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Pepperdine University  
Graduate School of Education and Psychology

SUCCESS STRATEGIES OF FIRST-GENERATION FOREIGN-BORN LEADERS

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

by

Verzhine Julfayan-Gregorian

July, 2017

Farzin Madjidi, Ed.D. – Dissertation Chairperson

This dissertation, written by

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under the guidance of a Faculty Committee and approved by its members, has been submitted to and accepted by the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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## DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to my father Gevorg and my mother Aida who taught me courage and wisdom and encouraged me to always chase my dreams no matter how far reachable they may seem. This degree wasn't just my dream; it was my father's lifelong dream that I am proud to say I fulfilled.

I also dedicate this study to my loving husband Aram, who has been my partner, my best friend, and my biggest supporter throughout this long journey. With your love and support, every dream is possible to fulfill.

Love,

Verzhine Julfayan-Gregorian

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Thank you all for being part of my dream.

## VITA

### Education

<b>Pepperdine University – Los Angeles, CA</b> <i>Doctoral Degree in Organizational Leadership (EdD)</i> <i>Dissertation Honors Recipient</i>	<b>2017</b>
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## ABSTRACT

The United States of America is a country of immigrants, where people and groups representing different nationalities have immigrated in search of a better life and opportunities. Among those immigrants are the Armenian people, who immigrated to the United States fleeing wars and Genocide. This study explores the first-generation foreign-born leaders of Armenian descent who came to the United States in search of opportunities, education, happiness, and success. The study examines the success strategies employed by first-generation, foreign-born leaders. This phenomenological study concentrates on the common experiences of the selected 15 participants. To answer the four research questions, 15 foreign-born, first-generation Armenian leaders were interviewed and asked 10 interview questions. Additionally, themes were formed to describe the common experiences of the interviewees. Through the interview process, it was discovered that the heritage and the strong cultural presence had shaped the leaders and determined their path to success, affected their decisions and prepared them for the challenges. It was also discovered that (a) hard work, (b) perseverance, (c) discipline, and (d) honesty were the main determinant factors for their success. The notable challenges described by the participants were (a) difficulty to assimilate, (b) the language barrier, and (c) discrimination. In addition, the participants made recommendations for the future generations of foreign-born leaders who are yet to move to the United States in search of new opportunities and success.

## Chapter 1: Introduction

### Background

In the past one hundred years, a significant population of immigrants has migrated to the United States in search of a better life, a better future, financial stability, new opportunities, a brighter beginning, and in pursuit of the American Dream, the dream of freedom (Mensch & Mensch, 2000). Many immigrants become successful leaders as entrepreneurs, doctors, scientists, educators, or choose to pursue other careers. For most of them, the path to success is difficult, and a better life does not come easy, as many are faced with the struggle of starting from the bottom, which can be especially difficult due to the lack of a “defined path to citizenship” (Hanson, 2010, p. 23).

Immigration is not only a historical factor in the development of the United States but also a phenomenon that still happens today. According to the *2014 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics*, published by the Office of Immigration Statistics of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, one million immigrants obtained lawful permanent residence in 2014. Since 2000, over 15 million have become lawful U.S. residents. Furthermore, nearly one million people have received refugee status in the United States (Department of Homeland Security, 2016). In addition, thousands of people come to the United States as nonimmigrants pursuant to employment or student visas (U.S. Department of State Bureau of Consular Affairs, 2015).

Immigration is not just a term that describes a change in the country of residence. It is a wider concept that encompasses unique challenges and may have long-lasting effects. If in the past, immigrants experienced discrimination and there were

no policies protecting them (Johnson, 1996), today their rights are protected by the policies designed to make the transition into the new reality smoother to some extent (Clark, 2003). Clark (2003) explained that the policy changes increased family-sponsored immigration quotas, giving immigrants opportunities to reunite with their families, even though it is still a lengthy process.

### **Immigration Patterns in the United States**

At the beginning of the twentieth century, changes in the U.S. immigration patterns started to be noticeable. Immigrants coming to the United States had a visible effect on the economy, the labor market, education, and the country's increasingly diverse culture (Gerber, 2011). While there were similarities with earlier waves of immigration, changes in the immigration patterns also became evident. Similarities included the preference of settling in urban areas and a few coastal cities, and the willingness to accept low-paying jobs. One of the notable differences was that immigrants from the previous century had been mostly European and white, while the new wave consisted mostly of people of color from developing countries (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006). While their willingness to accept lower wages was regarded as an adverse effect on the labor market (because the newcomers were perceived as competing with the native born, increasing unemployment among the latter and decreasing wages), positive factors of immigration, such as the immigrants' abilities to complement some native skills, traditions, and processes in the workplace, thus increasing the productivity and overall welfare, were overlooked (Friedberg & Hunt, 1995).



According to Vialet (1991), U.S. immigration started in 1776 with the Declaration of Independence, followed by the Treaty of Paris in 1783, when the United States was recognized as a nation. Technically speaking, newcomers were now considered immigrants, as they were migrating to an independent nation and becoming part of the new American culture. However, long before that, “the settlers and pioneers who colonized North America” (Vialet, 1991, p. 5) also came to America from different parts of the world. According to the 1790 census, the population of the United States was 3,227,000—75% of the residents were English, Scots, and Irish; 8% were Germans, and the remaining 17% were French, Spanish, Swedish, Dutch, and other nationalities (Vialet, 1991).

Gerber (2011) mentioned three major waves that had historical significance and impact: 1840s–1850s, 1890s to the end of World War I, and after 1965, marked by the Immigration Act of 1965. With the first major wave of immigration, approximately 6 million immigrants arrived in the United States. At the time, the discovery of gold in California created a need for more workers, and the American government was eager to populate the new land. Immigration was actively encouraged (Ewing, 2012). The paramount of such encouragement was the Homestead Act of 1862, which secured free plots of land for those who agreed to live on the land and develop it for at least five years. Soon enough, immigrants from Italy, Russia, Poland, Greece, Austria-Hungary, and China started settling to the United States (Ewing, 2012).

With the second major wave of immigration, the foreign-born population rose to historically high numbers, reaching 14.8% in 1890 and 14.7% in 1910, while by contrast, that number was only 12.5% in 2009 (Ewing, 2012). With this second wave, the face of

American immigration also started to change. America was promising freedom and economic prosperity to the new immigrants. As a result, in the ten-year span of 1901–1910, 77% of American immigration was due to the newcomers from southeastern Europe (Dillingham, 1911). This wave of immigration had a significant effect on the U.S. society as the population was growing and becoming very diverse.

The third major immigration wave took place after the Immigration Act of 1965. While the first two migration waves were mainly bringing newcomers from Europe, the population of immigrants after 1965 was primarily from Asia, Latin America, and a few other nations (Gerber, 2011). The Immigration Act of 1965 was enacted by the Congress to reform America's immigration laws and eliminate the discriminatory quotas based on national origin (Johnson, 2013). Signed by the President Lyndon Johnson at the foot of Statue of Liberty on October 3, 1965, this Act was not only symbolic but also became an important event in the history of American immigration (Daniels, 2008). The Act eliminated discrimination based on two controversial characteristics—the country of origin of immigrants and their occupational background (Keely, 1971).

While the Immigration Act of 1965 opened the doors for immigrants from new countries as it was eliminating the national origin quotas, the Immigration Act of 1990 (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services) increased the immigration cap to 675,000 immigrants annually. This Act, enacted on November 29, 1990, allowed skilled immigrant workers into the United States. It also created additional visas, which could have been granted through a lottery process (Lichtenstein, 2006). The Act also made some significant changes in the immigration processes, such as procedures regarding

family and business immigration, naturalization, exclusion, and deportation (Leiden & Neal, 1990).

While the 1990 Immigration Act created a rise in legal immigration, the number of undocumented immigrants was also rising rapidly, consisting largely of migrant workers from Mexico (Bean, Edmonston, & Passel, 1990). What followed was welfare legislation in 1996, which limited many social benefits to the U.S. citizens only and made the eligibility criteria and processes for obtaining asylum more difficult (Karentz, 2004). The welfare legislation of 1996 made noncitizens ineligible for a number of welfare benefits, such as “Supplemental Security Income, food stamps,” (Zedlewski, Clark, Meier, & Watson, 1996, p. 2) and others. With these limitations in place, obtaining citizenship became crucial (Jacobson, 1996). Thereafter, even tighter immigration constraints followed, especially after the 2001 terrorist attacks. These included more stringent screening procedures, resulting in slowing down the immigration flow (Karentz, 2004). Amid concerns following the terrorist attacks and issues around the rising number of undocumented immigrants, the literature suggests that the United States economy still depends on positive contributions derived from immigration.

### **Immigration and the Economy**

Throughout the history, immigrants have demonstrated a vast diversity of skills and expertise in different industries. Gerber (2011) defined early immigrants as the Irish ditch digger, the Polish steelworker, the Italian construction worker, sometimes the Slovak coal miner, often the Jewish garment worker, Japanese market farmer, the Chinese railroad laborer, and, especially in the west, the Mexican agricultural worker. Waters et al. (2009) further described these immigrants as the *new Americans*.

However, even though immigrants had a significant effect on the economy and labor force, they were not always viewed as assets. Some American citizens strongly voiced that the negative impact of immigration was far greater than the anticipated benefits. Anti-immigration lobbyists claimed that large-scale immigration was harmful to the American environment and insisted on means to reduce immigration (Reimers, 1998).

Nevertheless, the large immigration wave into the United States in the past century had a major effect on the U.S. labor force. In the 1980s, the United States admitted 600,000 immigrants each year, adding an additional 400,000 workers to the total U.S. labor force annually (Borjas & Freeman, 1992). In addition to the stream of legal immigrants, a steady flow of over three million undocumented immigrants qualified for amnesty under the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act and obtained permanent resident status. The Immigration Act of Reform and Control of 1986 allowed most undocumented immigrants currently in the United States to obtain legal status, while on the other hand the Act was enforcing stronger control on the U.S.–Mexican border and imposing sanctions against employers who knowingly hired unauthorized immigrants (Ewing, 2012). By 1988, about 9% of the U.S. labor force was foreign-born and 5% of the total U.S. population consisted of immigrants (Borjas & Freeman, 1992).

Immigrants' influence on the job market was evident despite the language barriers. Changes were noticeable in different industries at different levels. One example is the effect on the wages of citizens (Ottaviano & Peri, 2012). Positive changes included immigrants' "expanding the U.S. economy's productive capacity, stimulating investment, and promoting specialization" (Peri, 2010, p. 4), which in the long run boosted productivity.

Although deemed as an economic benefit by some, the immigration flow to the United States was also observed with criticism by other Americans (Borjas, 2001). As Waters et al. (2009) pointed out, the transformation of the society through immigration has seen conflicts in American society. While Republicans support U.S. immigration, for instance, cultural conservatives worry about its effect on “American social fabric” (p. 4). On the other hand, while many Democrats also support immigration and immigrants, many worry about the long-term effect of a vast number of unskilled newcomers living on the wages and in the conditions of the poor (Waters et al., 2009).

### **The Modern-day Immigrants**

Since the colonial era, immigrants were expected to change and blend in, and were welcomed as long as they were willing to adjust to the American culture (Hirschman, 2005). In addition to racism and prejudice, immigrants were also being viewed as a cultural threat not because they were the newcomers but because they were not open to assimilation (Paxton & Mughan, 2006). However, that has changed to some extent. While immigrants today may still witness and experience acts of racism and intolerance, most of the world sees this phenomenon as a humanitarian act. If before, tolerance was an act of good faith and might have been expected but was not a must, in today’s society tolerance is highly promoted and even legally secured in some cases (Hirschman, 2005). In the United States, the immigration policy may seem strict; nevertheless, it tolerates and welcomes the presence of immigrants, within reasonable expectations, whether it is for humanitarian reasons or economic benefits (Motomura, 2007).

The face of immigration in the United States has changed drastically (Banks, 2015). If previously the immigrants were farmers, construction workers, agricultural workers, and miners, today they are often educators, doctors, and scientists. They are students who strive to get their education at American institutions. If a century ago literacy was not given much importance and physical work was what counted, today's immigrant understands that the only path to success is and will long be education (Grigorenko, 2013).

In other words, the role of education is immense for the modern-day immigrant, as most professions require higher education, industry experience, and proficiency in languages and computer literacy (Wiley, Lee, & Rumberger, 2009). If a century ago, the immigrant parent could not afford to send their child to school, today they give a great importance to education, as it promises a better and more secure life for their children. In fact, as Wiley et al. (2009) explored:

Based on the analysis of a large-scale national longitudinal sample, with data spanning over 12 years, individuals from immigrant families are more likely to obtain a baccalaureate degree or above in comparisons within racial/ethnic groupings. For all four of the groups analyzed in this study, we found that those classified within the immigrant family grouping were predicted to have a greater likelihood of earning a baccalaureate or above, though differences in estimated likelihoods varied for each racial/ethnic grouping. (p. 107)

Other studies show that immigrant workers are “twice as likely as native-born workers to be in fields” (Alasalam, 2010, p. 1) that require at least a college degree, such as

computer science and mathematical sciences, which then yields an average earning similar to the salaries of native-born Americans (Alasalam, 2010).

### **Armenians in the United States**

Since this study concentrates on the population of Armenians leaders, the patterns of immigration of Armenians in the United States were explored, going back to the history of immigration centuries ago when the first Armenians arrived in the land of opportunities. “John Martin the Armenian” (Knippling, 1996, p. 21) is known to be one of the first Armenians who arrived in the Virginia colony in 1618. Significant migration of Armenians to the United States began at the beginning of the nineteenth century. In 1850, the community of Armenians was small—only 1,000—however, by 1898 that number had grown to 15,000. By 1925, more than 100,000 Armenians were residing in the United States (Payaslian, 2010). The main reason for a large number of Armenians migrating to the United States were the atrocities committed by the Ottoman Empire carried out against Christian Armenians, specifically the Armenian Genocide of 1915.

“I am a person without a country” (National Archives visit, May 12, 2016) is a phrase displayed at the National Archives in Washington, DC. Under the display, the story of an Armenian immigrant is told. Mooshegh Manoogian entered the United States illegally in August 1923 after escaping genocide and taking a long journey through Russia and Canada before entering the United States. The records at the National Archives show that it took 11 years for Manoogian to take advantage of a law designed to help individuals fleeing Soviet oppression to apply for permanent residence. Manoogian was later granted a U.S. citizenship.

The United States has one of the largest Armenian Diasporas, specifically in the state of California. During the genocide, nearly two million Armenians were killed, causing survivors to flee their historic homeland of more than three millennia (Payaslian, 2010). After these events, Armenians spread all over the world. As Payaslian (2010) mentioned, the first Armenian immigrants found what seemed to be concrete, tangible, sacred homeland in the United States. They had lost their homeland to genocide, the homeland where they had built their schools, their churches, where they were raised and where they raised their families. In the new country, Armenians started to thrive, recovering and rebuilding what they had lost; the United States was now the “Homeland in the image of the Hostland” (Payaslian, 2010, p. 113). The Armenians came to find a peaceful life in the land of freedom where they could experience greater political and civil freedom.

As Dauny (2011) stated, Armenians, just like Jews and Greeks, are known for having a classical diaspora, which means they have shared collective memories and myths about the homeland and have a strong commitment to preserve and recover the homeland wherever they go. They also have a strong ethnic group consciousness. From the day of their arrival, Armenians concentrate on rebuilding their old home in the new land. They always start with building a church and a school that will serve as the bridge to the homeland. They hold onto their values, language, 3,000-year-old culture, and Christian religion very tightly. The churches and the schools are a way to preserve what they left in the homeland. However, they also seek opportunities to contribute as citizens in America (Karentz, 2004).



As Karentz (2004) wrote, the first Armenian migration groups settled in Rhode Island at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Rhode Island was the land of opportunities where Armenian men would come seeking employment and later bring their families as well. However, the Quota Act of 1921, which temporarily limited the immigration flow into the United States, closed doors for Armenian immigrants. This Act also limited the sponsoring of new immigrants by those residing in America, which had a profound impact on family members who were trying to reunite their families.

The Immigration Act of 1924 was even stricter than its predecessor, and imposed a quota for Armenians, accepting only 124 immigrants annually. More limitations and restrictions were imposed with the McCarran-Walter Act of 1952, which limited the quota for each country outside the western hemisphere, reserving most of the quotas for immigrants migrating from the United Kingdom, Ireland, and Germany (Ewing, 2012). It wasn't until the Immigration Act of 1965 that doors opened for more Armenians to immigrate once more (Karentz, 2004). While the established limits caused by the Acts slowed down the migration of Armenians, people still found ways to cross the borders, especially those who already had families in the United States. They put all their efforts and funds into reuniting their families.

For the past few decades, Los Angeles, and especially Glendale and Pasadena areas, have been viewed as a home away from the homeland for many Armenians. They are here for a better life, opportunities, progress, and education. The Armenians in Los Angeles are entrepreneurs, intellectuals, scientist, artists, and doctors. They are especially known to be small business owners, mostly in heavily Armenian populated cities in California. As Der-Martirosian, Sabagh, and Bozorgmehr (1993) explained, the

number of self-employed among Armenians in 1980 “was twice as high as the general population of Los Angeles” (p. 253).

### **Statement of the Problem**

Both children and adults migrating to the United States face a complex set of challenges. Chiswick & DebBurman (2004) state that most studies are generalized and do not concentrate on different generations of U.S. residence, where typically “second-generation immigrants are grouped with first-generation immigrants or they are often grouped with native-born adults and children” (p. 3). This study focuses on foreign-born leaders whose parents faced their own set of obstacles trying to structure new lives for themselves and their children in a culture that was very foreign to them (Carreon, Drake, & Barton, 2005).

The current leadership literature lacks information on first-generation, foreign-born leaders who did not inherit their success and resources but instead overcame all the barriers newcomers face. The existing literature largely examines the four main aspects of assimilation: socioeconomic status, the measure of integration into the host country, language assimilation, and intermarriage (Waters & Jimenez, 2005). These leaders were first in their families to achieve high career and educational goals, and their primary purpose of relocation to the United States was inspired by the search for a better life.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this study was to determine:

- The exemplary practices and strategies employed by successful first-generation, foreign-born leaders.

- The challenges faced by first-generation, foreign-born leaders in achieving success.
- How first-generation, foreign-born leaders measure their success.
- Recommendations first-generation, foreign-born leaders have for future leaders looking to come to the United States.

### **Research Questions**

To address the purpose of this study, the following research questions (RQ) were explored:

- RQ 1: What exemplary practices and strategies are employed by successful first-generation, foreign-born leaders?
- RQ 2: What challenges are faced by first-generation, foreign-born leaders in achieving success?
- RQ 3: How do first-generation, foreign-born leaders measure their success?
- RQ 4: What recommendations would first-generation, foreign-born leaders make to future leaders looking to come to the United States?

### **Significance of the Study**

This study was of societal importance, as the United States is known to be a country with a large immigrant population (Castles, Miller, & Ammendola, 2005). Many of those immigrants face similar challenges in the arenas of education (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2010), career, and cultural adjustment (Bhagat & London, 1999). This research will be a contribution to the current knowledge about immigrant leaders, specifically of Armenian leaders, and may be used for future Armenian diaspora studies. This study may be used as a spotlight on the issues and needs of immigrants settling in the United

States. Through data collection regarding the challenges immigrant leaders face, this study presents the possibility of developing new programs to assist the immigrants with their education and career progression. This study explored the process of acculturation, the barriers associated with it, and the impact of the challenges.

Since the study focused on Armenian American leaders, it will add to the literature of Armenian Americans by recording their success stories, backgrounds, the challenges they faced, and what they used as sources of motivation to overcome those challenges. These individuals will set an example for the younger generations of Armenians. Through their stories, young Armenians will learn about the strength, resilience, courage, talents, and skills Armenian leaders bring to America. The success stories of leaders portrayed in this study will motivate young Armenians to realize that there is always a way to make the impossible become possible.

### **Limitations and Assumptions**

The limitation and assumptions in the study were as follows.

- As the study is conducted with a group of Armenian leaders, it limits the generalizability of the findings to apply it to all other immigrant groups.
- Although the participants were chosen from a group of Armenian leaders, they may have been born and raised in countries other than Armenia or the United States. They may have been born in other countries with large Armenian Diasporas, such as Russia, Lebanon, and Iran. The participants' cultural backgrounds might vary as they have already experienced acculturation in different countries.

- Answers given by the participants were the sole source of information, with the assumption that the information was truthful and honest with the possibility of minimal exaggeration.

### **Definition of Terms**

The purpose of the definition terms is to clarify how select terms are used in the scope of this study. Specific elements may have been added to narrow down certain characterization of some terms.

- *Acculturation*—According to Berry (1997), acculturation is the process where changes in the nature of the group occur due to people of different cultural backgrounds coming to live together in one state and create a multicultural society.
- *Armenian American leaders*—Armenian American leaders are foreign-born leaders who are of Armenian descent and have gained U.S. citizenship at some point after migrating to the United States.
- *Diaspora*—A wide range of connotations including movement, travel, displacement, dislocation, uprooting, and resettlement (Dauny, 2011).
- *First-generation leaders*—First-generation leaders are defined as individuals holding leadership roles in different careers in different industries, who are first in their families to achieve success after moving to the United States. These individuals did not inherit the resources they have but are self-made leaders who take leadership in business processes (Zadek, 2001).
- *Foreign-born leaders*—Foreign-born leaders are individuals who moved to the United States and chose to remain “consistent with the constraints set by

immigration laws, which themselves reflect the choices of the U.S. resident population” (Jasso & Rosenzweig, 1990, p. 2).

- *Immigrant*— An immigrant is an individual who migrates to another country for permanent residence (Immigrant, n.d.). In the scope of this research, only legal immigration patterns will be discussed and studied.
- *Naturalization*—The legal process that allows foreign-born residents to become American citizens (Bloemraad, 2006).
- *The American Dream*—For the purpose of this study, the American Dream is described as “a new world where anything can happen and good things might, a dream that consists of tenets about achieving success” (Hochschild, 1996, p. 15).

## **Chapter Summary**

This chapter provided a background on immigration patterns in the United States, as well the role immigrants played in changing the face of the U.S. labor force. It focused on modern-day immigrants and the role of education in their success. The chapter also gave a background on Armenian immigrants in the United States. Their progress throughout the past century will be discussed in chapter two in more detail. This chapter also provided an overview of the subject and the purpose of the study, clarifying the research questions and the possible limitations and assumptions expected in the study. In addition, chapter one thoroughly explained the significance of the issue and described the importance of the problem from different angles.

This study sought to uncover the strategies used by first-generation, foreign-born Armenian leaders to achieve success in the United States. The study concentrates on

foreign-born leaders who moved to the United States during their adult years, and who were faced with many challenges, such as language barriers, cultural differences, challenges in maintaining education and career expectations, financial burdens, difficulties with uniting families, and much more. Despite all odds, these leaders have overcome all sorts of difficulties met along their journeys to success, achieved major goals, pursued different levels of higher education, held high career positions in different areas, and fulfilled their purpose and goals. This study focuses on first-generation leaders whose success and financial resources are not inherited from families but rather were produced by the leader through hard work and dedication. The study concentrates on the population of first-generation Armenian American leaders who were born elsewhere and moved to the United States as adults.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to explore the struggles, study the barriers, and understand how past experiences have shaped U.S. immigrants. This study also explored how immigrants overcame obstacles and achieved success, in order to better understand how resilience and motivation may have contributed to their success. The study aimed to explore the existing immigration policies in the United States as well as the lack of reliable policy. The purpose of this study is not to identify reforms for immigration policies and procedures, but rather to analyze the policies' effects on the lives of the leaders in the study.

This chapter explores the literature review related to this study and presents sufficient material to support different aspects presented in chapter one, as well as reflects on different theories that apply to the study. This chapter discusses the common barriers encountered by immigrant leaders. The literature review also covers the laws enforced to limit migration to the United States and the problems that occurred due to lack of proper solutions for immigration-related issues. In addition, this chapter discusses several leadership theories that relate to the study and explores several theories of motivation in order to understand the role of motivation in the success of these leaders.

The chapter focuses on examples of successful and active leadership that played an important role in individual and group success. It analyzes the phenomenon of leadership in the context of immigration and explores successful examples that can serve as the basis for successful implementation of leadership practices to the benefit of



discrete immigrant groups. Examples of successful leaders are offered, who despite all the difficulties immigrants face, managed to successfully build careers and reach goals that were unattainable for their parents.

### **Barriers for Immigrants**

Immigrants from around the world have chosen to come to the United States to live a better life in the *nation of immigrants* (Karas, 2002). Some states such as California and Texas attract more immigrants than others, creating the melting pot (Jacoby, 2004). The melting pot metaphor portrays the assimilation and acculturation of immigrants (K. Johnson, 1997). While earlier European immigrants successfully integrated into the new American culture, immigrant groups such as Asian and Latino groups experienced more discrimination and prejudice, which resulted in their remaining separate and unassimilated (Jacoby, 2004).

Throughout the process of assimilation, immigrants encounter many obstacles. A common obstacle is discrimination. Discrimination is not only expressed as racial and ethnic prejudice but also happens in the forms of economic, educational, occupational, and earning disparities (Karas, 2002). Karas (2002) further explained that immigrant groups that are more similar to the dominant, native groups by culture, language, religion, and other characteristics might receive better positions and higher pay.

It is not an easy task to obtain higher education, gain employment, and start a career that matches an individual's skills and desire, and it is even harder to achieve in a foreign country where everything from language to customs is new and foreign. Matute-Bianchi (2008) described cultural inversion, cultural mistrust, and perceptions of immobility as barriers to opportunity that is rooted in minority group members. Matute-

Bianchi (2008) further stated that these barriers might negatively impact the educational and occupational expectations of immigrants. In order to find an adequate employment, immigrants, in addition to obtaining higher education and gaining such formal qualifications as motivation and readiness to take risks, also struggle with becoming fluent in the native language, gaining specific knowledge of how the labor market in the host country functions, creating good social and networking circles in the new country, and so forth (Wingens, 2011). As Jacoby (2004) explained, many immigrants tend to cluster at the bottom and as well at the top of the job ladder, some taking low-paid jobs and yet others being at the top of the job pyramid, working as scientists, engineers, nurses, and entrepreneurs.

One of the main issues immigrants encounter, especially those who moved to the United States as adults, is the language barrier. This issue is much more serious for groups who migrate from non-English speaking nations such as Armenia, where the primary spoken languages are Armenian and Russian. Clay (1999) argued that the issue of language is dominant in regard to the success of immigrants, and the language issues have earned a great amount of attention from scholars, educators, policymakers, and politicians. This issue is especially evident in schools where language is a central element because it is instrumental for learning and conveying information, and expressing opinions and emotions.

The language barrier is more existent for immigrants pursuing higher education. It places them in a disadvantaged position in comparison with the U.S.-born students. Even though the language can be mastered and the barrier carries a temporary phase, nevertheless it may still slow down an immigrant's success. Barriers can be in different

forms and levels, and they vary for different immigrant groups. Heilbrunn, Kushnirovich, and Zeltzer-Zubida (2010) discussed the most common issues that derive from an individual's immigrant status in the host country:

- competition
- problems deriving from the macroeconomic environment: the trough of production or crisis in the labor market
- lack of social networks in the host country
- lack of experience in the host country
- differences in mentality
- lack of adequate work because of host country's labor market structure
- language problems (p. 249)

Immigrants encounter two types of barriers: “objective barriers that derive from situations related to the labor market of the host country, and subjective barriers that relate to with specific characteristics of the specific group of immigrants” (Heilbrunn et al., 2010, p. 246). Objective barriers include things such as competition, lack of experience, social network, language problems, and differences in mentality. Subjective barriers are present for everyone—not just immigrants—and include prejudice, lack of skills, and scarcity of resources.

Some of the barriers arise from the lack of welcome immigrants feel in the United States. As Clay (1999) highlighted, the problems immigrants encounter are not a question of the difficulties created by immigrants for the host country, but on the contrary, are created by the reactions expressed by the native-born people who either

welcome the immigrants or resist their presence. In other words, the difficulties immigrants face often depend on how welcomed they are in their new habitat.

Immigrants most often have limited access to public benefits citizens enjoy. Perreira et al. (2012) analyzed the “barriers to immigrants’ access to health and human services programs” (p. 2). In 1996, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA), a welfare reform law, was passed which restricted some legal immigrants from having access to “benefits such as Medicaid and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)” (p. 2). Two categories of eligibility limitations were formed: dependent on “the time of arrival into the United States” and “the length of U.S. residency” (Perreira et al., 2012, p. 2). These limitations prevented many immigrants from accessing most of the benefits U.S. citizens have. Due to the high cost, health care was not accessible for many immigrants.

Perreira et al. (2012) also mentioned that the characteristics and the circumstances the immigrants are in also make the challenges more complex. For example, language and literacy barriers may be reasons why immigrants have difficulty accessing health and human services programs. The problems depend on how the programs are directed, which group the immigrants belong to, and how do they comprehend the system. Also, the problems can be related to the general attitude toward the newcomers in the community or the state, which might vary (Perreira et al., 2012).

### **Citizenship and Nationality Policy**

To understand U.S. immigration policy, it is important to first understand the distinctiveness of international migration as a social phenomenon (Zolberg, 2009) and

to comprehend the process of migration, different forms of migration, and the underlying reasons why individuals and ethnic groups chose to migrate. As Zolberg (2009) described, migration is often viewed as a political process. Migration is not just a movement across borders, but also the transition of people from the jurisdiction of one state to another and the change of membership in a political community. The existing policies are comprised not only of border regulations but also include rules that govern all political, social, economic, and cultural aspects of migration. That explains why an effective immigration policy that would benefit all parties involved becomes such a complex phenomenon and takes a long time to shape and make effective.

Immigration is a “key characteristic of the American landscape” (Clay, 1999, p. 780) and is certainly not a new phenomenon. Many immigrants are here in the pursuit of the American Dream, which for them means enjoying civil rights, having equal opportunities, and financial freedom (Burns, 2006). However, many immigrants live in families where only some of the members have legal status and where at least one person may be under the risk of deportation (Perreira et al., 2012). Restrictions vary in different states but many have passed immigration legislation “preventing unauthorized immigrants from obtaining driver’s licenses, employment, housing, public education,” and other benefits (Perreira et al., 2012, p. 4).

The significance of citizenship is comprised of three main domains by which “its values are compared and contrasted”—international law and politics, national politics, and federalism (Schuck, 1965, p. 43). The first domain, international law, classifies all individuals as insiders or outsiders. Insiders are those who have all the legal rights and belong to the constitutional community; outsiders are everyone else. The second

domain, national politics, classifies who the insiders are by sub-categorizing them. The third domain, federalism, divides the polity into sovereignties that overlap (Schuck, 1965).

Citizenship means having a “legal status, right, participation, belonging,” and is described as “a form of membership in a political and geographic community” (Bloemraad, Korteweg, & Yurdakul, 2008, p. 1). The Welfare Act of 1996 highlighted the importance of having citizenship in the United States, as now only citizens qualified for public benefits, which was a harsh change for noncitizens and long-time U.S. permanent residents (Bloemraad, 2006). According to the U.S. Census Bureau’s 1997 statistics, of 25.8 million foreign-born immigrants, only 37% had U.S. citizenship (Bloemraad, 2006), which meant the remaining 63% of non-citizens faced the negative consequences of the Welfare Act.

Lawful immigrants in the United States are generally treated as future citizens, or as Motomura (2006) referred to them, “intending citizens” (p. 9). Aleinikoff (2000) presented citizenship as a status that plays an important political and affiliative role, granting full membership in a state, enabling one to vote and have political rights in a state, and other benefits such as passport eligibility, protection from being deported, and so forth. Citizenship, according to Joppke (1998) is both a legal status and an identity, with challenges to every component of it.

Before 1978, when the retention requirements imposed by 1952 Immigration and Nationality Act changed, the law required a child and at least one parent to reside in the United States for a specific period of time before the child could get U.S. citizenship. Since then, residency requirements for children have changed; however, a child born

outside the United States to a citizen parent does not become a U.S. citizen unless the parent established residence in the United States before the child was born (Aleinikoff, 2000). In other words, a U.S. citizen must choose the United States as his primary place of residence in order for the child who was born outside of the United States to easily obtain U.S. citizenship and have access to the same citizenship rights the parent has.

Rubio-Marín (2000) referred to *permanent residence* as the permanent coexistence of a group that is excluded from rights that are essential to achieving political and economic equality. Permanent residence is viewed as a probationary period (Motomura, 2006). Immigrants who lawfully reside in the United States “must establish five years of permanent residence, demonstrate good moral character, prove knowledge of U.S. history and civics, and be able to read, write and speak” (Aleinikoff, 2000, p. 130) at least some English in order to apply for U.S. citizenship.

### **Equal Rights for Immigrants**

The existing citizenship policies have created some barriers for immigrants, specifically in terms of having equal rights with U.S. citizens. Immigrants are granted limited rights and resources when lacking proper legal identity. Bhabha (2011) identified two forms of lack of legal identity: “de jure stateless people” and “de facto stateless people” (p. 1). He defines stateless people as “a person who is not considered as a national by any State” (p. 3). The term *de jure* refers to “people without nationality of any state,” and *de facto* refers to “individuals who have a nationality but have an illegal” (Bhabha, 2011, p. 1), undocumented status in the state where they live. While this issue has been underestimated or ignored by policy makers and human rights advocates, it

has become a serious issue for children who lack legal identity, especially creating barriers when it comes to educational rights.

Multiculturalism is based on the core democratic values such as liberty, equality, and unity (Madood, 2013). According to the fifth and fourteenth amendments to the U.S. Constitution, the government must treat all persons equally regardless of their citizenship status (Romero, 2005). However, the immigration law categorizes people living in the United States as citizens and noncitizens; noncitizens being immigrants, undocumented persons, tourists, foreign students, temporary workers, and so forth. The laws for each group are different, and while the Constitution recognized the distinction between these groups, a question arises about the extent to which Constitution should protect the noncitizens.

While legal identity and citizenship status are not a guarantee of a good life, their absence can be a serious obstacle and barrier in the relationship between the individual and the state (Bhabha, 2011). Motomura (2006) shared that the view of immigration is justice hand-in-hand with equality; that is, earned equality. Lowe (1996) pointed out that the failure of citizenship to provide equal rights for immigrants is a condition that has been the center of attention since World War II. Even after obtaining legal status in a state, many immigrants face inequality in some way or another. As Joppke (1999) stated:

Even if immigrants have acquired the citizenship of (or, at least safe membership status in) the receiving state, they are often not content with enjoying equal rights. As carriers of ethnic difference, immigrants notice that even liberal states, which are philosophically indifferent to the cultural preferences of their members,



are couched in distinct cultural colors—its official language, holidays, or church relations cannot but privilege the ethnic majority population over the immigrant minorities. (p. 630)

Romero (2005) mentioned two doctrines of race scholarship: anti-essentialism and anti-subordination. He explained that anti-essentialism dictates that the Constitution cannot be read to assume that all people are alike because they might look alike, as two people may not be characterized as the same simply because of their race or gender. Anti-essentialism emphasizes that the identity of minority groups is slowly changing as they reinvent themselves by fusing with majority cultural groups (Madood, 1998). Romero (2005) also mentioned the dangers of anti-essentialism, where critics might argue that if immigrants preferred to be treated as individuals instead of members of specific groups, then entities such as affirmative action programs for minorities should be eliminated as well. Hence, anti-subordination dictates that the Constitution should protect noncitizens, as they already have limited rights in comparison with the citizens of the United States.

Human rights are not based on the distinctions of whether people are nationals, foreigners, or residents. Noncitizens and citizens should be able to claim their human rights (Jacobson, 1996). When immigrants reside in a state where they contribute to society, then they are worthy of becoming citizens of the state and having access to equal rights, such as education, healthcare, and the social safety net (Lakoff & Ferguson, 2006). Moreover, Lakoff and Ferguson (2006) argued that immigrants who are here in search of the American Dream should be recognized as Americans. They should have equal access to resources afforded to citizens to better assimilate with the

American culture and contribute to the American society. Otherwise, the scarcity of those resources becomes a barrier to their further growth in their state of residence and limits their potential.

### **Acculturation**

To better understand the different characteristics of immigrants and the effect of those characteristics on their success, an examination of the ethnic variation in immigrant assimilation is essential. Karas (2002) did this by analyzing the resources available to and used by immigrants, as well the situations they encountered throughout the journey to success.

Using this type of framework permits an examination of three competing explanations of the differences in attainment between some of the newest groups of foreign-born. Members of certain immigrant groups may have different outcomes because (1) they are treated differently because of their race or ethnic origin, (2) they possess varying levels of human and social capital, or (3) they locate in cities where members of their ethnic group either create or find situations that are conducive to either success or failure. (Karas, 2002, p. 8)

Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits (1936) explained acculturation as a phenomenon in which people from different cultures come into direct contact, and as a result, changes occur in either one or both groups' original cultural patterns. Borjas and Freeman (1992) pointed out that immigrants tend to assimilate quickly within a few years of their arrival to the United States. A number of "organizations, foundations, and universities" are promoting multiculturalism by setting aside "the task of acculturating immigrants to a single language, history, and culture" (Ong et al., 1996, p. 754).

The concept of “psychological acculturation and adaptation” (Berry, 1997, p. 7) differs from the aforementioned definition, as it refers to the psychological changes occurring when going through acculturation. Berry (1997) also identified three aspects of adaptation: psychological, sociocultural, and economic. Psychological acculturation is the process in which individuals change by interacting with another culture due to changes taking place in their own cultures.

Faist (2000) explored citizenship and culture in the scope of transnationalization. He explored the phenomenon called “transnational social spaces” and defined it as the strong “ties of persons, networks, and organizations” (Faist, 2000, p. 189). In other words, it refers to the ties migrating groups keep with their countries of origin, and spreading their cultural, political, and economic influences in the host country. Even more to the point, transnational social spaces are created by the relationship between the immigration state and the country of emigration (Faist, 2000). Table 1 breaks down the three types of transnational social spaces that arise from international migration.

As a result of immigration, diverse cultural groups come to live side by side in countries such as the United States, creating culturally plural societies that gave rise to popular terms like “*mainstream, minority, ethnic group, and cultural group*” (Berry, 1997, p. 8). Culturally plural societies consist of different ethnic groups, which is “due to three factors: voluntariness, mobility, and permanence” (p. 8). Immigrants, for example, “enter the acculturation process voluntarily” (p. 8) while refugees experience it due to circumstances and not because it was planned. Berry also broke down the acculturation process into two groups: those who migrated to another country (refugees, immigrants), and those to whom new culture is brought (indigenous people, national minorities).

Table 1

*Three Types of Transnational Social Spaces Arising from International Migration and Flight*

<b>Types of transnational social spaces</b>	<b>Primary resources in ties</b>	<b>Main characteristics</b>	<b>Typical examples</b>
Transnational kinship groups	Reciprocity: What one party receives from the other requires some return	Upholding social norm of equivalence	Remittances of household or family members from country of immigration to country of emigration, e.g., contract workers
Transnational circuits	Exchange: Mutual obligations and expectations of the actors; outcome of instrumental activity (e.g., the tit-for-tat principle)	Exploitation of insider advantages: language, strong and weak social ties in peer networks	Trading networks, e.g., Chinese, Lebanese and Indian business people
Transnational communities	Solidarity: shared ideas, beliefs, evaluations and symbols; expressed in some sort of collective identity	Mobilization of collective representations within (abstract) symbolic ties: religion, nationality, ethnicity	Diasporas: e.g., Jews, Armenians, Palestinians, Kurds; frontier regions: e.g., Mexico-US; Mediterranean

*Note.* From “Transnationalization in International Migration: Implications for the Study of Citizenship and Culture,” by T. Faist, 2000, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 195. Copyright 2000 by Routledge. Reprinted with permission.

Berry (1997) pointed out two issues that are encountered in the acculturation process: “cultural maintenance, [and] contact and participation” (p. 9). Cultural maintenance is the degree to which “cultural identity and characteristics [are] considered to be important” for the certain group. Contact and participation are the

degree to which immigrants “become involved in other cultural groups” (p. 9). In Table 2, Faist (2000) explained the three concepts for the immigrant adaptation analyses.

Table 2

*Three Concepts for the Analysis of Immigrant Adaptation in the Receiving Countries*

<b>Approach realms of adaptation</b>	<b>Assimilation</b>	<b>Ethnic pluralism</b>	<b>Border-crossing expansion of social space</b>
Main prediction	Melting into the core	Pluralization	Transnationalization
Political	National citizenship: unitary national political culture	Multicultural citizenship: common elements of political culture include recognition of cultural differences	Dual state membership: elements of political culture from various states can be complementary
Cultural	Acculturation: full-scale adaptation of values and behavior to the nation-state's core	Cultural retention: practices maintained in a new context; collective identities transplanted from emigration country	Transnational syncretism: diffusion of culture and emergence of new types-mixed identities

*Note.* From “Transnationalization in International Migration: Implications for the Study of Citizenship and Culture,” by T. Faist, 2000, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 201. Copyright 2000 by Routledge. Reprinted with permission.

Schiller, Basch, and Blanc (1995) defined transnational migration as a phenomenon where immigrants “sustain simultaneous multi-stranded social relations that link together the two societies of their country of origin and the new country where they settled” (p. 48). These groups may go through long-term and short-term adaptation processes, where permanent settlers are more open to adapt the new culture than temporary settlers (Kim, 2000). They are also treated differently by the host country, as the long-term sojourners are expected to have “greater cultural conformity and

proficiency,” while the short-term sojourners may not experience the same pressure (p. 17).

Lazarus (1997) talked about stress, emotion, and coping in the process of adaptation, and pointed out that with relocation, a person may experience stress due to the difficulties and necessity of finding ways to cope. The process of adaptation varies from individual to individual and largely depends on characteristics of the person, as well the environment he or she is in. Stress may be related to the disruption in language fluency and work-related efficiency, as well as disruptions in the patterns of interpersonal relations (Akhtar, 2011). Lazarus (1997) identified the three subtypes of stress theory to be harm, threat, and challenge. In the process of adaptation, stress may cause emotions such as anger, anxiety, fright, guilt, hope, sadness, envy, and pride. A person may become sensitive to anything that shows signs of prejudice and even questions such as where are you from? or where were you born? may trigger the implication that someone is not really American and cause stress (Akhtar, 2011).

The stress level may be higher for the adults than the children of immigrants as children begin to assimilate with the new society easier and faster than their parents do, which also creates a generational conflict (Lazarus, 1997). However, children deal with their own set of acculturation challenges. The assimilation process in a new environment may have painful effects on children, as they have a hard time expressing their vulnerability, being totally dependent on the attunement of their parents who often avoid or misread their children’s cues of the stress in the new environment (Bonovitz & Ergas, 1999).

## **Immigrants in Labor Force**

Assimilation plays a very important role in the success of immigrants. One assumption is that immigrants generally earn more income with increased years spent in the United States; therefore, assimilation may play a key role (LaLonde & Topel, 1992). LaLonde and Topel (1992) further studied the “difference in relative earnings for a group of immigrants aged 34–44 who had lived in the country for no more than five years and were earning about 22% less than similarly-aged native-born citizens” (p. 73). In comparison, a similarly-aged immigrant group who migrated 11 to 15 years ago had a smaller earning gap when compared with native-born persons. While some see a strong connection between earnings growth with assimilation, other scholars such as Borjas (1985) argued that assimilation is not very important when it comes to earnings growth, as the adaptation of the newcomers with the American labor market is due to intergenerational mobility, and the assimilation process itself is slow and numerically small. As Karas (2002) explained:

Full assimilation implies that immigrant and native-born groups have similar levels of economic well-being, e.g., comparable mean household incomes, similar distributions of educational attainment, attitudes, beliefs, values, etc. Social and economic stratification may still exist, however, ethnic stratification would not. Patterns of assimilation depend on the characteristics of the entering groups, including race or cultural markers, as well as the features of the host society, for example, the characteristics of local labor markets and ethnic communities. (p. 16)

While assimilation is important, the age of immigrants when arriving in the country also plays a key role. Immigrants who migrate at a fairly young age may deal with fewer barriers as they learn the language faster and easier, are able to adapt to the new technologies and labor changes faster, and most importantly, are more inclined to get an education (Friedberg, 1992). Last, the level of education and skills are the highest indicator of earning growth for immigrants.

The United States is particularly attractive for highly skilled workers who want to migrate to a country that may offer a “higher rate of return” (Borjas & Freeman, 1992, p. 7). According to the 2000 U. S. census, immigrants embodied 24% of scientists and 47% of engineers in the workforce, while only 12% of the overall workforce consisted of immigrants (Kerr & Lincoln, 2010). By 2009, approximately “24 million members of the U.S. labor force were foreign-born” (Alasalam, 2010, p. 2).

In the past few decades, employers have expressed a desperate need for skilled workers, a shortage that leads countries to bring in skilled workers from abroad. Countries like the United States, Canada, and Australia have done so by increasing their annual quotas for high-skilled immigrants (Bauer & Kunze, 2004). Immigrants bring a set of inherited skills with them that complement the nation’s innate skill endowment (Brojas & Freeman, 1992). While decades ago, immigrants represented a significant part of the low-cost labor force; today’s immigrants are more inclined toward education and high-paying job opportunities.

The positive effects of high-skilled migration to the United States are “increases in domestic productivity, technology transfers, international collaboration, growing global markets, economic activity, research and development (R&D), increased enrollment in



graduate programs, and knowledge flow” (Regets, 2001, pp. 20). Immigrants are favored by employers, as these workers reduce the cost of labor and increase elasticity, even though others see immigrants as a threat, competing with resident workers and accepting lower pay and conditions (Zolberg, 2009).

### **Immigrants in Education**

The United States is the largest educator of foreign students and is an important part of the highly skilled workers’ international movement (Regets, 2001). The American Dream is almost impossible without higher education and postsecondary credentials (Erisman & Looney, 2007). The role of education has changed in the last few decades. Children of immigrants find greater importance in education than their parents and grandparents did as they realize that education may lead them to career growth and success. Johnson (2011) pointed out that 36% of first-generation immigrants ages 57 to 66 have not graduated from high school, while only 8% of second-generation immigrants ages 30–39 lack a high school education. Alassalam (2010) illustrated in Table 3 that the disparity among foreign-born and native-born men and women holding some college or higher degree is not very large.

Table 3

*Average Earning by Education for Workers Ages 25 to 64*

<b>Men and Women</b>	<b>Some College</b>	<b>Bachelor’s Degree</b>	<b>Graduate Courses or Degree</b>
All Men	950	1350	1650
Native Born	960	1370	1660
Parents native born	960	1370	1660
Parent from Mexico or Central America	830	1250	1610
Parents from rest of the world	950	1400	1690

(continued)

<b>Men and Women</b>	<b>Some College</b>	<b>Bachelor's Degree</b>	<b>Graduate Courses or Degree</b>
Foreign-born	820	1230	1590
Mexico or Central America	750	990	1390
Rest of the world	850	1270	1600
All Women	720	1020	820
Native Born	720	1020	830
Parents native born	720	1020	830
Parent from Mexico or Central America	650	980	720
Parents from rest of the world	780	1030	950
Foreign-born	690	1010	760
Mexico or Central America	620	850	500
Rest of the world	700	1020	870

*Note.* From “The Role of Immigrants in the U.S. Labor Market, an Update,” by M. Alasalam, 2010, Congress of the United States, Congressional Budget Office, 17.

Education is not something that can be easily achieved. For immigrants, the challenges are much bigger and the underlying issues are much deeper. Erisman and Looney (2007) discussed the lack of policy that creates barriers for immigrants’ educational advancements. “Such challenges are the lack of information about postsecondary education, work and family responsibilities, financial need, academic preparation and achievement, and limited English proficiency” (Erisman & Looney, 2007, pp. 6–7). As Karas (2012) stated,

There is growing evidence of an immigrant elite with advanced degrees, professional or business skills, and English language facility, all of which may lower the cost of migration to the U.S. Some evidence suggests that once established, these immigrant elite rapidly gain local status and business connections in order to achieve economically. The number of foreign-born

government officials, business leaders, and researchers attest to this growing phenomenon. (p. 6)

Other challenges that don't receive much attention are the differences in educational practices between countries and that immigrants may suffer from compatibility issues between the U.S. educational institutions and institutions in their home country (Antecol, Cobb-Clark, & Trejo, 2003). This challenge is especially evident for immigrants who already hold degrees when they arrive in the United States. Table 4 illustrates the percentage of immigrants with some kind of education from their home countries.

Table 4

*Share of U.S. Foreign-Born with Foreign Degrees*

<b>Degree level</b>	<b>% with highest degree from foreign school</b>	<b>% with any foreign degree</b>	<b>% with foreign secondary school</b>
Bachelor's degree	49.1	51.1	67.4
Master's degree	24.1	57.2	76.4
Professional degree	60.0	69.3	74.3
PhD	31.2	73.3	86.7
All degree levels	40.2	54.7	71.0

*Note.* From "Research and Policy Issues in High-Skilled International Migration: A Perspective with Data from the United States," by M. Regets, 2001, IZA DP, 366, p. 5. Copyright © Social Science Electronic Publishing, Inc. Reprinted with permission.

The United States has an advantage when importing services of higher education, especially areas where skilled experts are lacking, such as in science and engineering (Chellaraj, Maskus, & Mattoo, 2006). These immigrant students greatly

contribute to innovation in the United States. However, Chellaraj et al. (2006) also pointed out the limitations the United States' visa policy has placed on certain source countries, which eventually reduced the number of foreign students and skilled immigrants coming to the United States and resulted in a reduction of innovative activity in the country. In Table 5, Regets (2001) illustrated the percentage of foreign-born scientists and engineers in the United States in 1997. Their contributions in science and engineering are essential.

Table 5

*Share of Foreign-Born S&E-Trained US Scientists and Engineers, 1997*

<b>Field of highest degree</b>	<b>Labor Force (Total)</b>	<b>Bachelor's degree</b>	<b>Master's Degree</b>	<b>Doctorate</b>
All S&E	12.7	9.7	19.2	26.1
Engineering	19.8	14.9	30.1	44.0
Life Sciences	10.7	7.8	12.8	24.7
Computer/Math	16.5	12.7	24.6	35.6
Physical Sciences	16.0	11.8	17.2	28.5
Social Sciences	7.0	6.1	9.4	12.7

*Note.* From "Research and Policy Issues in High-Skilled International Migration: A Perspective with Data from the United States," by M. Regets, 2001, IZA DP, 366, 22. Copyright © Social Science Electronic Publishing, Inc. Reprinted with permission.

### **Immigrants in Leadership**

Besides education attainment, entrepreneurial success, and professional growth in various industries, immigrants have also emerged in the leadership arena. Eagly and Chin (2010) made an interesting observation highlighting the increasing number of

ethnic minorities in leadership positions. Their statistics showed that among executives of U.S. organizations, approximately 4% are Asian and 5% are Hispanic, and among the members of the U.S. Congress 1% are Asian and 6% are Hispanic. Zweigenhaft and Domhoff (2006) pointed out that even though those numbers don't seem to be high, they are still higher than in any earlier historical period.

Immigrants not only demonstrate their leadership in the political arena but also in diverse industries that look promising for success. Some immigrants find entrepreneurship to be the source of their projected success. Rusinovic (2008) stated that immigrants tend to be attracted to specific markets where they see an opportunity for entrepreneurship, such as ethnic markets, middleman markets, niche markets, and mainstream markets. The entrepreneurs primarily focus on specialty areas where the competition from larger businesses is not a threat to them and low economies of scale are required (Singh & DeNoble, 2004).

### **Armenian Immigrants in the United States**

Of particular interest in this study are the experiences of the Armenian immigrant community in the United States, the barriers they face, their challenges, assimilation process, and success stories. Bakalian (1993) stated that Armenians have unique historical and cultural features that make them resilient to forces such as assimilation. Armenia is a nation that has thousands of years of history, including disasters of genocide of 1.5 million, a massive earthquake in 1988 that claimed the lives of hundreds of thousands, and human and territorial losses in the war against Azerbaijan. Armenia carries a great pride in its history. These sentiments are presented in the memoirs of a great Armenian American author, William Saroyan (1984), who wrote:

I should like to see any power of the world destroy this race, this small tribe of unimportant people, whose wars have all been fought and lost, whose structures have crumbled, literature is unread, music is unheard, and prayers are no more answered. Go ahead, destroy Armenia. See if you can do it. Send them into the desert without bread or water. Burn their homes and churches. Then see if they will not laugh, sing and pray again. For when two of them meet anywhere in the world, see if they will not create a New Armenia. (Bakalian, 1993, pp. 3–4)

Very few Armenians were known to settle in the United States before the 1890s. One of the earliest known was Malcolm the Armenian who came to Jamestown in 1618 or 1619 (Mirak, 1983). Literature shows that before 1870, about 60 businessmen schooled in New England had arrived from Asia Minor, and in the late 1880s only about 1,500 Armenians lived in the United States. In the last decade of the nineteenth century, due to the massacres carried out by the Ottoman Empire, about 12,000 Armenians fled their homes and settled on American soil (Bakalian, 1993).

The literature also shows that in the years between 1898 and 1914, about 2,500 Russian Armenians settled in the United States, having initially settled in Canada and then moving to California (Bakalan, 1993). However, the numbers increased after the Genocide of 1915. The records show that in 1920 alone, 10,212 Armenians entered the United States, and another 20,559 came between 1920 and 1924. In this wave of Armenian immigration, half were women and children—orphans and widows who had managed to escape the genocide. At this point, entrance to the United States was becoming more difficult as Johnson-Reed Immigration Act of 1927 placed a quota for Armenians at 100 annually (Gregg, 2002). To change that, the pro-Armenian groups

fought to classify Armenians as refugees, since many were the survivors of the genocide.

Armenians formed communities in the United States prior to 1930s and many U.S.-born Armenians are part of third- or fourth-generation Armenian immigrant families (Allen & Turner, 1996). U.S. Armenian immigrants vary from “poor and unassimilated immigrants to the wealthy newcomers, or third-generation Armenian professionals and businessmen” (p. 145). Armenian businessmen and professionals, especially Armenians who emigrated from Iran, settled in the better and wealthier neighborhoods (Allen & Turner, 1996).

According to the 1990 U.S. Census, the Armenian population in Los Angeles, ages 25–64, was 61,558 people, 80.8% of whom were foreign-born Armenians and 55.2% of whom had arrived in the United States between 1989 and 1990 (Allen & Turner, 1996). Most of them (77%) live in the Glendale and Hollywood areas as a result of highly-focused operations by churches, refugee relief agencies, community centers, schools, and Armenian businesses (Arax & Schrader, 1988).

**Socioeconomic status of the Armenian Americans.** By the year 2000, Armenians formed a small portion, 1.3%, of the California population, which included both first and later generations of Armenians who came from Soviet Armenia, Lebanon, and Iran (Phinney, Romero, Nava, & Huang, 2001). As Bakalian (1993) stated, the Armenians who migrated toward the end the twentieth century were likely to be proficient in English and had higher education and demonstrable skills. Some who escaped the turmoil in the Middle East moved to the United States with considerable wealth and continued to prosper their businesses in the States. Small business

ownership was the “typical route to the American Dream for many Armenian immigrants” (Bakalian, 1993, p. 14).

Even though Armenians are only a small part of the U.S. population, they have developed “well-defined and highly visible communities,” have attained a “high degree of economic integration into American society” (Phinney et al., 2001, p. 141), and as a group, have a high socioeconomic status (SES) compared to other ethnic groups. According to the study Phinney et al. (2001) conducted with three immigrant groups in Los Angeles (81 participants were Armenian, 47 were Vietnamese, and 88 were Mexican), the SES component of the Armenian group was much higher ( $M = 6.5$ ) than the SES for “Vietnamese ( $M = 4.3$ ) and Mexican Americans ( $M = 4.0$ )” (p. 141).

**Language use.** According to the 1990 U. S. Census Bureau, the Armenian language was number 20 in a list of the 24 largest language groups in the United States (Chiswick & Miller, 1997). The same census also showed that 58% of the Armenians residing in Los Angeles spoke English poorly or did not speak English at all (Allen & Turner, 1996). However, 10 years later, the 2000 Census revealed that about 77% of Armenians, whose primary language spoken at home was Armenian, spoke English very well or well (Shin & Bruno, 2003).

Many immigrants find that “the American society does not encourage bilingualism” (Bakalian, 2013, p. 268). Even though Armenians persistently try to retain the Armenian language, eventually it becomes impossible to pass it on to new generations. The language of the homeland is more likely to weaken after the second generation, especially for those who live outside areas with a high Armenian population density. Passing the language to the second and third generations is a challenge



parents take seriously, and “the perpetuation of a cultural heritage necessitates a conscious ideological socialization, such as full-time and part-time schools” (Bakalian, 2013, p. 268). Valdes (2005) referred to the Armenian language as a heritage language since it’s spoken only by linguistic minority groups and belongs to non-societal language groups. She further stated:

Armenian, for example, would be considered a heritage language for American students of Armenian ancestry even if such students were themselves English-speaking monolinguals. In terms of strengthening and preserving Armenian in this country, such heritage students would be seen as having an important personal connection with the language and an investment in maintaining the language for future generations. Their motivation for studying Armenian would thus contrast significantly with that of typical students of foreign language. (p. 412)

A study by Imbens-Bailey (1996) on 44 children, ages eight to 15 years old, suggested that American-born Armenian children, who also spoke Armenian, were more connected with the Armenian community in comparison with those who only spoke English, and concluded that the knowledge of the Armenian language helped them preserve ethnic participation and identity. Another study by Phinney et al. (2001) on three ethnic groups showed that Armenians, in comparison to Vietnamese and Mexican groups, have a higher rate of ethnic identity, ethnic language proficiency, and cultural interaction. In fact, Armenians were the only group for whom, in addition to the language influence on ethnic identity, parental cultural maintenance was also a direct influence. In addition, many Armenian parents prefer to enroll their children in Armenian

schools so the children would learn the ethnic language and be closer to Armenian culture and identity.

**Education.** English language proficiency, as well as having a formal education, is an important part of cultural assimilation (Allen & Turner, 1996). A large number of Armenians who had moved to the United States after World War II valued education and made sure their children had some college education (Bakalian, 1993). As Malcolm (1910) pointed out, Armenian parents, no matter how scarce their resources are, give the utmost importance to the education of their children. He further recalled the words Gordon Browne, who once said, “the Armenian passion for education is astonishing. There is probably no people in the world who will make such sacrifice for this object” (Malcolm, 1910, p. 107).

Organizations such as Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) or Armenian Relief Society (ARS) were created to aid education, professional training, access to medical resources, agricultural growth, and orphaned children and needy families (Gregg, 2002). Education was one of their important priorities. A study of Armenians in Los Angeles area by Phinney, Ong, and Madden (2000), conducted with a sample number of 197 Armenians, showed that only 8.3% were unskilled workers or have little education beyond high school. The skilled workers with some secondary education comprised 23.3% of the sample population, while 44% were white-collar workers or individuals with some college education. The remaining 24.4% were professional workers with college or graduate education. That leads to the conclusion that 68.4% of the sample population had some college education, and also portrayed the importance of education for Armenians.

Bakalian (1993) presented another study where the population was divided into age and generation groups to explore the educational level percentile pattern between different age groups, which were also categorized with first- and second-generation Armenian groups. The study showed that in most age groups, more than 50% of Armenian immigrants held a college degree or higher; the figure increased for the second- and third-generation Armenians. The study also showed that only the participants in the 30s and 40s age group, who were also labeled as baby boomers, had better educational attainment than the foreign-born Armenians who had immigrated.

**Armenian Americans in leadership.** The success of Armenians on New World soil also predates the twentieth century. Even before World War I and the genocide of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire—events that forced many Armenians to leave their homeland and immigrate to the United States—there was a successful Armenian diaspora in America on both the east and the west coasts (Alexander, 2005). Many successful Armenians, such as Hagop Bofifian, a wealthy rug merchant in the Boston area, moved to the United States in the 1860s and 1870s. The immigrants who moved to the U.S. during or immediately after the World War I joined an already a successful and thriving community. Very soon, Armenian immigrants started leaving their employment in the factories and began their independent enterprises. New migrants with money and commercial backgrounds soon joined new groups of self-employed merchants.

A 1909 study of a small coastal town in Connecticut showed that 6% of the town's Armenian population was involved in business (Alexander, 2005). This figure was close to the 6.6% of the Jewish community, and far greater than the 3.4% of

Italians and the less-than-1% of Lithuanians, Slovaks, and Irish. At all times, successful Armenians in America were concerned about their peer Armenians in Armenia, and perhaps their motivations were derived from this concern. Armenians were determined to be successful in the United States so they could help their relatives in Armenia and all Armenians at large. As Malcolm (1910) stated:

It is no exaggeration to say that the Armenian immigrants from this country, with the skill, knowledge and experience they have gained here in the sphere of education, industry, government and living conditions, together with the aid of the American missionary forces, and let us hope with the mandate of the United States, will constitute an invaluable asset in the development of the coming Armenian Republic. And they will not only furnish the necessary medium through which American products will find a vast market throughout the East but will also help to implant and diffuse American ideals and American democracy on that part of the world. (p. 141)

Gibson, Harris, and Sadighian (2011) stated findings that indicated Armenians possess strong entrepreneurial capabilities. When measured by the Entrepreneurial Attitudes Orientation (EAO) scale, this immigrant group has scored significantly higher on three of the four EAO scales. While both men and women scored at similar strength on the scale, findings also showed that the high score was linked to their past experiences of having worked for some kind of small business in past. According to Foreman-Peck and Zhou (2013), there are two measures of entrepreneurial cultures: (a) the chance that a member will become a business owner and (b) the effect the country

of origin has on that exact probability. Of course, personal characteristics play a role as well.

## **Leadership Theories**

The United States has been a world leader in welcoming and integrating newcomers even though the immigration policies have a large disconnect from the economic and social forces (Meissner, Meyers, Papademtriou, & Fix, 2007). It takes a great deal of leadership to implement policies that will benefit both the nation and the immigrants, helping immigrants overcome the challenges they face in the new environment. Leadership is a phenomenon that exists regardless of whether it is recognized, noticed, and labeled with a specific modern or traditional theory of leadership. Leadership is not a synonym of success and can be both positive and negative. Leadership is necessary with regard to the United States immigration policies, in order to facilitate new policies and allocate appropriate decision-making authority (Zolberg, 2009).

According to Northouse (2015), leadership is the “process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (p. 5). Theories of leadership are mainly built around the characteristics, behaviors, and the situational factors (Biggart & Hamilton, 1987). The widely-accepted theories are the trait theory, style theory, skills approach theory, transformational leadership theory, transactional leadership theory, contingency theory, situational leadership theory, servant leadership theory, ethical leadership, and authentic leadership theory (Northouse, 2015). The trait approach dominated in the early twentieth century up to the late 1940s and was very

much alive until the 1990s. The style approach emerged and lasted until the late 1960s, followed by contingency approach, lasting until early 1980s (Bryman, 1999).

**Trait theory.** Trait theory is a big interest to scholars as it explains how traits influence leadership (Bryman, 1992). According to the trait theory, a leader's effectiveness and emergence are influenced by personality traits (Colbert, Judge, Choi, & Wang, 2012). Trait theory sought to identify the traits that were shared among great leaders, traits that made a leader stand out among others (Biggart & Hamilton, 1987). Zaccaro (2007) identified traits to be "innate and heritable qualities" defined as a "coherent and integrated pattern of personal characteristics" (p. 7). The main focus of trait theory is the leader as a person where leadership is portrayed in a form of personal influence (Biggart & Hamilton, 1987).

In studies related to leader traits, scholars focused mainly on uncovering the main differences between leaders and those who lack leadership skills. Focusing on the contribution of each group led to the discovery that behavior may not be grounded solely in a few personal characteristics (Zaccaro, 2007). This belief presented behavior as a complex phenomenon that is an outcome of a complex bundle of characteristics. Zaccaro (2007) characterized "leader traits as leader attributes that are relatively enduring, producing cross-situational stability in leadership performance"(p. 8).

Kirkpatrick and Locke (1991) explained the six important traits leaders must have and by which they differ from nonleaders. The first trait is *drive*, which consists of "achievement, ambition, energy, tenacity, and initiative" (p. 49). The term *drive* refers to a "constellation of traits and motives reflecting a high effort level" (p. 49). Northouse

(2015) referred to this trait as the trait of determination, which also included characteristics such as initiative, persistence, and dominance.

The second trait is the leadership motivation, which often refers to the desire to influence and need for power (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991). These leaders are often willing to assume responsibility, as it gives them the opportunity to influence others. The need for power is characterized by two motives: personalized power motive and socialized power motive. Personalized power motive derives from the need to dominate others, by which a leader gains dependent and submissive followers. Socialized power motive has a more positive attribute as it uses power to achieve goals and vision. This motive focuses more on the “ability to develop networks and coalitions, gain cooperation from others, resolve conflicts in a constructive manner, and use role modeling to influence others” (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991, p. 53).

The third trait Kirkpatrick and Locke (1991) discussed is a pair of virtues every leader should possess—honesty and integrity. They referred to integrity as “the correspondence between word and deed” and honesty as “being truthful or non-deceitful” (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991, p. 53). Followers often find these traits to be the most important ones, as these leaders are known to be credible and trustworthy. Integrity, as Northouse (2015) described, is a set of qualities such as honesty and trustworthiness.

The fourth trait Kirkpatrick and Locke (1991) discussed was self-confidence, which comes hand-in-hand with emotional stability. Being a leader means taking on many difficult tasks. A leader with self-doubt lacks the ability to handle difficulties, which also results in disappointment for the followers. Emotional stability and an even

temperament are important at all times. According to the scholars at the Center for Creative Leadership, “leaders are more likely to derail if they lack emotional stability and composure” (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991, p. 55).

The fifth trait is cognitive ability, which focuses on the leader’s intellectual ability when responsible for “formulating suitable strategies, solving problems, and making correct decisions” (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991, p. 55). Besides intellectual ability, a leader must have knowledge of the business, which is the sixth trait Kirkpatrick and Locke (1991) identified. They pointed out that effective leaders must have knowledge of their specific industry and technical matters. Finally, Kirkpatrick and Locke (1991) discussed secondary traits: “charisma, creativity/originality and flexibility” (p. 56). While charisma is mainly characteristic of political leaders, flexibility and adaptiveness should be characteristics every effective leader owns (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991).

Northouse (2015) explored leaders’ personality traits with a five-factor personality model. The five factors, generally called “Big Five,” are “neuroticism, extraversion (urgency), openness (intellect), agreeableness, and conscientiousness (dependability)” (p. 26). Most effective leaders are usually extroverts, more conscious and open, and tend to manage stress better. Northouse (2015) gave an overview of the five factors:

- neuroticism—the tendency to be depressed, anxious, insecure, vulnerable, and hostile
- extraversion—the tendency to be sociable, assertive, and to have positive energy
- openness—the tendency to be informed, creative, insightful, and curious



- agreeableness—the tendency to be accepting, confirming, trusting, and nurturing
- conscientiousness—the tendency to be thorough, organized, controlled, dependable, and decisive (p. 27)

Northouse (2015) also wrote about the trait of sociability, which is the leader's ability to build pleasant relationships. Leaders with this trait are friendly, outgoing, tactful, diplomatic, and often show concern for others. They have “good interpersonal skills and create cooperative relationships with their followers” (p. 26).

**Skills approach.** This approach focuses on skills that may be learned or mastered (Northouse, 2015). First, this approach introduced a perception focused on leader's abilities, placing his or her skills at the center of effective performance, as well describing leadership in such way that is easily understandable for everyone. This approach presents a “sophisticated map that explains how effective leadership performance can be achieved” (p. 71).

Northouse (2015) stated that even though the personality of the leader is important, knowledge and skills are also key elements. Katz (2009) identified three main skills that are essential for an effective leader: technical, human, and conceptual skills. First, technical skills concentrate on the proficiency of a certain type of work or activity; specifically, skills including methods, procedures, and techniques. Human skills include teamwork, the ability to work with people and groups, build strong relationships, and make others feel equal (Katz, 2009). A leader with this skill is a motivator, sensitive to the needs of others, and likes to create a secure atmosphere where everyone feels comfortable. Conceptual skills involve understanding and recognizing how certain

functions in an organization are linked to each other, and the way changes of one function may affect the remaining functions (Katz, 2009).

**Style theory.** This theory is very different from traits and skills theories. It focuses on a leader's actions, while the first two focus on who the leaders are (Northouse, 2015). This leadership type focuses on the behaviors demonstrated by leaders, which is what makes them effective leaders (Biggart & Hamilton, 1987). This approach presents leaders as individuals capable of changing behavior; therefore, it has an emphasis on the importance of training leaders rather than selecting leaders (Bryman, 1999).

In the study of style approach, Northouse (2015) presented two types of behavior: task behaviors and relationship behaviors. Task behavior is associated with goal accomplishment, where leaders assist group members in achieving their goals. Relationship behaviors are about providing the help and the assistance for team members to feel at ease with each other as well as with themselves. Northouse also explained that the central point of this theory is to "explain how leaders combine these two kinds of behaviors to influence subordinates in their efforts to reach a goal" (p. 75).

Ohio State University scholars looked at two components of leader behavior: consideration and initiating structure (Bryman, 1999). The first component, consideration, denotes a leadership style in which leaders have a positive strong relationship with their subordinates as the leaders show care and concern, and are trusted by their followers. The initiating structure differs in that leaders concentrate on what subordinates are supposed to do and how they are supposed to do it. The consideration component is "associated with better morale and job satisfaction among

subordinates but a lower level of performance”, but the initiating structure “tended to be associated with poorer morale but better group performance” (Bryman, 1999, p. 28).

**Transactional leadership.** This theory concentrates on the relationship the leader builds with a team and the negotiations and exchanges between them (Ardichvili & Kuchinke, 2002). Judge and Piccolo (2004) introduced “three dimensions of transactional leadership: contingent reward, management by exception-active, and management by exception-passive” (p. 755). First, contingent reward shows how constructive transactions and exchanges are set up between the leader and the followers, through clarifying the expectations and setting the rewards. Management by exception describes how a “leader takes corrective action on the basis of results” (p. 755) from transactions. Active leaders monitor the process and take action ahead of time; while passive leaders wait for issues to come up and only then they speak up (Howell & Avolio, 1993).

Transactional leaders work with specific benefits for subordinates, and the latter accomplishes the tasks agreed upon (Ardichvili & Kuchinke, 2002). Transactional leadership involves promises and commitments where the leaders are in charge of the exchanges, relying upon non-tangible values and rewards (Kunhert & Lewis, 1987). When the job no longer motivates the followers nor provides satisfaction, transactional leaders step in to clarify the performance criteria, negotiate new exchanges, and set new expected outcomes (Hartog, Muijen, & Koopman, 1997).

**Transformational leadership.** As Judge and Piccolo (2004) stated, “transformational leadership is built on the foundation of transactional leadership” (p. 756). Transformational leaders concentrate on achieving a higher collective purpose,

vision, and mission (Ardichvili & Kuchinke, 2002). These leaders surpass the short-term goals concentrating mainly on a higher set of goals (Judge & Piccolo, 2004).

Transformational leaders build relationships with their followers who trust, are loyal to, and admire the leader, which also motivates them to be more active (Yukls, 1999).

With a transformational leader, the team members change and transform. These leaders deal with “emotions, values, ethics, standards and long-term goals” (Northouse, 2015, p. 185). They work with followers’ purposes and motives and encourage them to always achieve more than it is expected. These charismatic and visionary leaders, together with their subordinates, are bound in the transformational process.

“Transformational leadership is the process” where people engage and create an atmosphere that promotes “motivation and morality in both the leader and the follower” (p. 186), a process where everyone is motivated to reach their fullest potential.

Lowe, Kroeck, and Sivasubramaniam (1996) believe that transformational leaders are better suited for private organizations than for public organizations, as the transformation process is more effective in private firms as a result of the impact on work unit effectiveness. Bass and Riggio (2006) referred to transformational leadership as the superior leadership performance, a process where leaders widen subordinates’ interests, using different methods to inspire them. These leaders are charismatic, aware of their followers’ emotional needs, considerate, and closely examine the difference between team members.

Bass, Avolio, Jung, and Berson (2003) explored four characteristics of transformational leaders: “idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration” (p. 208). Bass et al. (2003) stated that

“leaders with idealized influence are usually admired and respected” (p. 208). Their subordinates are loyal as their needs are always a priority for the leader. These leaders share the risks with the team members and stay true to their ethics, principles, and values. Leaders with inspirational motivation tend to keep the team spirit high. They motivate the followers by helping them envision a brighter and better future. Leaders with intellectual stimulation encourage creativeness and innovation. They are all about creating the new by transforming the old, and throughout the process, they always include their followers. Last, leaders with individualized consideration like to give each individual the attention needed often, to encourage and motivate them.

**Situational leadership.** Hersey, Blanchard, and Natemeyer (1979) discussed the situational leadership model, which is based on four behaviors of leaders: delegating, supporting, coaching, and directing the followers. This theory is based on an “interplay between task and relationship behaviors” (p. 6). Task behavior is the leader's communication of what the follower is expected to do, and relationship behavior is the willingness of the follower to take responsibility for his or her actions to complete the given task. A key point is that as the follower shows interest and increases the level of readiness, it is best for a leader “to reduce task behavior and increase relationship behavior” (p. 6).

Northouse (2015) discussed the strengths and weaknesses of situational leadership. Some strengths are that situational leadership is easy to comprehend, easy to apply to different settings, is prescriptive in nature, and has been thoroughly tested in the marketplace. However, a limited amount of research is available on this topic. Most of the research done around situational leadership has not been published, and the

theoretical basis of this theory has not been thoroughly explained by its authors. It simply provides a model that guides leaders and their behaviors according to specific situations.

**Contingency theory.** Donaldson (2001) defined contingency theory as an approach where the “effect of one variable on another depends upon some third variable” (p. 5), which means that the first variable will change only if the second variable is affected by the third. Contingency theory argues that no single leadership style exists as best (Biggart & Hamilton, 1987). This theory mainly relates to the environment of the organization, its size, and the strategy it uses (Donaldson, 2001).

The strengths of contingency theory lay in the great amount of research conducted on it and its predictability (Northouse, 2015). According to this theory, leaders are not expected to be effective at all times and in all situations. The negative aspect of this theory is that it fails to explain how some leadership theories are more effective than others (Northouse, 2015).

**Servant leadership.** Northouse (2015) explained servant leadership as a paradox associated with common sense. He described the research on this style of leadership as a positive contribution to the field of leadership. According to Patterson’s (2003) theory, a servant leader is characterized with these seven constructs: love, humility, altruism, visionary, trustworthy, servant and empowering (as cited in Dennis, Kinzler-Norheim, & Bocarnea, 2010). Irving and Longbotham (2007) explored the six essential themes of servant leadership:

- accountability—leadership who leads subordinates accountable to reach their goals and potential.

- supporting/resourcing—Leaders must support their followers and provide the resources needed to accomplish those goals.
- honest self-evaluation—Leaders must be fairly evaluated before they evaluate others.
- fostering collaboration—Leaders encourage teamwork and discourage competition amongst team members.
- Clear communication—Leaders communicate clearly for others to be aware of their plans/goals.
- valuing/appreciating—Leaders appreciate employees for what they contribute.

**Ethical leadership.** True and effective leadership is influenced by ethical and moral values (Mendonca, 2001). The concept of ethical leadership is explained “as the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision making” (Brown, Trevino, & Harrison, 2005, p. 120). For some, being ethical means to follow all the legal requirements. However, ethics is not just a set of legal guidelines, but rather the willingness and ability to make sure that the organization has the right moral compass (Leigh, 2013).

Ethical leaders value two-way communication between leaders and followers, expressing their opinion and yet listening to the opinion of others (Brown et al., 2005). These leaders also demonstrate ethical responsiveness and caring in all cases, showing that the followers’ needs and desires are always a priority (Brown et al., 2005). These leaders take into account the consequences of their decisions and policies

(Piccolo, Greenbaum, Hartog, & Folger, 2010); thus, their effective decision-making process always involves their moral values and ethical norms.

Langlois (2011) referred to ethical leadership as a notion that views human nature as capable of doing the right things and for the benefit of the organization. An ethical leader's reputation has two main pillars: he or she is perceived as a "moral person and a moral manager" (Trevino, Hartman, & Brown, 2000, p. 128). Honesty and integrity are the main characteristics of the moral person, while the moral manager has the ability to pass a strong message of ethics to followers and influence them positively. The moral person stands out for his or her behavior and the ability to make the right decisions, while the moral manager stands out by "role modeling through visible actions, rewards, and discipline, and communicating about ethics and values" (Trevino et al., 2000, p. 131).

**Authentic Leadership.** Some key characteristics of authentic leadership are "concern for others, ethical decision-making, integrity, and role modeling" (Brown & Trevino, 2006, p. 598). Being authentic means to be unique as "no one can be authentic by trying to imitate someone else" (George, Sims, McLean, & Mayer, 2007, p. 1). Followers can learn from authentic leaders, but to become such a leader, they need to be authentic and genuine in their own special ways (George, 2010).

Kernis (2003) described "four components of authentic leadership: awareness, unbiased processing, action, and relational orientation" (p. 13). For the awareness component, Kernis described the trust toward someone's motives, feelings, and desires, as well the awareness of someone's strengths and weaknesses and their roles in behavior. In the second component, unbiased processing, he stressed the involvement



of “not denying, destroying, exaggerating or ignoring private knowledge, internal experiences, and externally based evaluative information” (p. 14). Kernis found it important for an authentic leader to be able to look objectively at someone's positive and negative sides and attributes.

In the third component, action, Kernis (2003) discussed the leader's behavior and whether that behavior matches his or her values and views or is a false act, presented to please the surroundings or for the purpose of attaining rewards and avoiding punishments. The fourth component, relational orientation, relates to the leader's openness to close relationships and truthfulness in those relationships. Being authentic means to be “genuine and not fake in one's relationships” (p. 15), which is what makes authentic leaders stand out.

**Path-Goal theory.** This theory studies the behaviors that motivate subordinates to accomplish desired goals (Nevarez, Penrose, & Padron, 2013). This theory is built around four different approaches chosen by leaders: directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented (Fulk & Wendler, 1982). Through a directive style, the leader explains the rules and procedures, and strict deadlines and close supervision continue. The style is often used with inexperienced or unmotivated employees.

On the contrary, the supportive style is more friendly and empathetic, where the leader values the employees and makes an effort to create a sense of belongingness for them (Nevarez et al., 2013). In the participative style, leaders encourage followers to be involved in every aspect, especially in the decision-making process. These leaders want to hear their followers' ideas, opinions, and perspectives, which is also a way to motivate skilled employees. The achievement-oriented style is used when employees

are expected to reach high standards. Leaders with this style of leadership like to instill a high degree confidence in employees and push them to their maximum potential.

### **Motivation Theories**

Motivation and success go hand in hand. The desire to succeed is almost always driven by some sort of motivation, whether for some it has a monetary value or for others it is the need for achievement. Motivation is not believed to be a stable state; rather it carries a situated, contextual, and domain-specific form (Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 1990). Buttner and Moore (1997) gave the example of women entrepreneurs, pointing out that women are often motivated by the urge for challenge and self-determination, as well to show that they are able to create a balance between work and family. The motivation to thrive for a prosperous life and bigger opportunities makes challenges seem less overbearing (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 1995).

Motivation may come in different shapes and forms, and it might vary from culture to culture. Lockwood, Marshall, and Sadler (2005) conducted two studies where they examined the cross-cultural differences of positive and negative role models. The study on two cultural groups—Asian Canadians and European Canadians—showed that individuals with cultures that assign much importance to independence tend to be motivated by positive examples and examples of success and achievement, while cultures with a strong emphasis on interdependence will tend to use examples of failure as motivators. As the study illustrated, motivation may carry different forms from one culture to another, from one individual to another, and from one gender to another. This transmission may greatly depend on the needs of the group or individual. There are several theories that explain motivation in detail.

**Maslow's hierarchy of needs.** Abraham Maslow's theory consists of five very basic needs every human has. His theory proposed that a person won't feel the necessity of the second need unless the first one is satisfied, which means that the second need emerges after the first one is satisfied (Maslow, 1943). The order of the five basic needs is: "physiological needs; safety needs; the needs for love, affection, and belongingness; the need for esteem; and self-actualization needs" (p. 373). Physiological needs are those necessary for survival, such as air, food, water, and constant body temperature. These needs always come first, and only with the satisfaction of these needs does the need for security arise. Once an individual has satisfied the need for safety, the need for love, affection, and belongingness can emerge, involving both giving and receiving love and affection. After the first three needs are satisfied, the need for esteem may emerge, as humans are constantly in search approval and respect from others. The need for self-actualization is the level where a person has satisfied the other four needs and is now looking to do what he or she was born to do.

**ERG theory.** ERG theory has commonalities with Maslow's theory in some sense as it comprises of similar elements. Alderfer (1969) readdressed Maslow's theory by aligning "three groups of core needs: existence, relatedness, and growth" (p. 143), from which the abbreviation *ERG* is derived. Alderfer (1969) further explained that the existence needs are categorized under the needs of survival, which Maslow categorized under physiological and safety needs. Furthermore, the relatedness needs in ERG theory are related to the interpersonal relationships and a person's desire to build and

maintain those relationships. Finally, the growth needs involve the need for personal development, self-fulfillment, and self-actualization.

**Herzberg's two-factor theory.** This theory was introduced in 1959 and consists of two main factors: hygiene factors and motivators (DeShields, Kara, & Kaynak, 2005). The hygiene factors are the dissatisfiers and cause dissatisfaction when a shortage occurs— extrinsic factors that may affect overall satisfaction if they are not fulfilled. The motivators, on the other hand, are the intrinsic factors present that motivate but the absence of which do not necessarily cause dissatisfaction.

According to this theory, “the satisfiers are directly related to the performance of the work itself” and the reward is directly driven by the performance, while “the dissatisfiers are directly related the environment such as working conditions, interpersonal relations, salary, lack of recognition, etc.” (House & Wigdor, 1967, p. 370). According to Dartey-Baah and Amoako (2011), “hygiene factors are the maintenance factors and comprise of the psychological, safety, and love needs in Maslow’s hierarchy of needs” (p. 2). These environmental factors affect the employee, influencing the condition surrounding the employee’s job. Furthermore, motivators include goal achievement, recognition, and advancement—everything that is related to personal growth and may motivate employees (Dartey-Baah & Amoako, 2001).

**McClelland’s theory of needs.** Based on this theory, “people are motivated by three main motivators: achievement, affiliation, and power” (Royle & Hall, 2012, p. 25). The achievement need is about the individual’s set of standards, goals, and the desire to achieve high goals. These individuals seek situations where they can take control and responsibility and are very persistent in solving a problem, as they know that the

outcomes will most likely benefit them over time. Brunstein and Maier (2005) explored two dimensions of achievements needs, which are implicit and explicit motives. Implicit motives have an energizing effect and are effective for task performance. Explicit motives are behaviors that are deliberately chosen for difficult tasks. An achievement-oriented individual is an effective leader.

The next motivator is the need for affiliation. These individuals seek friendships and relationships, are fond of team activities, tend to be cooperative, and interdependent (Royle & Hall, 2012). The third motivator is the need for power. According to Royle and Hall (2012), this motive derives from the individual's need to seem influential and in power. These individuals seek to control of actions of others, and when choosing methods, they ensure the method will influence others. These individuals may often meet resistance from others, as their need for power and control may seem overbearing.

**Cognitive evaluation theory.** This theory suggests that the presence of “external rewards can change the locus of causality from internal to external, and as a result” (Ryan, 1982, p. 451), the intrinsic motivation is decreased. According to this theory, motivation decreases when rewards are expected, and it may have the opposite effect when rewards are unexpected (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Intrinsic motivation refers to things that boost interest and enjoyment as well as derive learning and creativity (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Extrinsic motivation refers to things that may lead to a separable outcome. Extrinsic motivators become effective when an activity has been completed, and it has been done in order to draw a separate outcome.

**Social learning theory.** This theory explains that behavior is learned with experience and direct interaction or may be learned through observing others (Bandura & Walters, 1977). According to this theory, the direct experience is governed by rewards and punishments that may have consequences. According to Rosenstock, Strecher, and Becker (1988), in social learning theory, “behavior is determined by expectancies and incentives” (p. 176). Expectancies may be in three forms: “expectancies about environmental cues, expectancies about the consequences of one’s own actions, and expectancies about one’s own competence to perform the behavior” (p. 176). Incentives are the values of a specific outcome, which may be in form of status, physical appearance, approval from others, and so forth.

### **Entrepreneurial Theories**

Gartner, Bird, and Starr (1992) wrote about two types of organizations: emerging organizations and existing organizations. They referred to “entrepreneurship as the process of emergence” and used the “emergence metaphor to explore how the organizational behavior area might be connected to entrepreneurship” (p. 13).

Entrepreneurs have different behaviors and outlooks than managers do. The entrepreneur looks at the organization from the viewpoint of creating the new, while the manager looks at it from the point of operating and managing the existing.

Attention and intention are two important elements for an entrepreneurial mind, even though entrepreneurial ideas, new products, and services are what help the organization emerge and grow (Bird, 1988). *Intention* refers to that which directs the entrepreneur’s *attention* toward the specific idea or goal to achieve something.

Intentions are what guide the entrepreneur to set goals, to communicate, to commit, and

so forth. Entrepreneurial intentions are aimed at creating the new, whether they are values or ventures.

Alvarez and Barney (2007) wrote about entrepreneurs as individuals who have the sense to recognize and explore opportunities, knowing when and how such opportunities may turn into economic profit. Entrepreneurs compare opportunities to a mountain that is waiting to be discovered and the top reached. To explain these theories, Alvarez and Barney (2007) use these two metaphors: mountain climbing and mountain building, where the *discovery* in entrepreneurship is compared to mountain climbing and the *creation* metaphor relates to mountain building approach.

**The discovery theory.** Alvarez and Barney (2007) also debated whether the opportunity is part of the discovery or creation approach. They concluded that in the discovery theory, opportunities exist independent of entrepreneurs, and they applied a realist philosophy. The focus of this theory is the “existence, discovery, and exploitation of opportunities and the influence of individuals and opportunities” (Alvarez, 2005, p. 109). According to this theory, the nature of these entrepreneurs differs from non-entrepreneurs—the difference is obvious. These entrepreneurs have the tendency to take risks in their decision-making processes (Alvarez & Barney, 2007).

Alvarez (2005) discussed the discovery approach in terms of three theoretical assumptions in entrepreneurship. The first assumption is that objective opportunities exist whether or not they are recognized by entrepreneurs; the opportunities derive from the attributes of the specific industry and market. The second assumption Alvarez presented is that entrepreneurship requires unique individuals who stand out because of their alertness for existing opportunities. He described the entrepreneurial alertness

as the ability to scan the environment, conduct market inspections, and hunt for new ideas. The last assumption Alvarez (2005) presented is that entrepreneurs are risk bearers. Objective opportunities require risk, which entrepreneurs are willing to take even though the results and consequences may be costly.

**Creation theory.** The creation theory explains that entrepreneurs are the creators of opportunities, and it applies evolutionary realist philosophy (Alvarez & Barney, 2007). Alvarez (2005) discussed three assumptions around creation theory. The first assumption is that opportunities are subjective and are created as a result of a series of decisions. It is also assumed people do not spot opportunities—they simply create them. This theory recognizes entrepreneurs as the creators of opportunity and as individuals who coordinate resources. The last assumption is that entrepreneurs bear uncertainty, especially when it comes to decision-making. Uncertainty especially rises when the possible outcome of a decision cannot be predicted.

### **Theories of Decision Making**

Leadership and decision-making are tightly connected. As Miramontes (2008) expressed, the leadership style of a leader dictates the decision-making style he or she uses. Like many other things in leadership, effective decision-making is mastered with experience. Experts develop much of their knowledge through trial-and-error experiences, which are later implemented in the decision-making process of entrepreneurs (Dew, Read, Sarasvathy, & Wiltbank, 2009). Experience is the key point that helps to differentiate the experts from the novices. Novices eventually become experts. Endres and Woods (2006) mentioned three types of contemporary decision-



making theories: “neoclassical, Austrian, and behavioral” (p. 189). These theories draw out “the key explicit and implicit assumptions about entrepreneurial behavior” (p. 190).

**Neoclassical.** The principles of the neoclassical theory derive from the notion of the entrepreneur as a representative of a new production and are not connected with the standard three, which are land, labor, and capital (Endres & Woods, 2006). While the traditional format concentrates on the relationship between inputs and outputs, this approach uses the behavioral phenomenon as its main force. Endres and Woods (2006) also pointed out that the neoclassical approach describes entrepreneurs as risk bearers and lists characteristics that are typical of them, such as their equal access to risky ideas and the full profit share of risk taking, being the firm’s principal decision makers, almost always maximizing profits and minimizing cost, and finding opportunities that are evenly distributed in the market.

**Austrian.** This approach suggests that entrepreneurs seek opportunities that over time will turn into a profit in a gainful exchange. Going forward, the Austrian approach suggests that “perennial optimality in competitive markets” (Endres & Woods, 2006, p. 192) is not taken into consideration when approaching the opportunity. The Austrian approach explains that even though opportunities may be created by existing market circumstances, not all entrepreneurs may recognize the existing opportunities, which may happen due to dispersion in markets. Opportunities might not be discovered or known before the entrepreneurs start their discovery process. The Austrian entrepreneur “is crafted as part of a vision of the continuity of the market process” (p. 194).

**Behavioral.** The behavioral theory suggests other alternatives for the profit opportunity conceptualization (Endres & Woods 2006). These opportunities tend to appear complex, uncertain, and challenging to entrepreneurs. Opportunities are also “never available in an exhausted set and are usually exploited in unique environments or highly variable environments that render learning difficult” (Endres & Woods, 2006, p. 195).

Saaty (1990) researched three behaviorist theories that influence decision-making processes, which are (a) instinct-drive theory, (b) reason-impulse theory, and (c) dynamic field theory. According to the instinct-drive theory, humans follow certain unlearned patterns of behavior that are driven by instinct. Reason-impulse theory suggests that decisions are derived from logical reasoning, as leaders use reason to attain goals efficiently. Reason helps to get what is available within the limits of available resources. The dynamic field theory focuses on the environmental factors that might affect human behavior (Busemeyer & Townsend, 1993). Stresses and tensions may become the dynamic field to which the decision maker responds with action.

**Traditional theories.** Brousseau, Driver, Hourihan, and Larsson (2006) mentioned two types of decision makers: maximizers and single-focus decision makers. Maximizers always look for the very best answers and though they are usually very well informed, it may cost them time efficiency. Single-focus decision makers focus on action one at a time, and their energy is focused on outcomes they believe they should get. Brousseau et al. (2006) used these two dimensions to create “a matrix of four styles of decision-making: decisive, flexible, hierarchic, and integrative” (p. 2). Decisive decision makers focus on “action, speed, efficiency, and consistency” (p. 2). They value time,

and in people, they look for honesty, clarity, loyalty, and brevity. Flexible decision makers emphasize the importance of speed and adaptability and are satisfied as long as they have enough data to choose or change the course of direction when necessary. Hierarchical decision makers avoid judgment but prefer to thoroughly analyze information; they expect others to do the same. Finally, integrative decision makers don't always look for a single best solution. They analyze most things broadly and on the surface, and often have situations where multiple things overlap, which may create possible conflict.

### **Summary of the Literature Review**

This chapter presented the literature review around the topic of foreign-born leaders. It covered the available literature on obstacles immigrants face on their way to and in the United States. It further provided a brief overview of citizenship and naturalization policies and procedures in the United States, and presented additional and U.S.-specific challenges that newcomers encounter. Further, the assimilation and acculturation processes were discussed in great detail, highlighting the common and uncommon challenges faced by immigrants and their children. This chapter also analyzed unique as well as general immigration-related difficulties and ways to overcome them in conjunction with contemporary and traditional leadership and motivation theories. Finally, this chapter touched on entrepreneurial theories and the unique ways entrepreneurship can overcome the challenges foreign-born Americans often face.

The focus of this chapter was the immigration pattern of the Armenian Americans. A historical background of this population is important for studying and

understanding the reasons and the tragic events that forced Armenians to leave everything behind and migrate to a new country where everything would start from the very beginning. The literature showed that it was not by choice that Armenians chose to migrate; rather, they were forced out of their homeland. The chapter gave a brief background on the socioeconomic status of Armenian Americans, language use, education, acculturation process, success stories, and leadership presence.

Through the literature review, it became apparent that the current U.S. immigration policies need improvement and greater leadership to implement the changes that can benefit the nation and ease some of the challenges immigrants face under the current immigration doctrine. Policymakers can observe and study the immigration policies of other countries with large immigrant populations such as Australia and Canada, as the immigrants in those countries are reported to have higher incomes, higher levels of education, and have better fluency in English (Antecol et al., 2003). With the presence of strong leadership, policymakers may be able to design a set of laws to solve the issues related to legal and illegal immigration.

## **Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to examine the success strategies employed by first-generation foreign-born leaders, to explore the challenges they faced through their path to success and to determine how they measure success. This chapter discusses the methodology of the qualitative research design, concentrating on a phenomenological approach. This methodology uncovers the nature of the study and the approach taken for data collection that best fits this study. The chapter also discusses the research design, identifying the population and the sample chosen, presenting the participants, their conditions, qualifications, and experiences. In this phenomenological study, the data collection was completed through the interview process with the participants, which is further discussed in the chapter's interview protocol section. This chapter focuses on important instruments such as validity and reliability, as well as human subject consideration. Finally, the chapter gives an overview of the data analysis, further discussing the coding/bracketing process.

### **Re-Statement of Research Questions**

This study focuses on the following research questions (RQ).

- RQ 1: What exemplary practices and strategies are employed by successful first-generation, foreign-born leaders?
- RQ 2: What challenges are faced by first-generation, foreign-born leaders in achieving success?
- RQ 3: How do first-generation, foreign-born leaders measure their success?

- RQ 4: What recommendations would first-generation, foreign-born leaders give to future leaders looking to come to the United States?

### **Nature of the Study**

Marshall and Rossman (2011) described qualitative research as the broader method of the phenomena of social studies. They described the various types of qualitative study to be a naturalistic, interpretive, critical approach that might require multiple forms of method analysis. The difference between qualitative and quantitative research is that a quantitative approach derives its results from statistical procedures and is quantified, while the qualitative approach is characterized by illumination and understanding of similar situations (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Quantitative research is more about the “determination, prediction, and generalization of findings” (Hoepfl, 1997, p. 1).

Tracy (2010) identified “eight criteria of quality in a qualitative research: worthy topic, rich rigor, sincerity, credibility, resonance, significant contribution, ethics, and meaningful coherence” (p. 840). Qualitative research largely involves a thorough discussion of the sample and the data collection, as well the recording of the procedures (Creswell, 2013b). Creswell further stated that qualitative research relies on data analysis and methods used to present, interpret, and validate the data, further indicating the potential outcomes of the study. However, several challenges are also associated with qualitative research. Marshall and Rossman (2011) identified these three challenges:

- Developing a thorough, concise, elegant, and generative conceptual framework that would best fit the study.

- Planning a systematic, manageable, and flexible design.
- Using the above two challenges to build a strong, convincing proposal that would deem the study worthy of approval (p. 6).

Qualitative research is criticized for the lack of scientific rigor (Mays & Pope, 1995). In qualitative research, an extensive amount of data may be collected but may only apply to limited situations. Mays and Pope (1995) further explained that qualitative research is often criticized for being a set of anecdotes and personal impressions, may be subject to bias and lacks generalizability.

Qualitative research methodology has been chosen for this study, as its interpretive and theoretical frameworks better fit this research. This form of research addresses the meaning individuals give to social and human problems (Creswell, 2013b). Several needs are associated with the creation of the traditional qualitative research:

- the need for the specific type of research
- the discipline's relevance to the theory and data
- the relevance of the theory to social action
- the unpredictability and complexity of human behavior
- the idea that humans take action when problems occur
- the belief that human behavior is based on meanings
- the belief that meaning is identified with interaction
- the sensitivity to the process and procedures
- an awareness of the relationships among structure, process, and consequences (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Furthermore, a specific concept of philosophy strengthens this study—the theory of social constructivism. This theory is built around the realities constructed by various cultural groups and individuals (Atwater, 1996). The theory suggests that humans are dependent on their social environment and its shared systems, such as culture (Risse, 2004). Three assumptions of social constructivism are related to reality, knowledge, and learning (Kim, 2001):

- *Reality*—According to the social constructivists, reality is created based on the human activity and it does not exist unless the society invents it.
- *Knowledge*—Knowledge is the socially and culturally created human product that is created by individuals' interactions with their environments.
- *Learning*—Learning occurs when people engage in social activities.

Creswell (2013a) defined social constructivism in relation to qualitative studies. He described social constructivists as individuals who develop meanings of things through experiencing them. Those meanings may encourage the scholar to choose more complex views rather than categorizing those meanings into generalized categories. Furthermore, Creswell (2013a) explained that the research relies on participant's view and feedback on the situation, subject to the study.

## **Methodology**

To further conduct this study, the phenomenological design of a qualitative study has been chosen due to its experience-based nature. According to Creswell (2013a), the phenomenological study focuses on the experiences lived by the subjects of the study and describes what they have in common, gained through the experiences. One



important requirement for a phenomenological study is the interest the researcher has in the stories of the participants of the study (Seidman, 1991). The phenomenological method involves several long and detailed interviews with participants who have commonalities experiencing the certain phenomenon that is being studied (Marshall & Rossman, 2011).

Creswell (2013a) also highlighted the weaknesses of the phenomenological study. One challenge is that this type of study may be too structured for some scholars. Finding a certain number of individuals who have experienced common phenomenon may be challenging. The phenomenological study is not a study of a certain number of individuals and their life stories; it is rather the study synthesizing their commonalities, using an approach to determine whether all participants have experienced the same type of phenomenon (Saldaña, 2011). The strength of the phenomenological study lies in how it can yield information that is complex yet easy to understand without a need for in-depth analysis (Goulding, 2005). Phenomenology is the appropriate method for this type of research as it will contribute to the understanding of complex issues through examining the common experiences of the subjects and develop findings based on the results.

**A structured process of phenomenology.** As Dowling and Cooney (2012) stated, “Phenomenological research approaches are varied and often difficult to apply appropriately” (p. 21). For that reason, understanding the study of phenomenology well before going forward with the study is important. Creswell (2013a) reflecting back on the work of Moustakas (1994) and Manen (1990), described the phenomenological method

as a structured process that some may see as a challenge. He observed the following steps:

- The phenomenon is emphasized as “a single concept or idea” (Creswell, 2013a, p. 78). Such example would be the success strategies employed by a foreign-born leader in the United States.
- The process of examining the phenomenon for groups of people who share common experiences, such as all Armenian immigrants sharing similar experiences throughout the process of assimilation.
- Recognizing the “broader philosophical assumptions of phenomenology” (Creswell, 2013a, p. 83). This is the discussion of the subjective and objective experiences of the subjects who are part of the study.
- Emphasis on the importance of bracketing as the study is conducted. This step is especially important as the researcher shared similar experiences with the participants, herself being a foreign-born first-generation immigrant.
- The data collection process which is done through semi-structured interviews that include open-ended questions.
- In the data analysis process a cluster of meanings is formed from themes and significant statements that are also used to describe the experiences of participants.
- The description of the essence related to the phenomenon is formed, where the what and how of the shared phenomenon is described (Creswell, 2013a).

**Appropriateness of phenomenology methodology.** The central focus of the study was the foreign-born leaders, their experiences, the common challenges and

barriers they face, and the commonalities within their success strategies. For this type of study, the phenomenological method was the best approach as it synthesizes the common experiences of the participants. This methodology gathers answers that appropriately address the research questions. Transcendental phenomenology approach is used to identify the common experiences of foreign-born leaders. This approach was the best fit for the study as it helps to perceive the “phenomena just as we see them and as they appear to us in consciousness” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 49).

### **Research Design**

The analysis unit, the single participant in this study, is a foreign-born leader of Armenian descent who was born either in Armenia or in any other country of the Armenian diaspora. The subject immigrated to the United States and was faced with the challenges of acculturation and assimilation. The population of this study consisted of fifteen participants who met the required criteria to be part of the study.

**Sample size.** Qualitative studies tend to have a much smaller sample size than quantitative studies (Dworkin, 2012). The sample size is chosen at the beginning of the study; however, it is possible to change it as the research moves closer to the data collection process (Benner, 1994). The sample size of a qualitative study varies from five to fifty participants (Dworkin, 2012). When deciding the sample size of a qualitative study, the concept of saturation must be taken into account (Mason, 2010). Dworkin (2012) defined saturation as the point at which new and relevant data is received. The concept of saturation is also the point where the new data no longer gives any new theoretical acumen (Chamraz, 2006). Accordingly, sample size of 15 participants was

chosen for this study. The participants were chosen based on the following characteristics:

- Be a male or female between the ages 30 and 70.
- Be of Armenian descent, both parents being Armenian.
- Be born in Armenia or any other country with large Armenian Diaspora.
- Be a self-made leader, currently holding a leadership position at an organization.
- Have completed at a minimum a bachelor degree.
- Reside in the State of California, Los Angeles County.

**Purposive sampling.** In this study, the purposive sampling method was employed. This form of sampling “is designed to enhance understandings of selected individuals or groups’ experience(s) or for developing theories and concepts” (Devers & Frankel, 2000, p. 264). Purposive sampling is mostly used for qualitative studies and is based on specific purposes for which the research questions are intended (Teddlie & Yu, 2007). Purposive sampling has four main characteristics: “sampling to achieve representativeness or comparability, sampling special or unique cases, sequential sampling, and sampling using multiple purposive techniques” (Teddlie & Yu, 2007, p. 78). This form of sampling was used to achieve representativeness and comparability in this phenomenological study.

**Participant selection.** Participants were selected from a master list of 100 potential participants. First, criteria of inclusion/exclusion and maximum variation were applied to extract a list of participants that meet all requirements of the study. The recruitment process started with the first 30 subjects on the list. The recruitment process

continued with the next 30 potential subjects, until at least 18 volunteers willing to participate in the study were identified. In the event that someone might withdraw from the study, three additional volunteers were identified as possible replacements. The study was conducted with the 15 final subjects chosen.

**Sampling frame to create the master list.** To obtain subjects' contact information, a letter (Appendix B) was sent to the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA), based in Washington, DC, which has a large membership, among whom many are foreign-born successful Armenians who hold leadership positions in various organizations. ANCA was given information on the nature of the study, on its purpose, and any questions asked by ANCA were answered. The master list obtained from ANCA included the members' names, phone numbers, and email addresses. Another list was obtained from LinkedIn online platform, following the same process. Next the following progression was made:

- The master lists obtained from ANCA and LinkedIn were combined, creating a final master list of 100 potential subjects.
- The master list was transferred into an Excel spreadsheet.
- The spreadsheet was saved on a computer that was password protected.
- A password protection was also created for the excel spreadsheet to ensure the security.
- The criterion of inclusion and exclusion were applied.
- Criteria of maximum variation were applied if the sample size was more than 15 participants.

- Three additional subjects were chosen in case of one or more participants withdrawing from the study.

**Criteria for inclusion.** The criteria for inclusion in the study required the participant to hold a leadership position in an industry or organization in which he or she has experienced success. Criteria for inclusion in this study were (a) to be a foreign-born leader of Armenian descent whose mother and father were Armenian, (b) to have moved to the United States by such an age that the participant could recall and describe the challenges associated with the language barriers, assimilation, and acculturation, (c) be a self-made leader, which means their resources were not inherited, and (d) hold at a minimum a bachelor's degree.

**Criteria for exclusion.** The criteria for exclusion was the participant could not be born in the United States but was born in Armenia or any other country with a large number of Armenian population. The subject would also be excluded from the study if he or she did not agree to sign the consent. The same exclusion applies if the subject did not provide information whether he or she met all the criteria of inclusion.

**Maximum variation.** Maximum variation in this study included the following: (a) the study was conducted with individuals from Los Angeles County, (b) the study was open to Armenian immigrants from any country with large number of Armenian population, and (c) preference was given to individuals currently in leadership position.

### **Human Subject Consideration**

Any type of research should be done with principles to consider the human subject with respect and justice (Capron, 1989). The subject must be informed about the study and be able to freely make a decision whether to participate or to withdraw

(Capron, 1989). The details are included in the consent form. The informed consent, which is referred to as the negotiation of trust, must be given to create a balance with the information given, without over-informing or under-informing the subject (Kvale, 1996). Keeping the subjects' information confidential and anonymous is a moral obligation; this obligation may even be enforced by the law (Orb, Eisenhauer, & Wynaden, 2001).

As Capron (1989) stated, three principles guide the conducting of a study: respect for the subjects, beneficence, and justice. This research was guided by all three principles and the human subject consideration was given a great importance. An application was filed to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for review and approval prior to recruiting participants. Additional compliance with all the IRB requirements was met as presented by the Pepperdine University Graduate School of Education and Psychology. All subjects (a) were informed that participation was voluntary and the subject may withdraw at any time, (b) received an explanation of the purpose of the study and all the steps and procedures of the study, (c) were assured that all names and personal information of the subjects would be kept confidential, (d) provided with information regarding any risk associated with the study, and (e) provided with information on the possible expected benefits (Creswell, 2013a). The consent form is presented in Appendix D.

### **Data Collection**

Once the final master list was obtained, the data collection process started. First, a recruitment script (see Appendix D) was written to ensure the information was consistent for all subjects. The recruitment script was e-mailed to all potential subjects,

from which 15 were to be selected. A period of two weeks was given to receive replies from the subjects. From the list of subjects who replied back with an agreement to participate in the study, 15 subjects were chosen for participation, and three more in the case someone not proceeding with the study.

The consent form (see Appendix D) was also e-mailed to all 15 participants. The subjects were asked to sign the consent form and return it by e-mail. The subjects were asked to provide best contact information and the preferred city where they would like to meet for the interview. All information received from the subjects were stored on a computer in a password-protected folder. The final list, which included the subjects' contact information and preferred interview locations, were sorted and grouped by cities closest to each other, forming three groups in different part of Los Angeles County. One week was designated for each group's interviews to be conducted. The subjects were asked to pick their top three days and time slots when they would be available to meet for 45–60-minute interview. After the interview day, time, and place was decided and agreed on, appointment reminders were sent to each subject via e-mail, which was also followed up three days prior to each interview day. In the same e-mail, the subjects were notified that the conversation would be recorded on an MP3 portable recording device. The reason for recording the conversation was to collect the data more accurately (Creswell, 2013a).

### **Interview Techniques**

A semi-structured interview process was used to collect the data from the subjects of the study. Semi-structured interviews are designed to explore the experiences of the subjects as they speak about issues highlighted in the research



questions (Tong, Sainsbury, & Craig, 2007). These type of interviews “include open-ended questions that are addressed in one-to-one interviews” (p. 150). Rabionet (2011) described six stages in the semi-structural interview process: “selecting the kind of interview, establishing the ethical guidelines, crafting the interview protocol, conducting and recording the interview, analyzing and summarizing the interview, and reporting the findings” (p. 563).

While semi-structured interviews are a better fit for this type of study, they still have strengths and weaknesses. The strengths of semi-structured interviews lay in the ability to accommodate a variety of research goals and provide tools and resources to fully draw the subjects into the topic (Galletta, 2013). Another strength is that the interviewer may probe deeper into the given situation if it seems to be necessary; however, inexperienced interviewers may find it difficult to ask the right questions, which is a weakness of this type of interview (Kajornboon, 2005).

Face-to-face interview techniques are the most common techniques, followed by the telephone interview approach. The face-to-face technique is based on synchronous communication between the interviewer and the participant (Opdenakker, 2006). The strength of this technique is that it gives an opportunity to pick up on “cues such as voice, intonation, body language” (p. 1). These cues are hard to notice during phone interviews and especially in the case of e-mail communication.

During face-to-face interviews, the interviewer often needs to formulate new questions due to the interactive communication in a semi-structured interview process (Opdenakker, 2006). As a result, new information may be released and it may become difficult for the interviewer to remember all of it, which is why it is important for the

interviewer to tape the conversation and make notes of it. Taking notes during the conversation is helpful when checking if all questions have been addressed and answered. Note taking is also helpful in the case of a malfunctioning of the audio recorder.

Interviews via telephone or e-mail communication are helpful in situations of “wide geographical access, hard-to-reach populations, closed site access, sensitive accounts, and access to dangerous or politically sensitive sites” (Opdenakker, 2006, p. 1). The disadvantage of these types of interviews is the asynchronous communication in which the interviewer does not have a clear view of the situation. Another disadvantage of telephone interviews is the difficulty or inability to record the conversation.

### **Interview Protocol**

For the interview protocol development, a series of questions were formed based on literature review and personal knowledge. A three-step process (prima facie, peer review, and expert review) was used to establish validity. Pilot interviews were also used to establish reliability. The original interview questions (IQ) were based on the research questions of this phenomenological study.

- IQ 1: What are some of the exemplary practices you used to achieve success?
- IQ 2: What were the strategies you used and how did you implement them?
- IQ 3: How did those strategies impact your success?
- IQ 4: What role did culture play in your success?
- IQ 5: What are some of the challenges you faced as a first-generation, foreign-born leader?

- IQ 6: How did those challenges influence you?
- IQ 7: What helped you cope with the difficulties?
- IQ 8: What were some motivational instruments you used?
- IQ 9: What are some experiences that helped you develop your leadership style?
- IQ 10: How do you measure success?
- IQ 11: Are there any weaknesses you are still working on? If so, what are they?
- IQ 12: What recommendations would you give to future generations of foreign-born leaders who come to this country?
- IQ 13: What would you do to be effective in a new environment and new culture?

The information gained in the process of the literature review was a key contributor to the formation of the interview questions. The literature review related to the success strategies of foreign-born leaders was used to design interview questions 1–4. Similarly, the section on the barriers foreign-born leaders encounter gave enough information to design interview questions 5–7. Interview questions 8–13 were influenced by the literature available on the theories of motivation, leadership, decision-making, and entrepreneurship.

**Reliability and validity of the study.** Reliability is the extent to which consistent results and accuracy in the representation of the population being studied are found (Bashir, Afzal, & Azeem, 2008). The research instrument is reliable as long as the results of the study can be replicated under a similar methodology. Reliability is the

concept of testing. In qualitative studies, the most important test is the quality of the research (Golafshani, 2003). To ensure reliability in a qualitative research, detailed records of interviews, observations, and the process of analysis must be maintained (Mays & Pope, 1995).

While reliability is about the stability of the findings, validity focuses on the truthfulness of the information discovered (Altheide & Johnson, 1994). Some common validity issues encountered are “the tension between qualitative and quantitative research, tension between rigor and creativity, and tension between epistemological purism and pluralism” (Whittemore, Chase, & Mandle, 2001, pp. 523–524). Whittemore et al. (2001) further expanded on the contemporary synthesis of validity—“the distinction between criteria and techniques” (p. 528). Criteria refer to the standards upheld as ideal in the specific form of qualitative research, while techniques are used to reduce the validity threats that are identified in the qualitative research.

Cho and Trent (2006) described “two approaches to validity in qualitative research: transactional validity and transformational validity” (p. 321). Transactional validity is the product of the interaction between the researcher, the collected data, and whatever is being researched. Transactional validity predicts “research can be more credible as long as certain techniques, methods and strategies are employed” (p. 322). Transformational validity is the process that leads to social change, which itself is enforced by the researcher. This form of validity “involves a deeper and self-reflective, empathetic understanding of the researcher while working with the researched” (p. 322).

***Prima facie validity.*** The term *prima facie* means “initial impression” or “upon an initial observation” (Herlitz, 1994, p. 393). While this term is mostly used in common law,

it has been applied to academia as well. It generally refers to a piece of evidence believed to be true at first glance. Face validity allows systematic and informal ways to be used in the research process (Lather, 1986). Face validity is a way to “assess validity through participant reaction to the results of the research” (p. 74). Face validity is concerned with whether the study is reasonable and appropriate (Golafshani, 2003). Relying on the information gained from the literature review and using this principle of validity, the interview questions were carefully drafted to fit the four research questions tightly. To demonstrate the prima facie validity, Table 6 was formed.

Table 6

*Research Questions and Corresponding Interview Questions*

<b>Research Questions</b>	<b>Corresponding Interview Questions</b>
RQ 1: What exemplary practices and strategies are employed by successful first-generation, foreign-born leaders?	IQ 1: What are some strategies you used to achieve success? IQ 2: How did those strategies impact your success? IQ 3: What role did culture play in your success?
RQ 2: What challenges are faced by first-generation, foreign-born leaders in achieving success?	IQ 4: What are some of the challenges you faced as a first-generation, foreign-born leader? IQ 5: How did those challenges influence you? IQ 6: What helped you cope with the difficulties? IQ 7: What were some motivational techniques you used? IQ 8: What are some experiences that helped you develop your leadership style?
RQ 3: How do first-generation, foreign-born leaders measure their success?	IQ 9: How do you measure success? IQ 10: Are you still working on any challenges? If so, what are they?
RQ 4: What recommendations would first-generation, foreign-born leaders give to future leaders looking to come to the United States?	IQ 11: What recommendations would you give to future generations of foreign-born leaders that come to this country? IQ 12: Knowing what you know now, what would you have done differently to be more effective in a new culture and environment?

**Peer review validity.** To ensure the validity of the study, a peer review team was formed to provide feedback after a thorough review of the research questions and interview questions. The two scholars who reviewed this study were chosen from the Doctoral Program of Education in Organizational leadership at Pepperdine University. The peer reviewers, who have completed the coursework in the Doctoral program, were knowledgeable and well informed about the qualitative research approach, the phenomenological research methodology, and the data collection process.

A day and time was set with each cohort member for the peer review process. Each reviewer was given a copy of the research question with the corresponding interview questions. A pilot interview was conducted with each peer, during which the interview protocol, as well the clarity of wording and understandability of the interview questions were discussed. For each interview question the reviewers had three feedback options. The options were the following: (a) keep as stated, (b) delete, or (c) modify as suggested. For the third option, the reviewers were asked to write alternative recommended wording for the specific interview question. Changes were made according to the feedback and suggestions received from the peer reviewers. As a result of the peer review, several changes were made. Question 2 of the initial interview question set was removed. Interview questions 8, 11, and 13 were modified.

- Original IQ 1. What are some of the exemplary practices you used to achieve success?
- Revised IQ 1. What are some strategies you used to achieve success?
- Original IQ 8. What are some motivational instruments you used?
- Revised IQ 7. What are some motivational techniques you used?

- Original IQ 11. Are there any weaknesses you are still working on? If so, what are they?
- Revised IQ 10. Are you still working on any challenges? If so, what are they?
- Original IQ 13. What would you do to be more effective in a new environment?
- Revised IQ 12. Knowing what you know now, what would you have done differently to be more effective in a new culture and environment?

**Expert review validity.** Finally, the dissertation committee served as the expert and final reviewers of the validity of the instrument. After the peer review was conducted, the final draft of the interview questions was given to the expert panel, which consisted of three dissertation committee members. The interview questions were reviewed with the dissertation committee, changes and modification were incorporated. The interview questions and corresponding research questions are presented.

Table 7

*Research Questions and Corresponding Interview Questions*

Research Questions	Corresponding Interview Questions
RQ 1: What exemplary practices and strategies are employed by successful first-generation, foreign-born leaders?	IQ 1: What values or cultural lessons from your childhood were helpful to your success? IQ 2: What are some personal characteristics, educational or training experiences that have been valuable to you? IQ 3: What are some strategies you use to achieve success? IQ 4: How do you motivate yourself and maintain that motivation?
RQ 2: What challenges are faced by first-generation, foreign-born leaders in achieving success?	IQ 5: What are some of the challenges you have faced as a first-generation foreign-born leader? IQ 6: Has your heritage ever been an impediment to you?
RQ 3: How do first-generation, foreign-born leaders measure their success?	IQ 7: How do you define success for yourself? IQ 8: How do you measure your success?

(continued)

Research Questions	Corresponding Interview Questions
RQ 4: What recommendations would first- generation, foreign-born leaders give to future leaders looking to come to the United States?	IQ 9: What recommendations would you give to future generations of foreign-born leaders that come to this country? IQ 10: Knowing what you know now, what would you have done differently to be more effective in a new culture and environment?

**Statement of Personal Bias**

A researcher’s personal experiences, beliefs, and values may be a reason why a specific topic is chosen, how a certain type of methodology is chosen, or how he or she interprets the findings (Mehra, 2002). Furthermore, Mehra (2002) stated that those biases may put the researcher “either in support of one side of the argument” or another (p. 7). One’s personal bias may be a limitation in the study, as his or her personal experiences may play a role in the way the questions are asked or the way responses are understood. The following personal biases are present in this study. The researcher:

- Is a foreign-born, first-generation immigrant of Armenian descent and has experienced the challenges of acculturation immigrants face in the United States.
- Holds bachelor’s and master’s degrees in business administration and holds a leadership role in a large organization, which has shaped her views on success strategies.
- Has worked with many foreign-born leaders throughout her career, which may also affect her views on foreign-born leaders and their success strategies.



## **Epoche**

In the scope of qualitative research, *epoche* refers to the process in which the researcher's past experiences are related to the study but need to be set aside during data collection in order to avoid personal bias (Bednall, 2006). Past experiences should not interfere with the units of meaning identified during the data collection (Bendall, 2006). However, the researcher cannot be completely unrelated to the study as he or she needs to understand it well in order to conduct it (Merriam, 2009). The balance between one's past experiences and the units of meaning results in reintegration, which later turns into interpretation (Bendall, 2006).

Epoche is the process of bracketing and separating the biases (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Van Manen, 2014). In the scope of this study, bracketing is done through the method of memoing. Memoing helps to reach important insights which may "include acknowledging and foregrounding one's preconceptions, and may free the researcher to engage more extensively with the raw data" (Tufford & Newman, 2012, p. 86). In order to bracket her own experiences, the researcher was interviewed by her colleague, during which her personal experiences were recorded and journaled. She reflected on her personal experiences with the process of assimilation as a foreign-born first-generation leader, and made memos to isolate her personal biases. For the same purpose, a journal was maintained for an ongoing record in the duration of the research.

## **Data Analysis**

In a qualitative research, the raw data is collected through the recording and transcribing of conversations (Mays & Pope, 1995). The raw data is a product of interactions with the population. For a qualitative study, "data analyses and data

collection are usually done concurrently so that investigators can generate understanding about the research questions” (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006, p. 317). As a result of this process, the researcher realizes at some point that no other new data is being gained, which is called the saturation or signaling of the data being complete. Strauss and Corbin (1990) referred to data analysis as the “interplay between the researcher and the data” (p. 13). The problem in qualitative research analysis is having a sheer volume of data and trying to summarize it in a more compact data set to be comprehensible for the reader (Mays & Pope, 1995).

**Representing, visualizing.** Visualization is the process of “visual representation, exploration, and analysis of qualitative data” (Knigge & Cope, 2006, p. 2026). Visualization involves “multiple rounds of data collection, display and analysis” (p. 2028). This process allows for the discovery of uncertainties in the data studied and filling in the gaps. Representation is used to compare different sources of data that may spur new questions.

**Reading, memoing.** Creswell (2013a) highlighted the importance of reading and writing notes on transcripts to be able to better explore the data. Memos are the notes about the data and its categories that help raise the data to a level where it feels comfortable to move forward to the next steps, which are data collection, coding, and analyses (Holton, 2007). Memos are usually brief and to the point. Holton (2007) also stated that sorting and writing memos often leads to making new memos, which at times may slow the pace of the research process.

**Describing, classifying, interpreting (coding).** After reading and memoing are complete, the next step is describing, classifying, and interpreting the data. According to

Creswell (2013a), this stage involves building a detailed description and developing themes, further clarifying the researcher's views or perspectives. The data is then interpreted by abstracting out beyond the codes. Interpreting begins with coding, themes are formed from the codes. Finally, the themes are organized into "larger units of abstraction to make sense of the data" (Creswell, 2013a, p. 187). According to O'Dwyer (2004), interpretation of the data is done in five stages. In the first two stages, the detailed review and big picture outline are drawn. In the third stage, a *thick* description is formulated, and in the fourth stage, a thick description is contextualized. Finally, in the fifth stage, the analytical lens is employed.

The last stage of the data analysis is the process of coding. Coding is the process of transferring the visual data from a large database into smaller categories of information (Creswell, 2013a). Hsieh and Shannon (2005) identified two strategies of coding that depend on the research questions. If the intention is to identify the particular phenomenon with all the details, then it is better to read and highlight the transcript later, coding the highlighted passages. The other strategy is to start the coding immediately. In both strategies, the data that cannot be coded is set aside to be given a new code or to be recorded as a subcategory of an existing code.

**Interrater reliability and validity.** Validity in qualitative research refers to "research that is plausible, credible, trustworthy, and therefore, defensible" (R. Johnson, 1997, p. 282). External validity is used to generalize findings related to people, settings, and times (Cook, Campbell, & Day, 1979). Merriam (1995) described external validity as "the extent to which the findings of a study can be applied to other situations" (p. 57). Interrater reliability is established in order to improve the external validity. Interrater

reliability is the mutual understanding and agreeability between the coder and the rater (Marques & McCall, 2005). It is a verification tool designed to address the consistency of the rating system. In other words, data is independently coded and the results are compared to reach an agreement.

For this study, a four-step process was used to establish the interrater reliability.

- Step 1. The first three interviews were coded, after which transcript and coding results were sent to the panel of co-raters to review the coding and suggest modifications.
- Step 2. The panel of co-raters consisted of doctoral students who are familiar with and are experienced in qualitative research and the coding process. Their feedback was received, and modifications were made accordingly. If a consensus was not met, the results of step two were sent to the committee for a final review and decision.
- Step 3. The results of step two were used to complete the coding of the 15 interviews.
- Step 4. The results of the coding for 15 interviews were also shared with the panel of co-raters. Where consensus was not met, the expert review was also conducted.

## **Summary**

This chapter presented the nature of the study and the methodological approach. The phenomenological method of qualitative study was chosen to conduct the study. Thirteen interview questions were formed corresponding to the four research questions. The semi-structured interview protocol was chosen in order to gather the data through

face-to-face interaction with the participants. The chapter described the research design covering human subject consideration, participant selection, and the data collection process. Validity and reliability concepts were described in detail and applied to the study. Finally, the data analysis was outlined and the four-step process to establish interrater reliability.

## **Chapter 4: Findings**

### **Introduction**

Chapter 4 introduces the findings of the study. It presents the data collection process, the population of the study, and the research questions. For each research question, the data collection process was completed through a series of interview questions. The chapter also introduces the data collection results and analyzes the results in light of each interview question. In the analysis, graphs are used to explain common themes across different interview questions and participants with various backgrounds.

### **Participants**

The participant selection was projected to be compiled from a master list obtained from ANCA, mentioned in Chapter 3, and a master list gathered via LinkedIn. However, ANCA did not provide a list. As a result, the participant selection was mostly completed via the LinkedIn master list. The snowball sampling method was used, as many of the participants were reached through referrals. The snowball sampling method is a technique that is widely used in qualitative research to target population through the networks of the existing population (Atkinson & Flint, 2001).

Fifteen participants were selected for this study. The participants had diverse professional backgrounds, as explained in Figure 1. The diverse background of participants resulted in a wide range of responses. The occupational backgrounds of the participants ranged from engineers to doctors, tech gurus to pharmacists, a music professor, holding a Ph.D. in musical education, and an athlete who had held the European and the Soviet Union Champion titles.

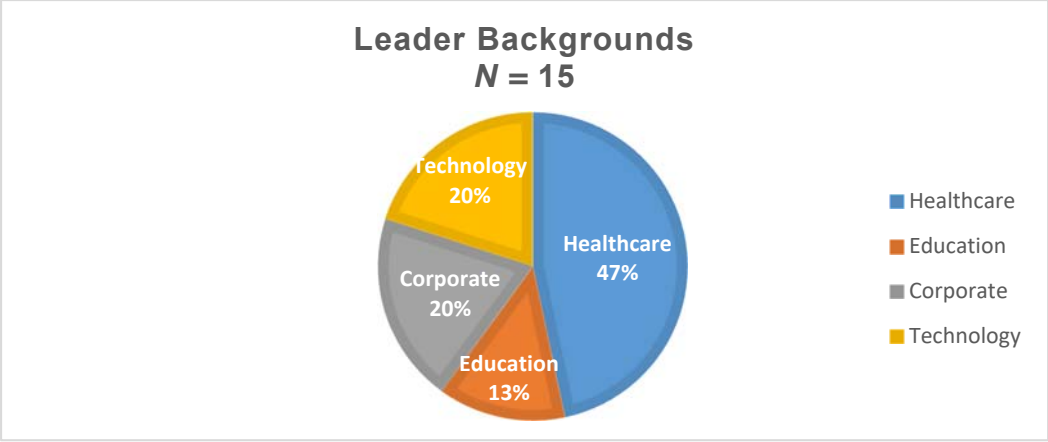


Figure 1. Leader professional backgrounds

The sample pool, consisting of 15 participants, included six male and nine female leaders (see Figure 2).

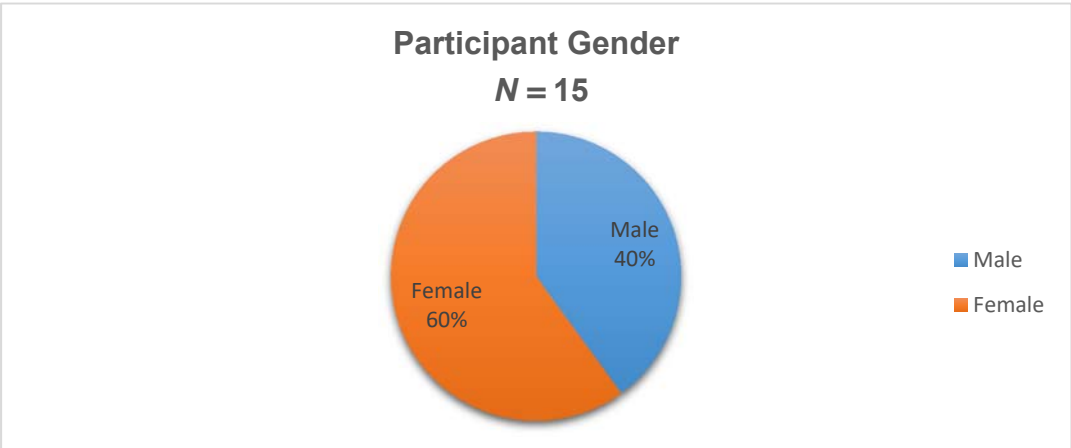


Figure 2. Participants' genders

All ultimately selected participants met the following criteria for inclusion:

- Must be a male or female between the ages 30 and 70.
- Must be of an Armenian descent (meaning both parents are Armenian).
- Must be born in Armenia or other countries with large Armenian Diaspora.
- Must be a self-made leader, currently holding a leadership position at a functioning organization.
- Must have at minimum a bachelor degree.

- Must reside in the State of California, County of Los Angeles.

All participants were born either in Armenia or a country with a large Armenian community. All participants moved to the United States at the age of 11 or older. Several participants moved to America in their thirties which, as the study revealed, made the immigration experience to be for them more challenging than for those who immigrated at an earlier age.

### Data Collection

The data collection process took 38 days. The interviews with each participant were scheduled via email or a phone conversation. The interview questions and consent forms were submitted to the participants before the interview dates. The interviews were planned at a place and time of a participant's choice. The participants were notified that the interviews would be recorded to aid in the accurate collection of the data.

Table 8.

Interview Days

January 9	Interview 1
January 12	Interview 2
January 12	Interview 3
January 30	Interview 4
January 30	Interview 5
January 30	Interview 6
January 30	Interview 7
February 7	Interview 8
February 12	Interview 9
February 15	Interview 10
February 15	Interview 11
February 15	Interview 12
February 16	Interview 13
February 16	Interview 14
February 16	Interview 15



## **Data Display**

The following section presents the data collection results. After the interviews had been transcribed and coded, the answers were grouped under the common themes. Responses having the same or very close meaning were grouped under the same themes even when the respondent used different wording or phrases. Further, if a response was more relevant to a different interview question, consideration was given to relating the answer to the question it would apply to. Peer review was conducted to ensure the validity of the themes formed. In cases where a common consensus had not been reached, an expert review was also conducted. To ensure complete anonymity, all identifiable information was removed, and the interviewees are identified by the assigned participant numbers (i.e., Participant 1, Participant 2, etc.).

### **Research Question 1**

Research question 1 sought to discover the exemplary practices and strategies employed by successful first-generation foreign-born leaders. For the purpose of collecting data that would provide a solid foundation for answering the first research question, four interview questions were asked.

**Interview question 1.** What values and cultural lessons from your childhood were valuable to your success? Interview question 1 had the most diverse answers. The common ones were hard work, honesty, strength, fairness, respect for others, the

importance of education, love, and the family values (see Figure 3).

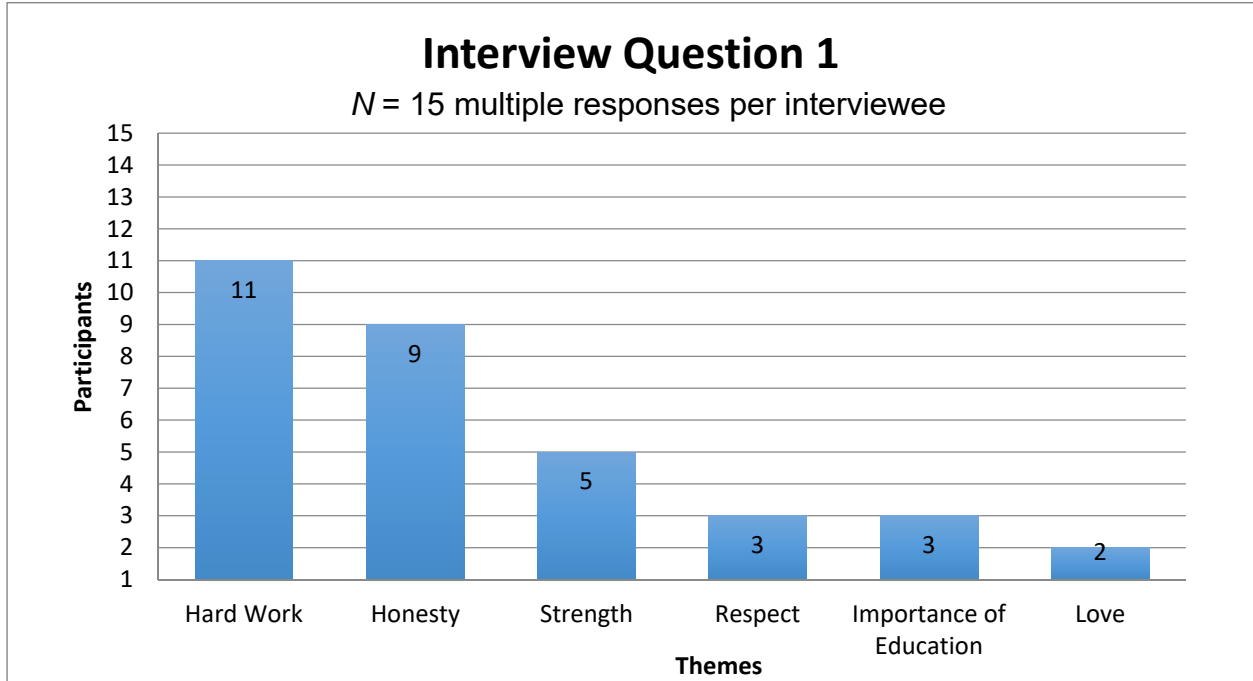


Figure 3. IQ 1. Values and cultural lessons

**Hard work.** Out of 15 participants, 11 stated that hard work was a value instilled in them from childhood. Participant 14 pointed out that, even though she did not get to make her choices as a child because her parents had always decided everything for her, hard work was one of the characteristics passed on by her parents. Participant 6 explained “seeing my parents work very hard to achieve their goals; that was very important” (personal communication, January 30, 2017).

**Honesty.** The importance of honesty was pointed out by nine of the participants. “My mother specifically has always told me that it doesn’t matter what party or clique or background people are from, they are still people and you need to treat everyone the same way,” said participant 3 (personal communication, January 12, 2017). Participant 6 stated that in her childhood, she had always seen people around her give importance values such as honesty; therefore, it was always part of her nature.

**Strength.** Five participants gave importance to activities that require strength and perseverance. Participant 8 mentioned that she has always given importance to activities such as sports. Participant 4, a female, explained, “I had three brothers, but my parents encouraged me to be equal, strong, and I was athletic, and my mom encouraged me to be strong and not a crybaby” (personal communication, January 30, 2017).

**Respect.** Three participants stated that respect for others was an important value they were taught since childhood. “I don’t know if it’s a cultural thing, but it was ingrained in my cultural experience,” said participant 1 (personal communication, January 9, 2017). Participant 8 shared that treating people with respect was an important value.

**The importance of education.** In the process of selecting the participants, one of the criteria for inclusion was that the participants must have at a minimum a bachelor’s degree. All 15 participants selected for the study had bachelor’s degree or higher; many held master’s degrees and several even had various doctoral degrees. As participant 6 mentioned during her interview, intellectual curiosity was something she had seen around her when growing up, and it was helpful for achieving success. Others mentioned the importance of having the stability that education would give them. As participant 2 stated, “Having a job today and tomorrow is important to me; having stability at work and home is [even more] important to us” (personal communication, January 30, 2017).

**Interview question 2.** What are some personal characteristics, educational and training experiences that have been valuable to you? The main themes identified were

persistence, diverse education, and discipline. Lesser-mentioned themes were honesty and self-awareness (see Figure 4.)

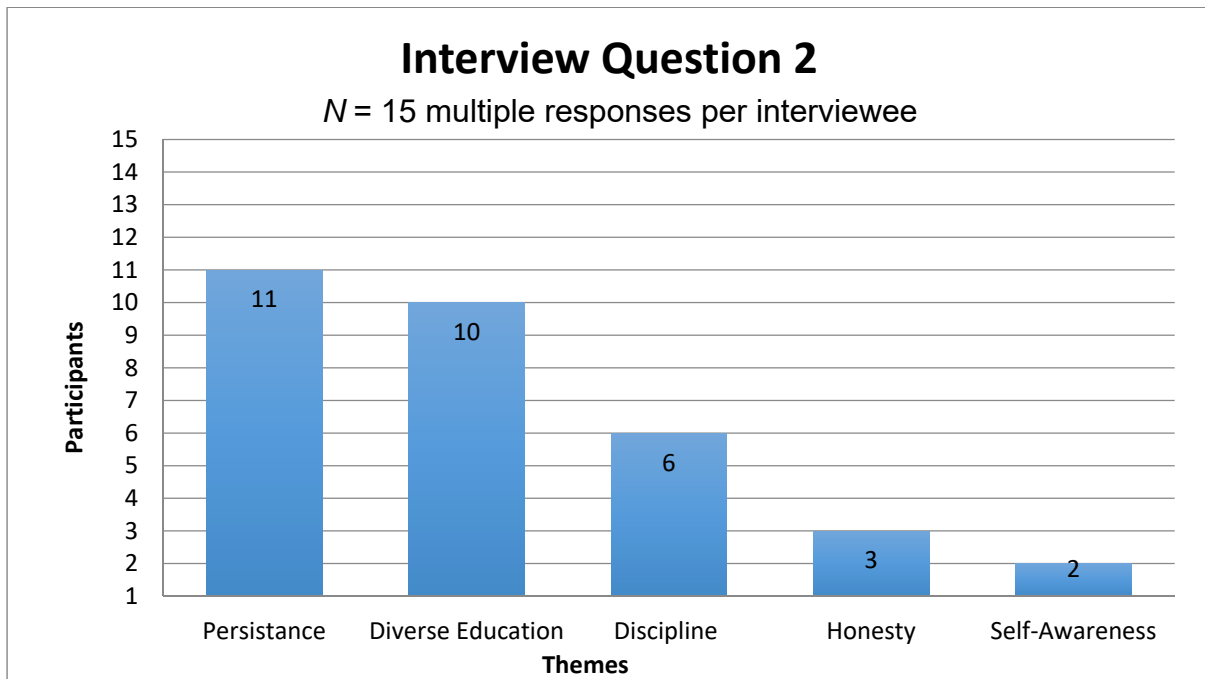


Figure 4. IQ 2. Personal characteristics, educational and training experiences

**Persistence.** Majority of the participants spoke about persistence as one of the characteristics valuable in achieving their success. Participant 1 mentioned that he liked to be challenged, and if someone told him he couldn't do something, it would motivate him to try even harder. As participant 3 pointed out "a lot of energy, a disproportionate amount of energy, goes to making sure each task, as small as it is, is done correctly" (personal communication, January 12, 2017).

**Diverse education.** Many of the participants obtained part of their education in the home country. After moving to the United States, they felt the immediate need of getting a local education to have broader career options. For some interviewees, the education they received back home would not give them the financial security and professional satisfaction they desired. Understanding this led them to go to a U.S.

school, shifting majors or even starting something entirely new. “I got this MBA with computer information technology as an emphasis, so that I put, even I should say, ‘a title’ to the experience I have had, because having the foreign experience was not [enough for] selling,” said participant 10 (personal communication, February 15, 2017).

**Discipline.** For some of the participants coming from a country where discipline was part of the culture, it was also carried with them into their new life in the United States. The interviewees opined that for some professions discipline played a more crucial role than for others. “Discipline that we received back in the country of my origin was also helpful and helped me to achieve my goals here,” summarized participant 6 (personal communication, January 30, 2017).

**Interview question 3.** What are some strategies you use to achieve success? The main themes identified were strong work ethic and setting goals. Lesser-mentioned themes were efficiency, self-improvement, leading by example, and building relationships (see Figure 5.)

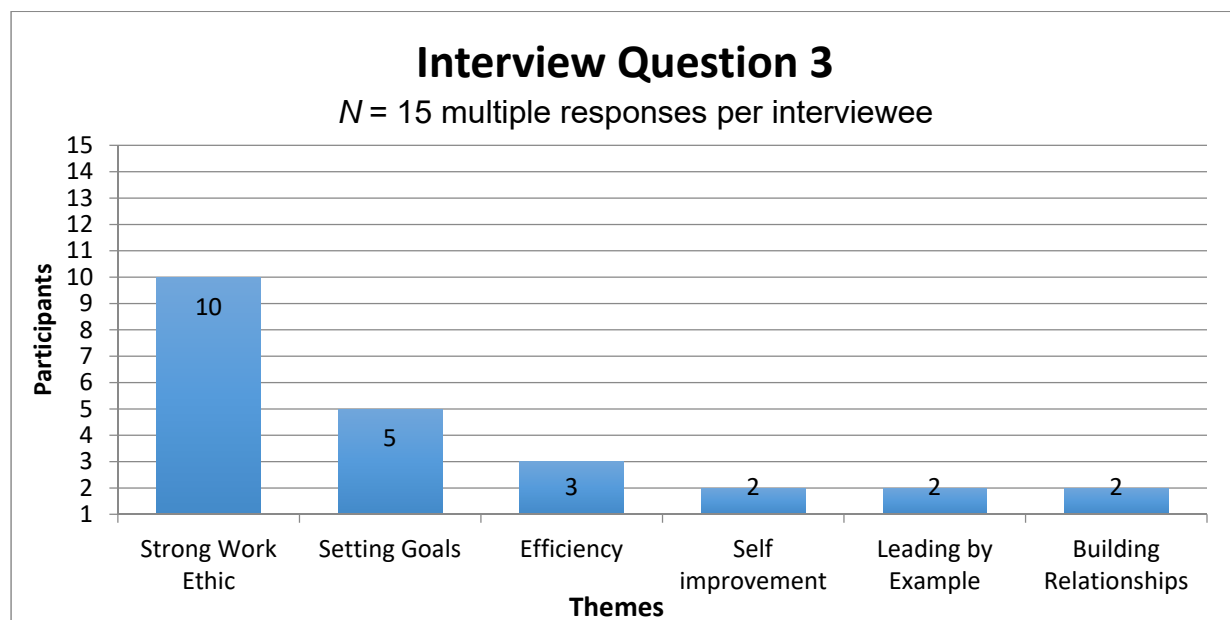


Figure 5. IQ 3. Strategies used for success

**Strong work ethic.** Most of the participants pointed out that hard work was a key determinant in their success. Due to the challenges associated with assimilation and learning language, most participants had to work harder to achieve their goals, which would not be as complex and lengthy had they not been immigrants. “Since we are from a different country, we weren’t born here, I think we put extra effort in everything we do,” explained participant 11 (personal communication, February 15, 2017). Some interviewees found that hard work required patience as achieving goals also required time. For many participants coming to a foreign country and starting all over again at a higher level of complexity, patience and hard work were indispensable for success.

**Setting goals.** Many of the participants spoke about setting the goals and designing strategies to achieve those goals. Setting goals is a way to create a vision where one can see the desired outcome and can design his or her steps leading to that outcome. For one participant, the goal was to be independent and to have control over his destiny. He envisioned creating a financial security and no longer working under somebody else’s control, which he eventually succeeded to do. Participant 8 mentioned “setting goals and achieving them, finishing what I start” (personal communication, February 27, 2017) was a strategy he used to achieve success.

**Interview question 4.** How do you motivate yourself and maintain that motivation? The main themes identified were setting new goals and desire to learn. Lesser-mentioned themes were family, helping others, self-satisfaction, and traveling (see Figure 6.)

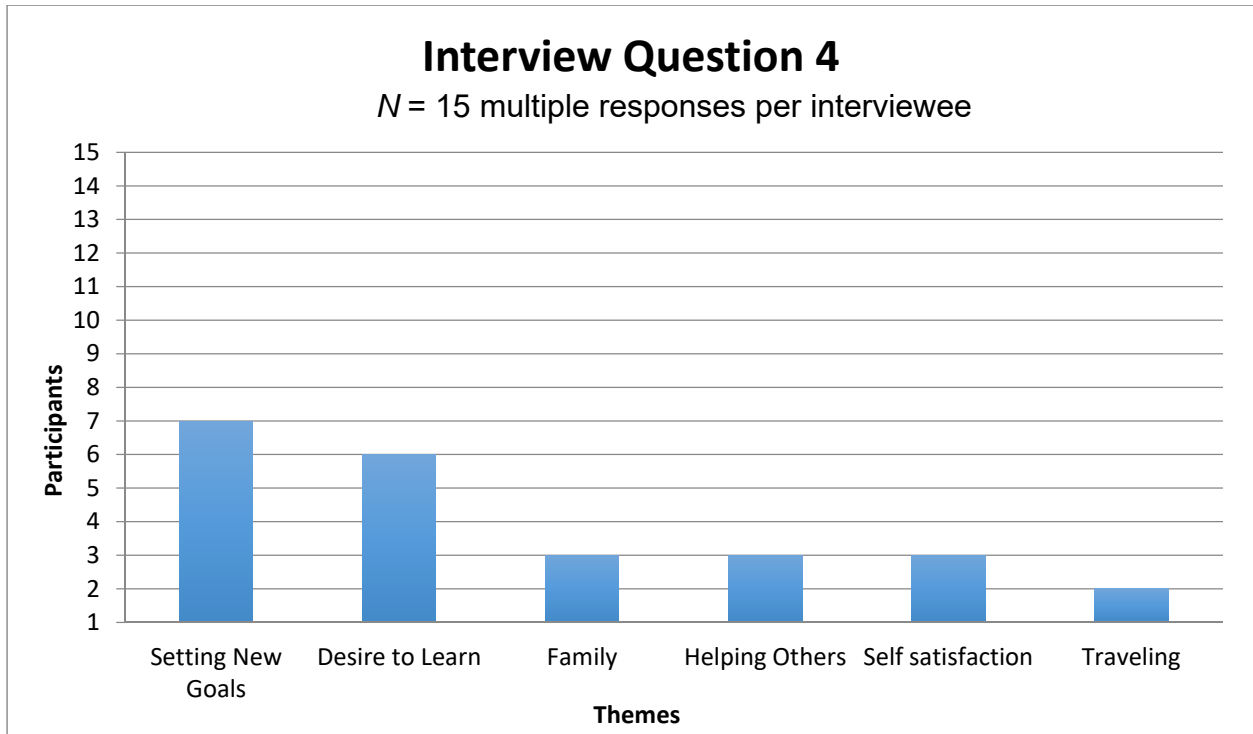


Figure 6. IQ 4. The motivators

**Setting new goals.** Setting a goal was also mentioned to be a motivating factor for many participants. As participant 14 mentioned, it wasn't just enough to set the goals and work toward them, it was also important to believe in the success. "If you believe in it, you will be successful," she explained (personal communication, February 16, 2017). Some of the participants mentioned that even short-term goals were motivators for them, so long as they could find something that excited them and made them happy. For others, the motivators were the long-term goals. They specifically mentioned that it didn't matter how long it would take, or how many resources were necessary to achieve those long-term goals, so long as it led to the brighter future they were in search of when moving to another country.

**Desire to learn.** As individuals who were taught to value education from an early age, the intellectual curiosity came naturally for some of the participants. The desire to

learn the new things that would eventually also open doors for them was described as a source of motivation. Participant 13 mentioned that the desire to be presentable and to be able to socialize with various groups regarding various topics motivated her to work harder and push her boundaries. Being in a foreign country where everything is new and unusual, many things had to be learned and practiced, and the desire to learn as quickly as possible to function better in a new environment was a big motivator.

## **Summary**

Research question 1 studied the exemplary practices and strategies employed by successful first-generation foreign-born leaders. This section sought to uncover the cultural values and lessons that the leaders carried with them on their paths to success, and the strategies they used to succeed in a new environment. Through the interviews, some strategies were discovered as key practices: hard work and dedication instilled in the leaders since an early age, and persistence and perseverance, which played a big role in their successes. Whether they migrated to the United States at a younger age or as accomplished adults, the strategies employed by the participants had common elements. Most participants mentioned during their interviews that the main strategy was to set goals that would lead them to a greater outcome, further putting all possible effort to achieve those goals.

## **Research Question 2**

Research question 2 sought to uncover the challenges faced by first-generation, foreign-born leaders in achieving success. Two interview questions were designed to find answers to research question 2.



**Interview question 5.** What are some of the challenges you have faced as a first-generation, foreign-born leader? The main themes identified were assimilation, language barrier, discrimination, and career and educational challenges. A lesser-mentioned theme was self-criticism (see Figure 7.)

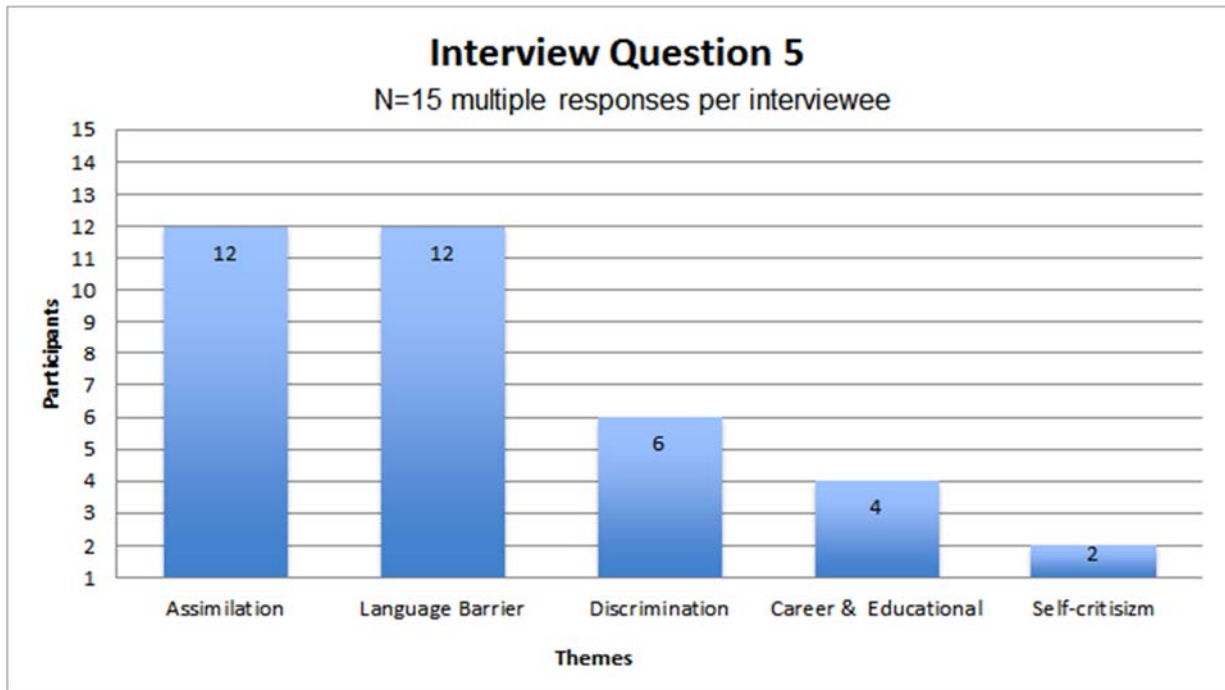


Figure 7. IQ 5. The challenges

**Assimilation.** As many of the participants had moved to the United States as adults, assimilation was a challenge they all faced in one or another way. Assimilating to the new environment that was too different from what they had seen and lived in was challenging for many. Learning the rules and getting used to complying with the rules of a foreign country that had become a new home was a difficult and lengthy process. It was a different world to the extent that even the education obtained in the home country was not accepted as the same, which prompted many to start all over again. It required a tremendous effort to assimilate into the new and unknown culture, especially for those who were already accomplished adults in their home countries. Participant 3 explained,

“I think I could have surmounted them better than I did, but challenges of assimilation would probably be the ones that are at the core of any difficulties” (personal communication, January 12, 2017).

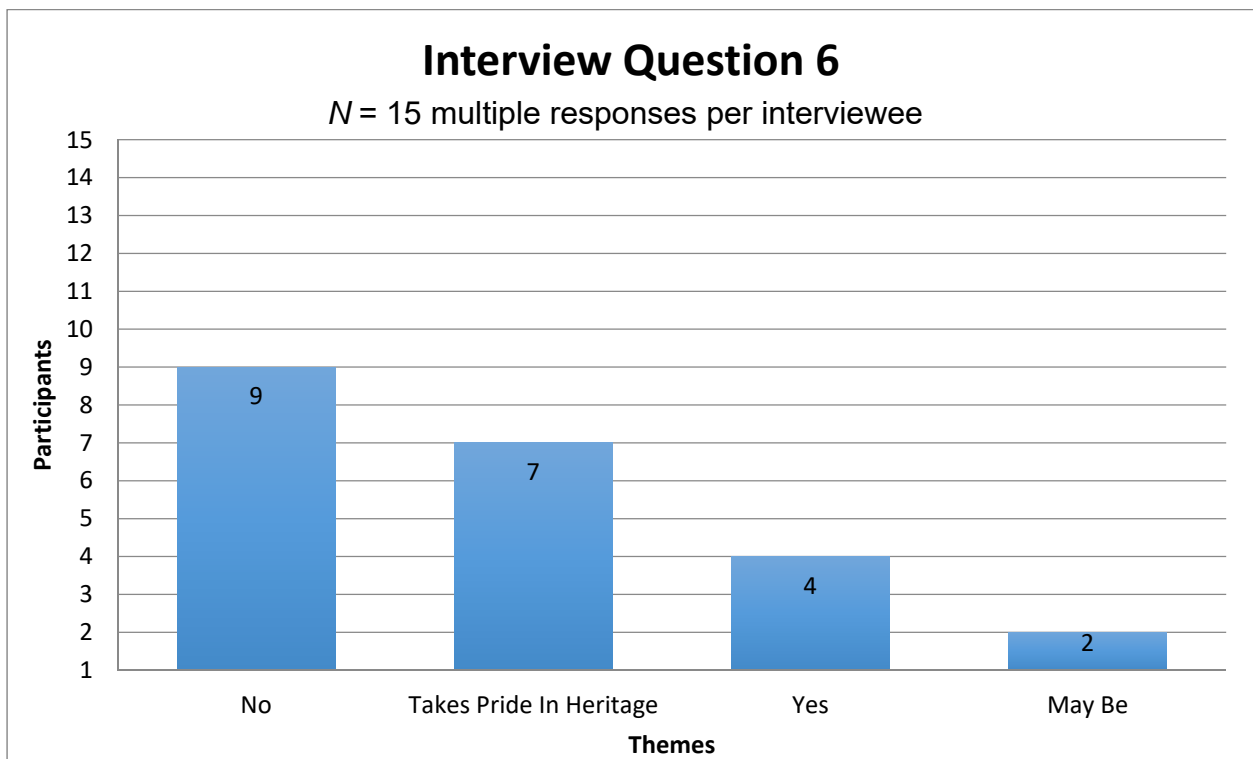
**Language barrier.** Hand-to-hand with the challenges of assimilation came the language barrier. Almost all interviewees mentioned that the language barrier was a major challenge. It was an obstacle to trying to find a job, build a career, or continue education in the United States. “Learning a new language in a short period of time at the age of 30” (personal communication, February 7, 2017) was the major barrier for participant 8 and many others. Another interviewee mentioned that not knowing the language of the country that she now calls home made her fearful for a very long time.

**Discrimination.** Another challenge was facing discrimination in a foreign country. Even though for some it wasn’t the first time being a foreigner and seeing discrimination, it was still hard to deal with it. As participant 10 mentioned, he “had seen a lot of racial and religious discrimination being an Armenian and living in Lebanon among non-Armenians, where there is not only cultural but also a religious difference” (personal communication, February 15, 2017). Nonetheless, seeing discrimination in the United States, in the land of the free, was still difficult for him.

**Career & educational challenges.** The challenges associated with career and education were especially due to the language barrier, which was present for most interviewees. Finding a job was a big challenge for the leaders who moved to the United States as adults and who had to work to support themselves and their families. As most jobs required knowledge of English, the participants, even those who already obtained an education in the home country, found it very hard to find a decent job. Participants

who had decided to continue their education in American educational institutions also faced challenges due to the language barrier. However, as several interviewees mentioned, moving to California made the transition easier for them as it was more diverse compared to most of other states.

**Interview question 6.** Has your heritage ever been an impediment to you? The identified themes were no, takes pride in heritage, yes, and maybe (see Figure 8.)



*Figure 8.* IQ 6. Heritage as an impediment

Almost all participants answered no to the question whether their heritage had even been an impediment to them. A lot of interviewees mentioned that they took pride in their heritage as it gave them uniqueness and made them stand out due to the strong features and characteristics of their culture. “I am always proud to promote and to show off my heritage and I am here to prove that yes, we can be good leaders also in this society,” said Participant 10 (personal communication, February 15, 2017). Very few

who did mention that at times they felt their heritage was an impediment to them felt that it wasn't for any important reasons. Participant 4 shared that her heritage with strong traditional values had at times created difficulties for her in making certain decisions or trying to take control of her destiny.

## **Summary**

Research question 2 looked closely at the challenges the foreign-born, first-generation leaders faced on their path to success. Even having the motivation of moving to another country and having new and better opportunities to build a future, they did not become successful easily. All participants spoke about some type of major barriers that had shaped their paths. Although living in California might seem to be easier for immigrants because people from so many diverse cultures have gathered here and because assimilation to some did not seem like an immediate need due to a huge Armenian community, assimilation was still a priority for those who intended to obtain higher education and climb the ladder of success.

## **Research Question 3**

Research question 3 sought to uncover how first-generation, foreign-born leaders measured their success. Two interview questions were attached to research question 3.

**Interview question 7.** How do you define success for yourself? The main themes identified were being content with life and providing for family. Lesser-mentioned themes were strong relationships, helping others, and being a servant leader (see Figure 9.)

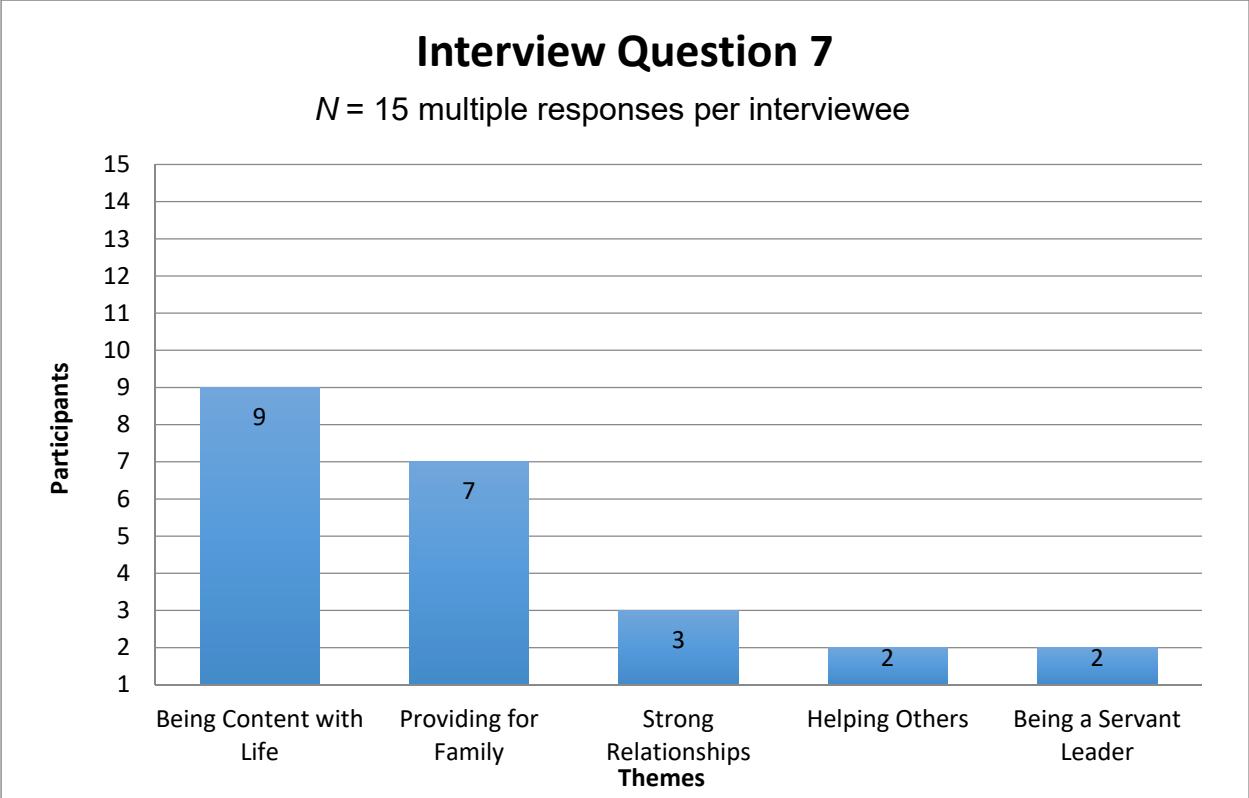


Figure 9. IQ 7. The definition of success

**Being content with life.** One of the most popular responses by the interviewees was being content with life. Many described their main goal to be happy with where they stood and with their accomplishments and to create a work environment where they could feel fulfilled and satisfied. For others, being content with life meant the success of raising children with good morals and biblical values. “The best measure of success for me is overall happiness,” Participant 7 explained (personal communication, January 30, 2017).

**Providing for family.** Many participants described success as the ability to provide for their families. They shared that their family was a priority and for some even the reason they made the decision to move to another country. “I think having a career where you make enough money to support yourself without a support of [another]

person . . . has been something that would make me feel successful at the end,” explained participant 13 (personal communication, February 16, 2017).

**Interview question 8.** How do you measure your success? The main themes identified were making a difference, satisfaction with achievements, and financial security. Lesser-mentioned themes were level of education and meaningful relationships (see Figure 10.)

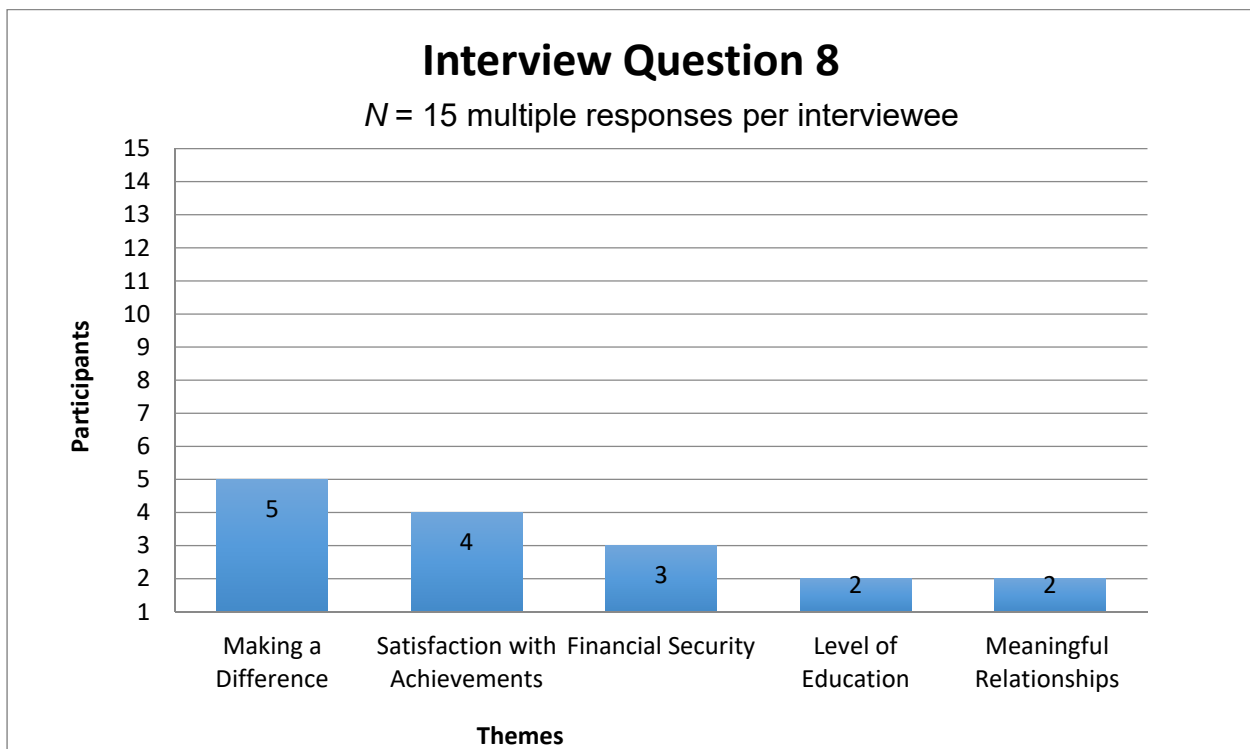


Figure 10. IQ 8. How success is measured

**Making a difference.** In response to the question regarding how they measure success, several participants spoke about making a difference. For them, success was measured by how much they had done to help others. Many spoke about helping their families, extended families, and others. Participants involved in the medical field, such as doctors and pharmacists, mentioned that given their profession, success for them was measured by how much they have helped their patients throughout the years. “You

might not have money, but you can help people,” explained Participant 4 (personal communication, January 30, 2017).

***Satisfaction with achievements.*** Participants also measured success with how well they had succeeded in accomplishing their goals. Everyone sets goals of various importance; however, not everyone brings them to a completion and achieves those goals. The leaders who were selected to participate in this study mentioned as a possible measurement for success the number of goals they have achieved from the number that had been set. Participant 1 spoke about being content with himself and his goals. He explained, “If I am happy with myself, I think other people would learn to love me, as long as I love myself first” (personal communication, January 9, 2017).

***Financial security.*** Others spoke about financial security as another measurement for success. “Measurement is in dollars at the end of the day,” explained Participant 10 (personal communication, February 15, 2017). They mentioned that the money was not a self-value but what they could do with the money was certainly valuable. The money decided a lot for their families: the quality of a school their children could attend, whether it was high school or college; living conditions; location; etc. The participants stated that it was easier for them to measure success with financial parameters because if the measurement is money, success can be quantified.

## **Summary**

All leaders interviewed for this study were individuals who have migrated to the United States either by their decision or a decision by their parents, with the sole purpose of searching a better life and more opportunities. Some of them measured success by how much of a difference they have made for others. Others measured it by

the level of education they had obtained or the number of meaningful relationships they had built.

#### Research Question 4

Research question 4 sought to uncover what recommendations first-generation, foreign-born leaders would give to future leaders contemplating on moving to the United States. Two interview questions were designed to gather data for answering to research question 4.

**Interview question 9.** What recommendations would you give to future generations of foreign-born leaders who come to this country? The main themes identified were assimilate sooner and improve constantly. Lesser-mentioned themes were to be open-minded, get a local education, work hard, and learn the language (see Figure 11.)

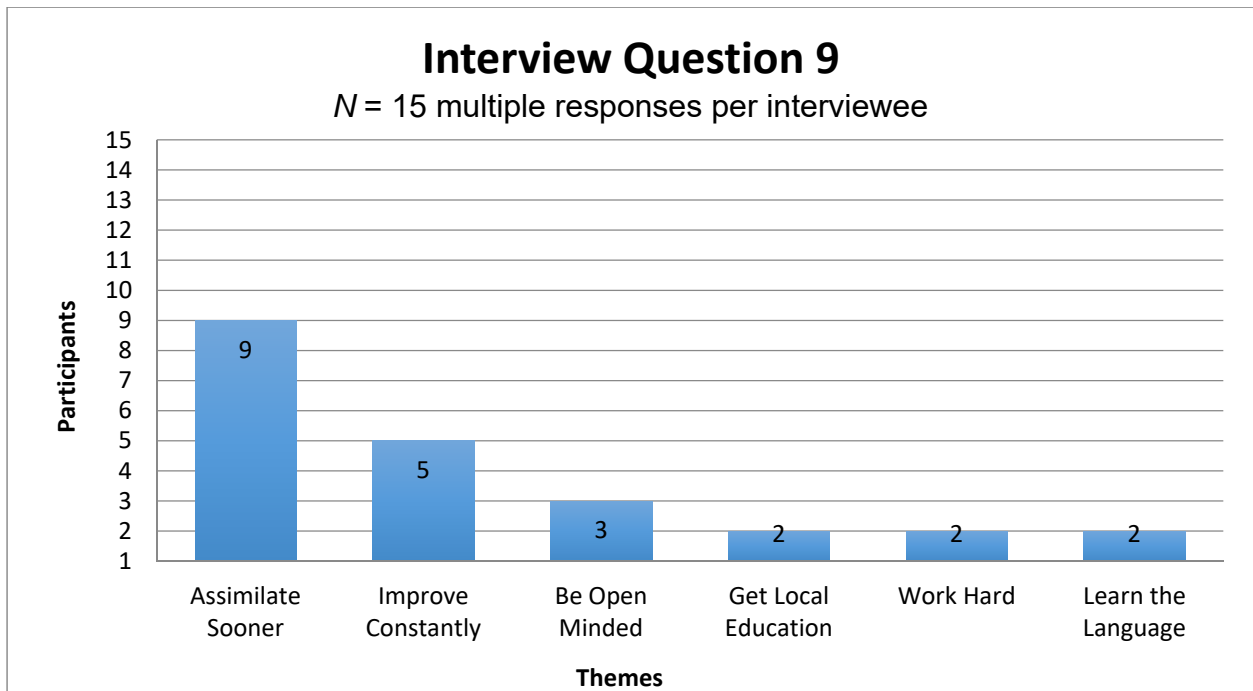


Figure 11. IQ 9. Recommendations for future generations



**Assimilation.** When asked about recommendations for the future generations coming to the United States, many leaders advised to assimilate as soon as possible. Some of them mentioned that resisting the assimilation only makes the process lengthy. To succeed in a new environment, one needs to be more open-minded toward the new culture, learn the language as early as possible, and adjust to the customs and the laws of that country. “Assimilation is just as important if not more important than just being closed off and isolated, to your success”, stated Participant 3 (personal communication, January 12, 2017).

**Continuous improvement.** Several leaders spoke about the constant improvement. They recommended to future leaders to never stop working on themselves, e.g., constantly reconsidering their goals, working on their abilities, gaining new strengths, and reaching new heights. In the modern society where innovation is a constant work in progress, there is always the need to learn and advance. “Try to do better, do not stop, be able to self-improve constantly,” encouraged Participant 6 (personal communication, January 30, 2017). To meet the needs of modern-day professions, continued growth and learning is inevitable.

**Interview question 10.** Knowing what you know now, what would you have done differently to be more efficient in the new culture and environment? The identified themes included not much change, learn the language at a younger age, be more content, assimilate sooner, and continue education. (see Figure 12.)

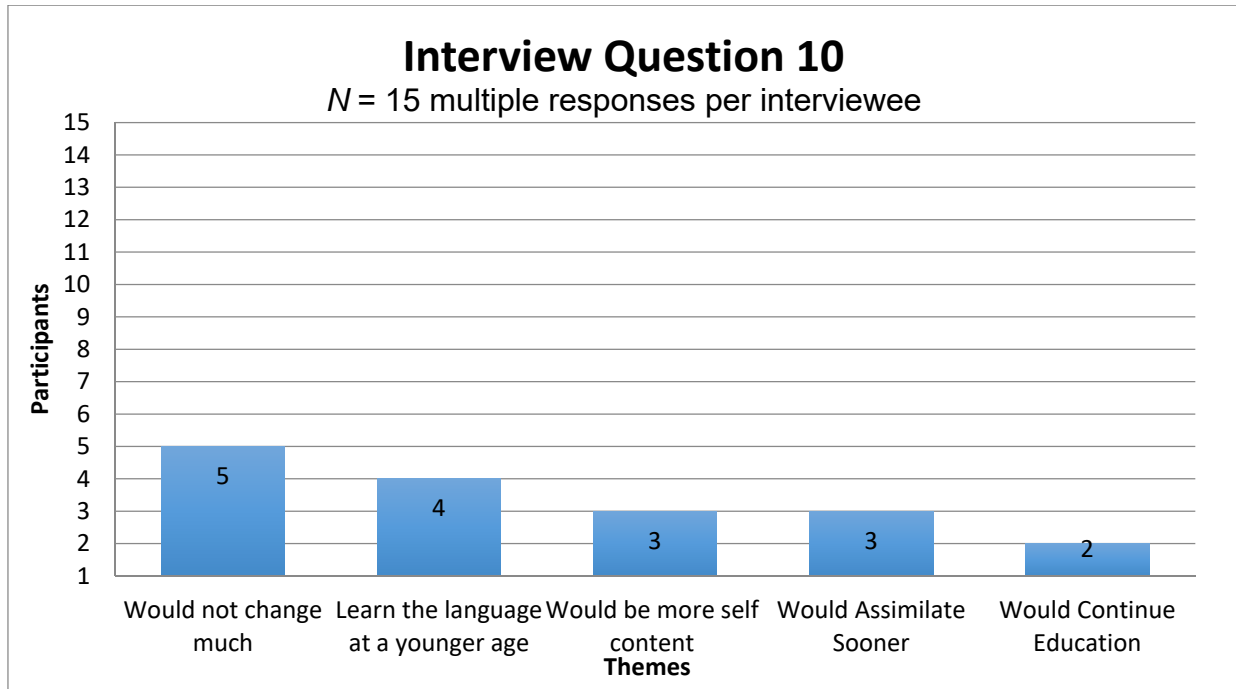


Figure 12. IQ 10. What would have done differently

The leaders had provided very diverse answers to the question of whether they would do anything differently had they known what they know now. Five of the participants said they would not change anything as they had to live through their experiences to become who they were now. “If I did something different, I would be somebody else, and I might not like that person,” explained participant 1 (personal communication, January 9, 2017). Some mentioned that they would be less critical and more content with what they had instead of constantly criticizing themselves or listening to the critics of others. Several others mentioned that they would have learned the language at an earlier age if they had a second chance. Two of the participants expressed the desire for continuing education as they felt it would open more doors for them.

## **Summary**

Success may have different meanings for different people, but achieving success requires a similar set of skills. In the personal stories of the participants of this study, success always came through hard work, perseverance, and persistence. They all dealt with challenges such as a difficulty of assimilation and learning the language, which occurred, for the most, at an adult age.

## **Chapter 4 Summary**

The purpose of this chapter was to examine the common experiences first-generation, foreign-born leaders lived after immigrating to the United States. The common experiences were identified with analyzing the responses collected through data collection process, which involved 10 interview questions asked to 15 participants. The collected information was coded and gathered under themes based on the commonalities. In the data collection process, a total of 282 answers were collected for 10 interview questions. From 282 responses, 53 main themes emerged. Chapter 4 presented the findings that emerged from the data collection process. Chapter 5 introduces the analysis of the collected data, as well as recommendations for future research on the topic.

## **Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations**

This chapter discusses presented conclusions and offered recommendations. It reflects back to the findings in chapter 4 and presents the results and analysis of each research question individually. Additionally, it shares recommendations for the future research on the topic. The summary of the study gives an overview of chapters 1 and 2, as well as analyses the answers corresponding to each interview question presented in chapter 3.

### **Summary of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to examine (a) the exemplary practices and strategies first-generation foreign-born leaders employed to achieve success, (b) the challenges they had to face, and (c) the ways they measured success. The focus of the study was to find the shared experiences Armenian Americans have had throughout the process of assimilation, acculturation, and throughout their path to success. The study examined the challenges they faced, the way they coped and overcame the challenges, and the motivational factors that kept them going.

The literature review discussed the United States immigration patterns for centuries, the major waves of immigration, and, specifically, the history and background of Armenian American immigrants. The literature review also discussed the effect of immigration on the labor market, education, and the U.S. society. It discussed the ways the face of American immigration had changed over the past century. The United States is known as a melting pot due to its diverse population. The descendants of the current population had come from every part of the world and had been brought together by certain historical voluntary or involuntary processes. Some of them had migrated due to

the voluntary international migration (Gerber, 2011). Some others had migrated due to wars and economic hardship they had been experiencing in their home countries. According to social scientists, the American life—its economic and social improvements, and the opportunities it may provide—transforms immigrants of different nationalities into Americans with a similar culture, attitude, and lifestyle that eventually turn into a melting pot (Bisin & Verdier, 2000).

As the focus of the study was the Armenian American foreign-born, first-generation leaders, the literature included a brief history of Armenian immigration to the United States, especially a century-old when many Armenians fled the homeland due to the atrocities carried out by the Ottoman Empire. Such behavior resulted in the Armenian Genocide when nearly two million Armenians were massacred. The survivors of the 1915 Genocide spread all over the world and many found home in the United States.

Today, Armenians are spread all over the world. The concept of home for Armenians is no longer associated with a particular geographic location; rather, it is synonymous to where the family is living (Pattie, 1994). The current generation of Armenians grew up eager to be part of America, as they pursued education and career achievements (Pattie, 1994). Even though this may take them outside of their ethnic arena, they still carry their Armenian side close to heart, which “speaks of the gratitude for the parent’s sacrifices, and of their rebellion against and eventual acceptance of the guild of survival” (Pattie, 1994, p. 187). Armenians strive to keep their ethnic identity by creating and maintaining philanthropic organizations, political parties, churches, and

cultural centers that promote ethnic consciousness and diasporic vigilance (Alexander, 2005).

### **Discussion of the Findings**

For this qualitative study, a phenomenological approach was chosen due to its experience-based nature. This phenomenological study focused on the common experiences the subjects had by examining the stories given by each participant. Each participant of the study was a foreign-born, first-generation leader of Armenian descent who was born either in Armenian or another country with Armenian Diaspora. The sample size consisted of 15 participants. The data collection was done by using 10 open-ended interview questions used to draw the findings supported by the literature review. Each interview question was carefully designed to bring an answer to the corresponding research question. Through 15 face-to-face interviews in which 10 semi-structural interview questions were asked, answers were collected, coded, and grouped into themes that described the common experiences of the subjects.

**Results of research question 1.** Research question 1 asked about exemplary practices and strategies employed by successful first-generation foreign-born leaders. The themes that were common and provided best answer for RQ 1 were hard work and setting goals. Hard work was the most talked about theme.

**Hard work.** Not much can be accomplished without working hard and investing maximum effort. To succeed in a foreign country that is now their home, immigrants must work harder to achieve what is given to the natives at no effort. Immigrants might have a higher cost for success in terms of time and effort. Based on the data collection results, the foreign-born leaders are generally expected to work harder than average

Americans to achieve success due to two major interrelated reasons. First, participants who gained educational and work experience before immigrating to the United States stated that they weren't given much credit for all educational and work-related experiences that they had prior to moving to America. Even though foreign degrees are evaluated in the United States, the difference in educational systems does not allow transferring more than a limited number of credit units. Furthermore, potential employees had never heard of foreign schools and often did not trust to foreign educational institutions. As a result, degrees obtained in the home country are often not considered by employers and potential clients.

The second major reason is a lack of trust, especially if one has an accent. Participants noticed that it took them an extra effort to prove that they were capable of performing as good as born Americans or even at a higher level. Therefore, participants recommended to the future newcomers to be aware that hard work would be required. They recommended accepting it and taking it for granted without a fight. However, they also suggested that once one can prove his or her capability of performing at a higher standard, he or she will be trusted as much as native-born Americans. To get credit for the degree obtained in the home country, they also recommended pursuing an education in American universities to supplement their foreign degree or to simply put a title on it.

**Setting goals.** The results of the data collection made it evident that the leaders gave great importance to having a vision and a habit of goal setting. Many interviewees explained how essential it was for a leader to have a clear vision, consisting of certain goals, and work all efforts towards that vision. Some spoke about breaking down the

process into step-by-step agenda where smaller goals were easier to accomplish and met fewer challenges along the way.

**Results of research question 2.** Research question 2 inquired about challenges that first-generation, foreign-born leaders faced on their way to achieving success. The themes that best answered RQ 2 were assimilation and language barrier. Assimilation was the most talked about theme.

**Assimilation.** Through the data collection process, it was discovered that challenges were highly interrelated with the pace of assimilation. The concept of assimilation is explored as the “integration into mainstream experienced across generations by many individuals and ethnic groups into the American life” (Alba & Nee, 1997, p. 827). The study showed that the quicker an immigrant assimilates, the fewer challenges he or she would face. Further, overcoming challenges is easier for those who assimilate at a faster pace. Participants also described the phenomenon of having an internal barrier to assimilate, e.g., putting a fight and resistance against assimilation. Fighting against assimilation will delay the progress leaders intend to reach.

Assimilation does not mean forgetting where one comes from, but it is a way to be open-minded about what the new country and the new culture has to offer. Participants mentioned that success is also measured by the ability to reach the general American market. As Durkin (1998) explained, “Assimilation occurs when benefits outweigh the cost” (p. 276). Limiting yourself to an ethnic community means limiting yourself to a very small market and population. Participants suggested that even if a professional becomes successful in his or her community and ethnic market, due to its generally small size, one might not be considered overall satisfied. It also appears that



participants believed that assimilation alone—without hard work, integrity, honesty, and education—was not enough to be successful. However, the lack of assimilation would certainly prevent one from becoming successful.

**Learning the language.** Learning the language is a part of the assimilation process along with learning the laws, customs, regulations and the history of the new country. Language, as Clay (1999) stated, is merged with the culture and identity of the group. While one can assimilate without learning the language and can also learn the language without assimilating, it is hardly possible to continue education and gain career advancements in a new country without knowing the primary language of that country.

**Results of research question 3.** Research question 3 inquired about how first-generation, foreign-born leaders measured their success. Making a difference was the common answer for many participants. While this answer may be subject to broad interpretations, the participants explained that they mainly implied that making a difference for others, such as their family members, was the way they measured their success. “Leadership that matters does so because it makes a difference” (Sashkin & Sashkin, 2003, p. 2). These leaders create their visions based on the perspective of making a difference for others—family members, the organization, or their followers. Making a difference results in self-satisfaction, which is another common answer many participants gave. Identifying what matters to them and their surroundings is how vision is built and how goals are structured. It may be different from one culture to another, as culture influences the way success is perceived. For many participants in the study, their vision was built around the difference they can make for others.

**Results of research question 4:** Research question 4 asked what recommendations first-generation, foreign-born leaders would give to the future leaders coming to the United States. The findings for RQ 4 are closely related to RQ 2, as nearly all participants, when giving recommendations for future generations, reflected back to the challenges they had encountered. Most once again spoke about assimilation and language barrier, recommending to overcome both at an earlier age and at faster pace.

The general recommendation for the future leaders coming to the United States was to assimilate as much and as quickly as possible, yet maintaining the cultural identity, the strong cultural presence, the mother language, and the values that make them unique. In other words, they recommended preserving all advantages of having a unique cultural, ethnic identity; however, not at the expense of assimilation. They recommended being at a minimum an average American with some special uniqueness, arising out of ethnic and cultural presence.

Another recommendation from many leaders was to learn the language at a much younger age because it is easier to learn and become fluent in a language as a child or a teenager than it is as an adult. They also recommended, to the extent possible, to learn English before moving to the United States. Knowing the language would allow them to concentrate on other aspects of assimilation. New opportunities come with language and, with more opportunities, success is easier to achieve.

### **Implications of the Study**

This section is intended to give information and guidance for the future first-generation, foreign-born leaders who may benefit from the literature and the findings of

this study. It is designed to educate future leaders about the success, strategies, and challenges of leaders who had previously immigrated to the United States in search of opportunities and a better life. The study contributes to the literature available about Armenian American foreign-born, first-generation leaders. Suggestions for future leaders are discussed below.

**Armenian American leaders.** As the study was conducted with Armenian American first-generation, foreign-born leaders, the focus was to shed light on the available literature on Armenian American leaders. It was done so by sharing the success stories of Armenian first-generation leaders. The study explored the challenges they were faced with and the strategies they implemented to overcome those barriers in order to succeed. Every participant and every story was unique, very different, yet very alike. They came from the same background, raised by very similar values, and shared a common vision when immigrating to the United States. They may measure their successes differently and may have used different strategies to achieve their successes, but they all shared the vision of making the impossible become possible in a new country they now call home.

Reflecting on their journey, the participants recalled the characteristics, the lessons and the trainings that coped them and shaped them to become today's leaders. Reflecting on the lessons learned, they made recommendations for the future generations of young Armenians who may take a similar journey. One valuable lesson this research is passing on to the future generations of Armenian immigrants is to place great importance on assimilation and learning the language. The research suggested that future generations of Armenians coming to the United States should welcome

assimilation, yet preserve the values and the cultural uniqueness they carry with them. The study also encourages the future generations to learn the language at a much younger age and before immigrating to the United States, which makes the assimilation process easier.

**Understanding the challenges and applying solutions.** This study may play a role in understanding the challenges and issues immigrants have in educational and career fields. It may have significance for scholars, educator, policymakers, businesses and other professionals to learn, understand, relate, and create new methods that would make things easier for the new-coming immigrants. The findings may lead to changes in the way professionals do things, such as educators creating a curriculum that is designed to work around the immigrant students' challenges, or changes in the way immigrant employees are challenged in the workplace. Other changes could be in the form of policies, where new policies may emerge to accommodate foreign-born leaders in issues related to citizenship policy, equal rights, and readily available resources.

The findings of this study improve the field's understanding of the challenges immigrants are faced with when moving to a foreign country. The findings also change the field's understanding of the success strategies the foreign-born leaders use and the key strategies they are guided by. It shifts the attention from the stereotypes and beliefs built around the phenomenon. As presented through the literature review as well through the findings of this study, migrating to another country is not always by choice. It is often in the escape of wars, genocides, in search of safety and the basic needs of survival.

**Application of theories.** As the literature review exposed, leadership is built around human characteristics, behaviors, and the situational factors (Biggart & Hamilton, 1987). The interview questions used for data collection were designed to study the characteristics, behaviors, and the situational factors that shaped the participants' leadership styles. It studies the characteristics and factors that geared each participant with strength and perseverance and prepared them for the path that led them to their success.

The findings are consistent with the theories discussed in Chapter 2, such as theories of leadership, motivational theories and theories of decision making. The two that closely apply are the trait theory and the transformational leadership theory. The traits of the leaders interviewed for this study were developed with the influence of the strong cultural presence. Therefore, participants coming from the same cultural background had very similar traits and characteristics. Among those traits were the six presented by Kirkpatrick and Locke (1991) as part of trait leadership theory: drive, motivation, honesty and integrity, self-confidence, cognitive ability, and task knowledge. These characteristics are described by the participants as attributes thought by their parents, traits that were gained through education and training, and lastly, traits that they gained in the change process.

Another theory that closely relates to the characteristics and behaviors described during the interviews is the transformational theory. The literature described transformational leadership as a phenomenon largely focused on the higher set of goals (Judge & Piccolo, 2004), specific purpose and motives guided by values and ethics (Northouse, 2015). The data collection showed that setting goals was a priority for the

leaders interviewed. The majority of them also spoke about the importance of having a purpose that would give them the drive to climb despite obstacles along the way.

Transformational leadership theory is also relationship-based theory (Yukls, 1999). The leaders tied their purpose with the relationships they have. Family was a main motivator for the leaders, and providing for the family was an important purpose that led them to look for a new home in a foreign country.

From the theories of motivation, Maslow's hierarchy of needs best described the reason behind the phenomenon of immigration. Individuals and groups immigrate to a new country to satisfy the psychological and physiological needs Maslow described in his theory (1943). Individuals and groups, such as the Armenian leaders who were part of this study, chose to move to a foreign country to satisfy the basic survival needs (food, shelter), safety needs by escaping wars and genocides, the need to belong by trying to assimilate in a new country. They worked their way toward self-esteem and self-actualization by fulfilling their desires for education, career, and other achievements.

### **Study Conclusion**

The study was conducted with leaders having various professional and educational backgrounds as well as belonging to different age groups. Despite the differences between the participants, their answers had a lot of commonalities across ages, industries, and professions. A pattern of similar conduct and beliefs became evident. The study has revealed that successful, foreign-born leaders have implemented similar strategies that were essential to success. Participants also named the same or similar characteristics that helped them achieve success. The majority of

them mentioned hard work as a necessary but not sufficient element of success. Assimilation was another necessary but not sufficient factor. They also gave high importance to learning the language, as well as continuing higher education. Overall, it appears that a cumulative experience of the participants can be used to filter certain essential elements of success.

### **Recommendations for Future Researchers**

Recommendations for future researchers were drawn based on the findings presented in the previous sections. If the study was duplicated after some years have passed, the results may be significantly different due to changes of circumstances. Such changes may be in the situation in the home country and changes in values the future generations will find important. Similar studies of other populations may have different results as the cultural background and heritage play an important role in the way particular individuals and groups settle and grow in the new environment. The study may also be duplicated for other populations of immigrants such as Hispanic population, Middle Eastern population, and others.

This phenomenological study was meant to collect the common experiences of the sample population chosen. The study helps to advance the research interview methodology by suggesting a change in the face-to-face, semi-structured interview process. It suggests combining the face-to-face interview process with written responses to interview questions, by allowing participants to respond in a written form if preferred. This method gives an opportunity to the participants to rethink their answers and provide the most accurate and relevant information versus being put on the spot and providing short, and at times, off-topic answers. In addition, the study suggested

improvements in the way the master list is built, by allowing exceptions upon justification, such as allowing the researcher to include well-qualified participants in the study even though they may not be part of the master list obtained. This method allows the researcher to collect valuable information from very well-qualified subjects who would otherwise be missed.

The following recommendations are made for the future studies on the topic of foreign-born leaders:

- Break down the population of foreign-born leaders into smaller groups of leaders as follows:
  - those who received their education in the home country,
  - those who spent part of their childhood already in the United States, and
  - those who came at an older age with no prior education from home country.

These subgroups may face different types of challenges and possess a different kind of characteristics unique to the group. The fact that they grew up in their home country and came to the United States in their 20s or later may make them a unique group compared to those who immigrated at an early childhood and were exposed to the culture and the language at a much younger age and have assimilated much sooner. The process of assimilation may be different for the young immigrants than it is for their immigrant parents (Portes & Zhou, 1993).



- The population of foreign-born leaders may also be studied in subgroups formed based on their profession; in different industries, assimilation may have different processes, and challenges may be dealt with at a different level. Acculturation is largely based on three groups of variables: conditions, orientation, and outcomes (Arends-Toth & Van De Vijver, 2006). These three variables may have a different form and complexity depending on the profession and the environment the specific progression requires. Further, knowledge of English might play a less crucial role in certain industries. Such example would be computer sciences, where one may not need to assimilate to succeed in one's profession, which is entirely different from doctors or lawyers who have constant interaction with patients, clients, and colleges, and must speak the language more fluently.
- A recommendation for future studies would be to inform and prepare the participants ahead of time for the interview questions and clarify the questions if necessary before the interview process begins. Participants often being put on the spot to answer a specific question may misunderstand the question and provide an answer that does not fully relate to the question. The pre-interview phase may be used to provide the participants with the opportunity to reflect and think about responses which also gives the researcher collect more descriptive data from the participants (Burke & Miller, 2001).
- A study can be conducted with a focus on challenges of foreign-born leaders. As the challenges are a major factor in the way the leaders may progress and achieve success, it is a broader topic with a great societal importance that

requires in-depth assessment. Such studies may be used by policymakers to design policies that would provide solutions to issues immigrants face. Such solutions would be offering language courses for different professionals, which would not only teach the language in general but would help them to assimilate as professionals in the new country. "Policy makers need to recognize the changing relationships between immigration, trade, and economic development in an increasingly global economy" (Saxenian, 2002, p. 20).

### **Final Thoughts**

The United States has always been a country of immigrants. Every year more and more newcomers come to the United States in search of opportunities and success. This study sheds light on the literature available on the topic and will help others to learn the challenges and better prepare for the change. Everyone will benefit from the smoother and faster assimilation. That includes immigrants themselves, the community where they live, and the country overall. It is important to understand and recognize the importance of the language, especially given that English has become a universal language. It is also important to understand that hard work and perseverance will eventually pay off, no matter what nationality, religion, or ethnic group the person belongs to.

This study encourages future leaders coming to the United States to take pride in their heritage and culture while not hesitating to assimilate. Assimilation does not necessarily mean losing identity; it simply means adjusting to the given environment and culture. An essential part of achieving success is to maintain the ethical and moral

values and to approach each task with honesty and integrity. Despite challenges associated with being in a foreign country and trying to survive despite tough competition, it is important to stay true to the good values and maintain the unique characteristics that may be instilled in the person as a part of his or her ethnic identity. The main purpose of this study was not only to show the challenges associated with immigration to a foreign country but, most importantly, to show that by employing the strategies recommended above, no matter how difficult and challenging the process might be, the outcome will always be rewarding. Rewards are quantifiable measurements; self-satisfaction, creating a vision, and making a difference though those visions are far more rewarding than any quantifiable rewards can be.

### **Researcher's Notes**

This research holds significant importance not only in my academic growth, but it portrays my journey as a foreign-born, first-generation leader, the challenges I faced along that journey, and the strategies I used to achieve my success. I would like to conclude this study with a story of an immigrant girl who once chose to leave everything behind and travel across the world in search of better life for herself and her family.

She was born in a small town in Armenia at a time where the country was experiencing economic downfall. One of her first memories at the age of five was the big earthquake in December 1988, which took away thousands of lives and wiped out towns such as her home town. With the devastating earthquake, her family lost their house, but they were fortunate to be alive and that's all that mattered. The family found shelter in a small garage in an empty field where once a school was standing and now it laid in ruins. Time were challenging. With limited resources and cold winter ahead,

water and electricity was a luxury available a few hours on certain days of the week. Every family's focus was finding daily food. The garage as a shelter for the family of four was a temporary solution as the government promised to rebuild the houses. It was a temporary solution, or so were they told. It lasted long—an unbearable 13 years.

The years were full of hardships, hardships that no child deserves to see. As the years went by and as the little girl grew into a teenager, all she could think of was a chance to get education that would open doors for her and her family. She saw an opportunity in learning English and applying to a foreign school. While many looked at it as a naive wish of a teenage girl, she was determined to chase her dream. At the age of 18, despite all the difficulties she encountered, she was standing a step closer to her dream. With a one-way ticket in her pocket and some change in her wallet, she said her goodbyes to her family, her parents and brother, and took a flight to Los Angeles. Little did she know that those goodbyes were to be for the next fifteen years; little did she know that life in the U.S. wasn't going to be as peachy and colorful as it seemed in Hollywood movies.

The first three years were the hardest. She often wondered if this was any better than the life back in Armenia. It wasn't any better, and in some ways, it was even worse, but there was no way back. At least she was providing for her family and that was her main motivation. As the years went by, she took one small step at a time and accomplished one dream at a time. From community college to a doctoral student, from clerical worker to Chief Operating Officer, it was an immigrant girl's dream that was now a reality.

That little girl is me, from a rural town in Armenia, now completing my dissertation and chasing my dreams in America. I am standing here as the living proof and the hope for every little girl and boy who will grow up to chase their own dreams no matter where they were born and which conditions they grew up in. Maybe I came from Nowhere, but I know I am certainly going to get Somewhere.

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## APPENDIX A

### IRB Approval



Pepperdine University  
24255 Pacific Coast Highway  
Malibu, CA 90263  
TEL: 310-506-4000

#### NOTICE OF APPROVAL FOR HUMAN RESEARCH

Date: December 22, 2016

Protocol Investigator Name: Verzhine Gregorian

Protocol #: 16-09-388

Project Title: SUCCESS STRATEGIES OF FIRST-GENERATION FOREIGN-BORN LEADERS

School: Graduate School of Education and Psychology

Dear Verzhine Gregorian:

Thank you for submitting your application for exempt review to Pepperdine University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). We appreciate the work you have done on your proposal. The IRB has reviewed your submitted IRB application and all ancillary materials. Upon review, the IRB has determined that the above entitled project meets the requirements for exemption under the federal regulations 45 CFR 46.101 that govern the protections of human subjects.

Your research must be conducted according to the proposal that was submitted to the IRB. If changes to the approved protocol occur, a revised protocol must be reviewed and approved by the IRB before implementation. For any proposed changes in your research protocol, please submit an amendment to the IRB. Since your study falls under exemption, there is no requirement for continuing IRB review of your project. Please be aware that changes to your protocol may prevent the research from qualifying for exemption from 45 CFR 46.101 and require submission of a new IRB application or other materials to the IRB.

A goal of the IRB is to prevent negative occurrences during any research study. However, despite the best intent, unforeseen circumstances or events may arise during the research. If an unexpected situation or adverse event happens during your investigation, please notify the IRB as soon as possible. We will ask for a complete written explanation of the event and your written response. Other actions also may be required depending on the nature of the event. Details regarding the timeframe in which adverse events must be reported to the IRB and documenting the adverse event can be found in the *Pepperdine University Protection of Human Participants in Research: Policies and Procedures Manual* at [community.pepperdine.edu/irb](http://community.pepperdine.edu/irb).

Please refer to the protocol number denoted above in all communication or correspondence related to your application and this approval. Should you have additional questions or require clarification of the contents of this letter, please contact the IRB Office. On behalf of the IRB, I wish you success in this scholarly pursuit.

Sincerely,

Judy Ho, Ph.D., IRB Chair

## APPENDIX B

### Master List Recruitment Script

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Verzhine Gregorian and I am a doctoral student at the Graduate School of Education and Psychology at Pepperdine University. For the purpose of my dissertation I am conducting a study on success strategies of foreign-born first-generation Armenian Leaders. The purpose of my study is to explore the challenges and barriers Armenians go through with the process of acculturation and assimilation when they arrive to United States as children or as adults. The main focus is to study the success strategies of Armenians who have come to the U.S. as immigrants and worked their way up succeeding in various areas and industries.

I am looking to get a list of Armenian Leaders in Southern California (Los Angeles County preferably) who I can ask for a short 45-60 minute interview. I am looking to get a list of 50 contacts; to whom I can send a short questionnaire and chose the final 15 participants. Once I chose the final 15 participants, I will schedule an interview with them. I will also present a confidentiality agreement, which states that no name, identity, or specific information about the participant will be disclosed.

Best Regards,

Verzhine Julfayan-Gregorian

## APPENDIX C

### Interview Recruitment Script

Dear Sir / Madam,

My name is Verzhine Julfayan-Gregorian, and I am a doctoral student in the Graduate School of Education and Psychology at Pepperdine University. I am currently working on my dissertation entitled SUCCESS STRATEGIES OF FIRST-GENERATION FOREIGN-BORN LEADERS. The purpose of this study is to examine the success strategies of foreign-born first-generation Armenian leaders.

If you are a foreign-born first-generation leader of Armenian descent and you agree to participate in this study, please let me know and we can proceed with setting interview date, time and place. The interview is anticipated to take no more than 60 minutes; it will be in person and at a location of your choice. The interview will be recorded to assist with the data collection. Participation in this study is voluntary. Your identity as a participant will remain confidential during and after the study.

If you have questions or would like to participate, please contact me at

[verzhine.gregorian@pepperdine.edu](mailto:verzhine.gregorian@pepperdine.edu).

Thank you for your participation,

Verzhine Julfayan-Gregorian

Pepperdine University

Graduate School of Education and Psychology

Doctoral Student

## APPENDIX D

Pepperdine University

Graduate School of Education and Psychology

### **INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH ACTIVITIES**

#### SUCCESS STRATEGIES OF FIRST-GENERATION FOREIGN-BORN LEADERS

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by principal investigator and doctoral candidate, Verzhine Julfayan Gregorian, with guidance by Farzin Madjidi, Ed.D., Lani Simpao Fraizer, Ed.D., and Gabriella Miramontes, Ed.D. at Pepperdine University, because you have been identified as first-generation foreign-born leader of Armenian descent. Your participation is voluntary. You should read the information below, and ask questions about anything that you do not understand, before deciding whether to participate. Please take as much time as you need to read the consent form. You may also decide to discuss participation with your family or friends. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to sign this form. You will also be given a copy of this form for your records.

#### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of the study is to examine the exemplary practices and strategies employed by successful first-generation, foreign-born leaders. The research study is designed to identify the challenges faced by first-generation, foreign-born leaders in achieving success. The findings may inform how first-generation, foreign-born leaders measure their success and what recommendations they have for future leaders looking to come to the United States.

#### **STUDY PROCEDURES**

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to partake in an interview with the principal investigator, Verzhine Julfayan Gregorian. You will be asked a series of interview questions regarding your experience as a first-generation foreign-born leader. The interview will be audio recorded in order to maximize accuracy. All audio files will be password-protected, transcribed, and subsequently destroyed.

#### **POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS**

The potential and foreseeable risks associated with participation in this study include a

breach of confidentiality or interview fatigue. The researcher will minimize the risk of breach of confidentiality by keeping all files on a password-protected computer. The researcher will minimize the risk of interview fatigue by ensuring the interviews do not exceed a duration of one hour. Personally identifiable information will not be used and the principal investigator will be using a coding process to minimize this risk.

## **POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY**

While there are no direct benefits to the study participants, the anticipated benefits to society include a better understanding of how first-generation foreign-born leaders measure their success and what are the challenges they were faced with.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

The records collected for this study will be confidential far as permitted by law. However, if required to do so by law, it may be necessary to disclose information collected about you. Examples of the types of issues that would require me to break confidentiality are if any instances of child abuse and elder abuse are disclosed. Pepperdine's University's Human Subjects Protection Program (HSPP) may also access the data collected. The HSPP occasionally reviews and monitors research studies to protect the rights and welfare of research subjects.

The data will be stored on a password-protected computer in the principal investigator's place of residence. The data collected will be coded and de-identified. The data will be stored for a minimum of three years and then destroyed.

Any identifiable information obtained in connection with this study will remain confidential. Your name, address, firm name, or other identifiable information will not be included as a part of this study. Your responses will be coded with a pseudonym and transcript data will be maintained separately. The audio recordings will be destroyed once they have been transcribed. You have the right to review and edit the transcripts.

## **SUSPECTED NEGLECT OR ABUSE OF CHILDREN**

Under California law, the researcher(s) who may also be a mandated reporter will not maintain as confidential, information about known or reasonably suspected incidents of abuse or neglect of a child, dependent adult or elder, including, but not limited to, physical, sexual, emotional, and financial abuse or neglect. If any researcher has or is given such information, he or she is required to report this abuse to the proper authorities.

## **PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

Your participation is voluntary. Your refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights, or remedies because of your participation in this research study.

## **ALTERNATIVES TO FULL PARTICIPATION**

The alternative to participation in the study is not participating or only completing the items for which you feel comfortable.

## **EMERGENCY CARE AND COMPENSATION FOR INJURY**

If you are injured as a direct result of research procedures you will receive medical treatment; however, you or your insurance will be responsible for the cost. Pepperdine University does not provide any monetary compensation for injury.

## **INVESTIGATOR'S CONTACT INFORMATION**

You understand that the investigator is willing to answer any inquiries you may have concerning the research herein described. You understand that you may contact Verzhine Julfayan Gregorian ([verzhine.gregorian@pepperdine.edu](mailto:verzhine.gregorian@pepperdine.edu)) or Farzin Madjidi ([farzin.madjidi@pepperdine.edu](mailto:farzin.madjidi@pepperdine.edu)) if you have any other questions or concerns about this research.

## **RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT—IRB CONTACT INFORMATION**

If you have questions, concerns, or complaints about your rights as a research participant or research in general, please contact Dr. Judy Ho, Chairperson of the Graduate & Professional Schools Institutional Review Board at Pepperdine University, 6100 Center Drive, Suite 500, Los Angeles, CA 90045, 310-568-5753 or [gpsirb@pepperdine.edu](mailto:gpsirb@pepperdine.edu).