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Acculturation of Hispanics/Latinos and its Impact on Public Relations Through the Framework of Secondary Research

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Dedication

This project is dedicated to my family, spouse, friends, and educators at Seton Hall University. A special thanks to my parents, who are the reason for what I have become today. Thank you for the support and encouragement you give me daily. Many thanks to my peers for their help and clarifications whenever I needed extra help. Thanks to my advisor, Dr. Schray, for providing me with all the necessary advice and guidance. Finally, thank you to every person who stayed by my side, sharing words of reassurance and supporting this dream of mine.

Abstract

Hispanics and Latinos are the largest growing minority in the United States. Despite this, they are less likely to be targeted for public relations (PR) campaigns. Through secondary research of previous literature on the subject, it was established that PR does not implement strategies to address this population successfully. This project aimed to investigate the importance of acculturation, cultural representation, language, and media selection for effective PR practices. Then, a modified PR model was presented for professionals to adopt while targeting this ethnic group.

Key words: acculturation, immigrants, minorities, PR, RPIE, cultural competence, Hispanic, Latinos, assimilation, and dominant culture.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

Chapter 1

Statement of the Problem

Introduction

Globalization has become an essential aspect of modern society. *Globalization* "is the economic, political, socio-cultural, and temporal integration of people, values, goods, and services enabled through advances in technology, travel, and communication" (Byers, 2012, para. 1). Due to globalization, the United States has become the host to thousands of immigrants every year. These immigrants constitute a remarkably diverse group of individuals that nearly represent every country in the world (U.S. Immigration, n.d.). Societies are experiencing a development known as acculturation due to the number of immigrants residing in each state of the United States.

Acculturation is defined as the process of altering the adoptive culture while retaining elements of one's original culture. On the contrary, *assimilation* assumes rejecting one's old culture by favoring the new culture one is exposed to (Adams & Johnson, 2020). The method of learning a new culture leads to broad changes, including transformations in values, attitudes, behavior, and language usage (Baack et al., 2013). Acculturation can be achieved by working with diverse individuals, encouraging them to be open about their personal opinions, and educating everyone about differences they may encounter within their new society (Goldberg et al., 2019).

A critical aspect of acculturation is immigration. *Immigration* is defined as the "entry of a person into a political unit, usually a state, with the aim of establishing permanent residence" (Anheier, 2012, para. 1). Society can be impacted by immigration, and due to these changes, there can be profound economic, social, and political results for the nations involved. Countries

that become hosts for immigrants can struggle to integrate them into society. Part of the reason is that there are not enough organizations willing to help in the acculturation process.

Another important term to be defined is *Public Relations (PR),* which is a management function that establishes and nurtures mutual understandings, acknowledgments, and collaborations between the public and an organization (Johnston, n.d.,). As time and demographics change, PR depends on acculturation to reach out to the community according to their levels of interaction and acceptance between cultures. The acculturation level of a group will determine the tactics PR needs to have to communicate effectively across ethnicities and races.

The PR field has to constantly adapt to the changes related to individuals with diverse backgrounds living in the United States and abroad. Globalization has opened the doors for PR practitioners to learn and be involved in diverse settings. It has also created exposure to different cultures by increasing the frequency and intensity of involvement. The concept of diversity includes agreement and respect, and it provides us the understanding of seeing each person as unique and recognizing individuals' differences. It makes a difference for individuals to be treated with respect and care while sharing their desires and goals with others (Lawrence-lightfoot, 2012). The overall idea is that with acculturation on both sides, we can understand one another to embrace and celebrate the richness of diversity (Patrick & Kumar, 2012).

Information is widely available online regarding immigration. For example, an article published by *The Washington Post* on October 26, 2021, stated that:

The United States has more immigrants than any other nation — about 45 million, or nearly 14 percent of the population, according to the Pew Research Center. If you or your

parents are not among them, chances are you don't have to look far back on your family tree to discover which of your ancestors made the daring decision to leave their homeland and start a new life here. A 1908 play popularized the term "melting pot" to describe how the blending of nationalities, customs, and beliefs made the United States stronger. (Tousignant, para. 3 and 8)

Articles like this one can help the nation comprehend the current reality of diversity and the need for effective inclusion to achieve success as social beings and organizations.

Problem Statement

Every professional field is evolving to catch up with the changes society faces. PR is no exception; considering the predominance of this field has grown significantly in recent years, one can see the rapid increment of PR professionals in and outside the country. At the moment, one of the biggest tasks is to represent the Hispanic/Latino community equally. This ethnic group should become a constant target for campaigns and communication efforts considering the growth of the population in the past decades.

The U.S. Census Bureau collected data in 2020 regarding the Hispanic or Latino population. This ethnicity can include people of any race. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, there are 62.1 million Hispanics/Latinos in the United States in 2020. This population grew 23%, while the non-Hispanic or Latino origin population grew 4.3% since 2010. The Hispanic/Latino population increased from 50.5 million in 2010 to 62.1 million in 2020. Approximately more than half (51.1%) of the total U.S. population growth between 2010 and 2020 originated from the Hispanic/Latino population (Improved Race, n.d.).

The large numbers of Hispanics/Latinos in the United States open new opportunities for PR firms to take risks and create more ways to communicate with the ever-changing world. PR

should be willing to make the best out of the opportunities presented because the field cannot remain static; societies change, and so should their approach. Having a solid foundation with this cultural group can increase the success of communication and marketing within PR. Diversified PR can have positive outcomes in the future because work opportunities can present inside this nation and on an international level.

The emergence of globalization and immigration has modified the ways organizations and individuals communicate. There has been limited research on the effects of acculturation in PR, specifically regarding Hispanics/Latinos. This ethnic group has become the most significant minority in the United States. There is a substantial gap in how PR is willing to change tactics and strategies to produce campaigns that fit the Hispanic/Latino culture equally. Thus, it is crucial to gain a deeper understanding of the acculturation process of Hispanics/Latinos inside the PR field to rework the approaches that can be modified to fit different cultural norms.

Purpose of the Study

Since PR is deeply embedded in race and ethnicity (Munshi & Edwards, 2011), scholars are just starting to engage with the idea of changing approaches of PR with the Hispanic/Latino population. The best practice to achieve adequate interaction between PR and Hispanic/Latinos is acculturation. This argument led to the following research questions:

> **RQ 1:** How has the acculturation of Hispanics/Latinos impacted the PR industry in the United States?

> **RQ 2:** What media channels can PR practitioners use to reach Hispanics/Latinos in the process of acculturation?

Acculturation is a positive skill that immigrants have to try to adapt to their new home country. However, PR practitioners are not fully aware of the transitions and efforts required

from society to adapt to newcomers and their values. Individuals who practice PR need to develop more skills to fully comprehend the process and intention behind acculturation. Part of the process is to learn the language and the customs to fit in with society and not face discrimination or bias. Considering that Hispanics/Latinos are the most significant minority within the United States, diversity has become a big topic in the past couple of years. Many organizations are in the process of learning to implement variety and representation as principles to connect PR and Hispanics/Latinos (Reinoso, 2021). Reinoso (2020) describes that there are some values that PR can use to attract the fastest-growing minority group in the United States. These values are truthfulness, authenticity, enthusiasm, and transparency.

By investigating the relationship between PR and Hispanics/Latinos, this project examined current data available on the subject to determine if PR is providing minorities with information according to their needs and their language of preference. Language became a significant component of this research. The reason for that is that language affects communication. One cannot actively participate in the communication cycle if one cannot understand the language used for advertisements and campaigns. Learning the dialect is also a path to learning the cultural norms surrounding a specific group (Curtin & Gaither, 2007). It would benefit PR practitioners to learn the Spanish language and lead others to practice it. The more one knows, the more capable one can feel about the use of language in relevance to culture. It can become detrimental to the relationship between PR and Hispanics/Latinos if there is no effort to target their language and cultural background. PR will become fully inclusive when the practitioners are "willing to work through barriers to develop a worldview" (Curtin & Gaither, 2007, p. 253). This includes getting immersed in the cultural behaviors of the community.

Organization of Study

The PR field is expanding globally, and the need for acculturation is imminent. As the Hispanic and Latino communities are still underrepresented in the PR industry, this study aimed to identify the disconnect between the concept of inclusion and its practice. Therefore, to examine the relationship between PR and acculturation of Hispanics/Latinos, this study consisted of five chapters: Chapter 1: Statement of the Problem; Chapter 2: Literature Review; Chapter 3: Methods; Chapter 4: Findings; and Chapter 5: Conclusion.

Chapter 1 discussed the purpose of the study and its rationale; Chapter 2 examines research related to acculturation, Hispanics/Latinos, and PR. In the process of collecting research for the literature review in Chapter 2, the gap in the literature showed that PR had not made adequate adjustments to serve the Hispanic/Latino population in their campaigns, and no potential solution was provided on how to increase diversity and inclusion for this ethnic group.

In order to try to close the gap in the literature, Chapter 3 was based on the approach of Secondary Research. This analysis examined the PR efforts to communicate effectively with Hispanics/Latinos and the acculturation process these groups endure while becoming part of society. The content analysis allowed the researcher to further search understudied information and provide further guidance for individuals and companies who aim to represent Hispanics/Latinos in the PR field.

The following section is Chapter 4; this chapter will discuss the findings of the interaction between PR and Hispanics/Latinos in the context of acculturation. The data analyzed for this research is qualitative in nature. Finally, the strengths and limitations of the study, the opportunity for future research, and concluding remarks are included in Chapter 5.

The following chapter, titled "Literature Review," will examine key themes that guided the research question of this study.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

A scholarly literature review was conducted to assess how PR adjusts to the increasing levels of diversity due to immigration and the acculturation process of these individuals. This chapter will further discuss the complexity of the relationship between Hispanic/Latinos and the PR field as it relates to the RPIE model as a guideline provided by the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA). This literature review will elaborate on the importance and understanding of the different cultures and identities and their contribution to the area of study. This chapter will explore previous literature on the same subject matter to attempt to answer the research questions that guide this master project.

While research exists on the subject of acculturation, there is a noticeable deficiency of examination into a connection between acculturation and PR. The data collected for this literature review was found on the Seton Hall Library Database. The search was based on the following key terms: *acculturation, immigrants, minorities, migration, PR, RPIE, cultural competence, Hispanic, Latinos, assimilation,* and *dominant culture*. Initially, the results were not concise enough; a quick search of the database provided 87,766 results. The investigation was then narrowed down using advanced search settings within the database and combining key terms with specific filters such as title, abstract, and time frame. The final list reviewed was 178 results. From this list, after reading general information, there was the possibility to narrow down the selected material by manually choosing which readings had similarities with the research subject.

This search was based on material that investigated acculturation and its impact on PR. Thesis papers, dissertations, conference papers, dictionaries, and book reviews were not included

in the documents reviewed. This research aims to analyze the importance of acculturation and its impact on PR to communicate messages to a diverse society successfully through PR campaigns. This research is based on different sources that were selected upon investigation and selection. This list is based on 71.4% academic journals, 16.07% books, 7.14% web pages, and 5.35% encyclopedias. The reference list of the articles used was then checked for other relevant sources. Considering the findings from the journal articles fall within particular categories, the body of this paper is organized as such. The research questions that guided the orientation of this paper are:

RQ 1: How has the acculturation of Hispanics/Latinos impacted the PR industry in the United States?

RQ 2: What media channels can PR practitioners use to reach Hispanics/Latinos in the process of acculturation?

The span of the sources selected is from 1997 to 2021, being the most recent. The data collected after being carefully reviewed were separated into categories. This classification was organized from a broader subject to a more specific topic. This list included PR, Spanish-speaking immigrants; minorities and discrimination; cultural identity; cultural competence, and acculturation and adaptation.

Learning a new culture leads to broad changes, including transformations in values, attitudes, behavior, and language usage (Baack et al., 2013). Acculturation can be achieved by working with diverse individuals, encouraging them to be open about their personal opinions, and educating everyone about differences they may encounter within society (Goldberg et al., 2019).

The term discrimination stress has been used to describe the impact of personal or indirect experiences of race-related discrimination (Becerra et al., 2012). When a person decides to migrate, there are feelings of excitement and fear. The process of acculturation and adaptation is different for every person and every family. When these individuals are able to find support and resources in the community, this can become an easier transition. This is why it becomes essential for government offices, PR agencies, and nonprofit organizations to provide guidelines and resources within the community to welcome these individuals and introduce the cultural norms.

Because globalization has brought the world closer together, exposure to different cultures has increased the frequency and intensity of involvement. The PR field has to face the upcoming changes related to individuals with diverse backgrounds. Therefore, an understanding of acculturation and cultural competence training is needed. Culturally competent knowledge is broadly defined as information and curricula that aim to enhance individuals' capability and efficiency to work in multicultural settings, both within a country and across national boundaries (Chao et al., 2011).

Strategies to improve and achieve cultural competence are defined to expand accessibility to a diverse body of employees of racial and ethnic minorities by increasing awareness, knowledge, and skills to modify organizations' policies and practices. Cultural competency may not have an endpoint because it is ever-evolving.

The concept of diversity includes agreement and respect, and it provides us the understanding of recognizing each individual's unique characteristics and recognizing differences.The overall idea is that with acculturation on both sides, we can understand one another to embrace and celebrate the richness of diversity (Patrick & Kumar, 2012).

Theoretical Framework

Historically, acculturation has been examined from an anthropological approach investigating how indigenous people assimilate to "modern," new cultural influences (Ozer, 2017). This conception of acculturation was later transferred to groups of immigrants adopting the culture in their new host society. The process of acculturation involves multiple variables, with changes in behavior, such as the use of language, food preference, peer group interaction, media consumption, and changes in attitude, such as preferences for the involved cultural elements (Ozer, 2017). On the other hand, immigrants also carry cultural traditions, languages, and values differing from those in their new home country.

Psychological theories have mainly investigated acculturation experiences by considering how the individual adjusts to the new environment (Ozer, 2017). The changes occurring to the individual can take place immediately or over more extended periods. Ozener (2017) described that short-term adaptation tends to be challenging and negative, while long-term adaptation can have a more positive outcome. Berry (1997) explained that the overall process of adapting to new cultural influences could be associated with positive outcomes such as creativity and intercultural competencies and adverse effects such as anxiety and stress.

Acculturation does not occur as a linear process but instead is full of ambiguity and contradictions marking various stages of the process. For example, an immigrant can arrive in a new cultural environment appreciating the new cultural stream. After a period of possible discrimination, this individual can react by renouncing the new culture or negotiating ambiguity (Ozer, 2017).

The acculturation model created by John W. Berry in 2009 is one of the most cited frameworks for analyzing the challenge of acculturation. There are four categories that an

individual from different ethnocultural groups is likely to experience. First is assimilation;

people seek continuous interaction with the mainstream culture while abandoning or making

little effort to preserve their own cultural identity. The second is separation; people emphasize

maintaining their ethnocultural identities and practices while avoiding contact with the dominant

culture. The third is integration; people attempt to retain their ethnic identities while

simultaneously becoming a part of mainstream society. Lastly is marginalization; in this

category, people lose their ethnocultural foundation and fail to integrate or show interest in

integrating effectively into society (Thompson, n.d.).

According to Berry (2009), there needs to be an understanding of the resulting cultural

changes that emerge during acculturation at the cultural level. According to the circumstance, no

cultural group remains unaltered following cultural contact; acculturation is a two-way

interaction, resulting in actions and reactions. As immigration expands in the United States,

acculturation research should be applied regularly to assist or support acculturating individuals

and communities (Ward & Kagitcibasi, 2010).

Acculturation and Adaptation

Acculturation is the dual process of cultural and psychological change resulting from

contact between two or more cultural groups and their members. Simultaneously, *assimilation* is

the suppression of original heritage, favoring the host country's culture (Ting-Toomey & Dorjee,

2019). Nonetheless, *enculturation* has been used to refer to the process of selectively retaining

elements of one's culture while also selectively acquiring some aspects from the new culture

(Schwartz, 2010).

Acculturation and adaptation are essential components of the identity change process of

every person who has decided to migrate either nationally or internationally where there are

different cultural norms. Also, it is vital to discuss the implications that acculturation and adaptation might have on an immigrant and their family while there are planning to relocate or recently relocated.

Although immigrants face diverse experiences during migration to the United States, language remains a significant aspect across racial/ethnic groups (Vasquez-Guzman & Sanchez, 2018). Language accounts for most of the variance in acculturation measures because it is a strong predictor for socioeconomic and health outcomes. Overall, the longer time spent in the host country increases the likelihood of adopting the dominant language, values, and cultural practices.

A multicultural orientation refers to a mutually respectful approach that embraces a variety of cultural backgrounds. As an immigrant or a potential immigrant, there are aspects to become aware of the process of acculturation. Cultural and social constructs such as confianza (or mutual respect for exchanging information in a relationship) can support individual cases' acculturation processes (Adams & Johnson, 2019).

Health disparities among Latinos have been associated with acculturation. Like other ethnic minorities in the United States, Latinos are inclined to receive inadequate health education and services and have worse health outcomes than other non-minorities (Villar et al., 2012). To adequately reach Latinos and obtain changes in attitudes and behaviors, culturally competent health messages must consider cultural values and beliefs. This consideration is what PR needs to understand to achieve culturally diverse and competent messages through campaigns. Campaigns or any other type of communication are most likely to be effective when the sender knows the receiver's posture on the issue and modifies the message to fall within their level of acceptance.

Latino immigrants who arrived in the United States as children or young teenagers are more likely to perceive discrimination than immigrants who arrived at an older age. This may indicate that as Latino immigrants go through the acculturation process, they may have more significant interactions with non-Latinos and increased opportunities to experience discrimination (Becerra et al., 2012). Usually, older individuals have no problems communicating with other individuals to obtain information or guidance. This makes them more likely to find a support group to get information about the acculturation process and programs available for individuals who fit the guidelines. With younger generations, we can expect more independence and, therefore, a lack of request for assistance even if they need it due to judgment concerns.

Considering immigrants experience the acculturation process in unique and personal ways, PR has the power to create a support mechanism to give them encouragement and advice to make the transition easier. Perceived social support has been recognized as a highly significant protective factor of cross-cultural adaption regarding assisting foreigners in overcoming societal pressures, providing them suggestions in hardships, and reassuring them of problem-solving competencies during temporary migration experiences (Pang, 2020).

Throughout history, the United States has welcomed a large number of immigrants and assimilated them into the cultural mainstream. These individuals bring into the mixture their values, habits, and perceptions that can shift in the process of acculturation to the new host culture (Wilcox et al., 2015). This shifting of actions or behaviors can occur after the sojourners acquire a sense of observation and imitation from the individuals native to that culture.

People in the same culture will see and react to events similarly, and people from different cultures can see and respond to the same event in another form. All of the major

societal institutions—family, education, and government—help teach us about our culture. Culture is instructed from the early stages of life and is later passed from one generation to the next. Only when individuals are no longer within the same culture can they understand their own values (Heath & Coombs, 2006).

Public Relations

In 1976 an American professor, Rex Harlow, published a combination of more than 400 professional definitions of PR, dating from the early 1900s to the mid-1970s. It states,

> PR is the distinctive management function that helps establish and maintain mutual lines of communication, understanding, acceptance, and cooperation between an organization and its publics; involves the management of problems or issues; helps management to keep informed of and responsive to public opinion; defines and emphasizes the responsibility of management to serve the public interest; helps management stay abreast of and effectively utilize change, serving as an early warning system to help anticipate trends; and uses research and sound and ethical communication as its principal tools. (Bates, 2003)

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, the number of practicing PR professionals is roughly 400,000 worldwide. The largest concentration is in the United States, where there are some 200,000 practitioners. Additionally, the employment outlook for PR between 2020 and 2030 is projected to grow 13% faster than average (Public Relations, n.d.).

PR is the business function charged with planning and managing an organization's relationships with essential stakeholders through the effective use of various communication channels and methods (Gregory, 2009). Considering PR has to adapt to the demographics of the

United States and reach minority populations, it can not rely solely upon traditional tactics to gain attention. Nonprofit organizations that seek to assist with the acculturation process use their websites to present the organizational mission and story and often leverage social media networks to mobilize when needed and share information privately with vulnerable minorities (Adams & Johnson, 2020).

The tie between culture and PR is logical and evident. Because PR is essentially a communication activity, it is plausible to conclude that culture affects PR (Sriramesh, n.d.). The PR field has to elaborate messages that are effective under particular circumstances, such as immigration and acculturation. This way, the sender knows the receiver's stand on the issue and tailors the message so that it falls within their scope of acceptance (Villar et al., 2012). When trying to communicate assistance from a societal perspective, bringing minority communities into the PR field at the same level as the rest of the population is imperative.

Russell (2020) demonstrated it is essential for PR as an industry to perceive diversity in gender, race, and ethnicity rather than ignore it. There is a call for awareness of identity and communication practice regarding PR and immigrant communities. Organizations, such as ethnic nonprofits, use their websites as a form of PR (Adams & Johnson, 2019). Organizations must take individual and cultural backgrounds into account when designing their communication platform and campaigns, and this becomes fundamental when trying to create an outreach within a specific community.

PR must also consider social changes when planning efforts to advocate and adopt the communication strategies according to the group they aim to serve. Considering the challenges PR might encounter, Latino nonprofit websites may be the most strategical public "face" of an organization (Adams & Johnson, 2019). These websites become a direct source of information

for individuals seeking resources or knowledge to assist them in the acculturation process. As communication channels, nonprofit websites work as information portals and cultural intermediaries. They assume a part of the local community while promoting group culture and social advocacy positions.

PR can increase the community's growth and overreach by providing related material accessible online to different minorities trying to adapt and acculturate to the new values. This way, it can serve as a path to understanding immigrants' acculturation experience in the contemporary digital media era (Pang, 2020). Individuals tend to prefer marketing messages reflecting their home country's cultures, whether in traditional media or online content. (Baack et al., 2013). In particular, for individuals, like seniors, who do not master the language, it is fundamental for media outlets to think of ways to spread their message across barriers.

Today's world is globalized and characterized by interconnectedness and cultural diversity. This causes individuals to feel the need to prepare and learn other languages and cultures in order to better communicate with different backgrounds (Dai & Chen, 2020). The connection between PR work and culture is fundamental. As PR is involved in border crossings, there is a constant exchange of principles between organizations and communities (on and off-line). "PR practitioners are culture-workers" (L'Etang, 2012, p. 167). Culture workers refer to individuals who need to be culturally competent to work in an organization that spreads messages across the globe.

Almost everyone can now communicate and work with people from different parts of the world due to the advancements in technology (Foma, 2012). These advancements allow individuals to connect on a personal level and in a business environment. PR has the necessary tools to create a more effective channel to outreach individuals in all corners of the world.

Foma (2012) indicated that it is essential to have excellent communication with the organization's clients for the PR industry to thrive. Therefore, this includes considering the diversity of clients and their cultural backgrounds. PR has to be up to the task and have variety within its team to fulfill the job expectations. Research and communication get in place to avoid any misunderstandings. The ability to perform effectively in foreign environments and in the presence of individuals with different cultural backgrounds is crucial to success within a culturally diverse context (Vlad & Stan, 2018). PR depends on the capability of its workers to connect with diverse people.

A diverse PR workforce may also provide better and more accurate service to fulfill expectations. Diversity within the professionals in each field should include at least one person who shares similar traits with clients to understand their customers' needs better and provide better service (Gephardt et al., 2016). An organization aware of the cultural needs and language uses can significantly impact societies that are not considered. Especially in regions where we know the culture or language is not uniform, there must be more work to fulfill goals within each campaign.

In PR, culture and race are firmly instilled within its practice (Munshi & Edwards, 2011). There must be an understanding of a diversified workforce to achieve success. To be legitimately multicultural and inter-cultural, we must carry out inclusion and diversity, not just with words but also with actions as part of the frame of PR diversity. To do so, we need first to develop an understanding and deep knowledge of our identity and culture; second, accept cultural differences; third, identify and acknowledge our similarities; and fourth, commit and enact inclusion and diversity principles in the PR workforce (Sison, 2016).

According to Lim (2021), as part of a process for anticipating and solving problems, PR follows a series of steps. All of these models are categorized using acronyms, and each explains the process in an easy-to-understand manner.

The ROPE acronym stands for Research, Objectives, Planning, and Evaluation:

- Research: The PR practitioner identifies the issues organizations face or the problems clients face. They determine whether the situations pose problems and opportunities.

- Objectives: PR practitioners set goals based on understanding the situations to create themes.

- Planning: A PR practitioner develops a strategy to influence a targeted audience by allocating budget, time, and other resources.

- Evaluation: During PR campaigns and strategies, practitioners analyze if they were successful at influencing the target audience.

The RACE model stands for research, action, communication, and evaluation

- Research

- Action: Research findings are used to determine the best course of action in the interest of customers or organizations by PR professionals.

- Communication: PR professionals formulate messages for target audiences and distribute them via the appropriate channels

- Evaluation

The GRACE model includes Goal, Research, Action, Communication, and Evaluation.

- Goal setting: The mission statement of a client or organization is studied by PR practitioners.

- Research

- Action

- Communication

- Evaluation

RPIE stands for Research, Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation. On PRSA's website, the RPIE model is explained with the statement that the RPIE process "transforms PR measurement from output-based to outcomes-based.".

- Research

- Planning

- Implementation: PR practitioners implement a campaign to influence the target audience once a specific strategy has been determined.

- Evaluation

These models can be found in the literature regarding standards of PR. The RPIE model is currently the one established for use under the PRSA. The models acknowledge how PR professionals target the different populations; however, there is no step where PR professionals recognize the critical differences between cultures and ethnicities.

Table 1:

Comparison of PR Models and Components

	ROPE	RACE	GRACE	RPIE
Goal Setting			•	
Research	•	•	•	•
Objectives	•			
Action		•	•	
Planning	•			•
Implementation				•
Communication		•	•	
Evaluation	•	•	•	•

Spanish-Speaking Immigrants

According to data collected, approximately 75% of immigrants are in the United States legally, and 44% are considered naturalized citizens as of 2017 (Adams & Johnson, 2019). *Naturalized citizens* are lawful permanent residents who, after meeting the requirements established by Congress in the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), are granted United States Citizenship (Citizenship and Naturalization, n.d.). The majority of this body of immigrants are Hispanics/Latinos. Although immigrants face various experiences during migration to the United States, language remains a significant variable across racial/ethnic groups. More time spent in the host country increases the prospect of adopting the dominant language, values, and cultural practices (Vasquez-Guzman & Sanchez, 2018).

As expected, Latinos who prefer Spanish-language sources get more Latino-oriented information than those who prefer only English-language news. Spanish-language media provide Latinos with more information fitted to their interests. As a result, consumers of Spanish-language media believe that retaining their culture is essential and that they identify more strongly with Latino culture (Len-Ríos, 2017).

An example of this can be found in Wilcox et al. (2015), where Colgate targeted mothers in its "El Mes de la Salud Bucal" campaign to promote oral health. The company recognized the importance of maternal influence in Hispanic culture and therefore decided to use it to their advantage for increased marketing. Also, Heineken's recent "Demuestra Quien Eres" or "Give Yourself a Good Name" Mural Arts Series touched on the importance of Latino cultural pride and the emphasis of males on establishing a reputation.

On the other hand, considering the growing influence of bicultural and bilingual Latinos in shaping the trends of marketing and targeted media, we have to acknowledge that these individuals can strongly or weakly identify with the mainstream North-American culture and the ethnic Latino culture (Li & Tsai, 2015). As part of the acculturation process, the host country's media becomes influential in the initial adaptation stage when new immigrants have yet to acquire communication competence to engage in interpersonal communication actively. The content provided in these campaigns should educate people about the host culture and mitigate the ambiguity and anxiety of this process. The organizations in charge of promoting acculturation material need to keep in mind that ethnic media helps individuals retain cultural interactions with their cultural heritage and maintain their ethnic identity and cultural values (Li & Tsai, 2015).

It is the case that PR needs to become mindful of how to target this population correctly. Spanish-language media provides Hispanics/Latinos with more information that matches their interests. As a result, research shows that consumers of Spanish-language media believe that retaining their culture is indispensable (Len-Ríos, 2017).

Market research indicates that Hispanics prefer the advertising and other informational materials in Spanish over English, although the younger generation feels more comfortable with English. More than 90% of Hispanic youth are bilingual. However, in recent years the media in the Spanish language has dramatically increased. "There are now almost 2,500 unique U.S. Hispanic media outlets, including more than 1,200 print publications, over 1,000 television and radio outlets, and 200 Internet-only outlets" (Wilcox et al., 2015, p. 281). Univision is still the most prominent Hispanic network but is getting increased competition from NBC's Telemundo and the Fox network's Spanish language MundoFox (Wilcox et al., 2015).

Minorities and Discrimination

The PR industry is global, and the geographical interconnection and technological improvements bring organizations into contact with people from different backgrounds. Consistently, the audiences that PR serves are increasingly multicultural. Diversity is seen daily in individuals and groups' work and home lives with diverse ethnic and racial heritage in public and private spaces (Waymer, 2012).

Migration remains a thoroughly challenging experience for the person who migrates and the society that receives them. The impact can be minimized through increased awareness of the acculturation phenomenon and through focused and diversified socialization policies and practices (Van Tonder & Soontiens, 2014). When people decide to migrate, there is a fear of discrimination. The PR field can significantly reduce the stress caused by discrimination by

creating outreach campaigns to educate the host country and assist immigrants in easing the acculturation process.

One of the main issues that surround PR involves race and gender imbalances. It's no secret the PR industry is not as diverse as the audiences it purports to reach, and minorities are severely underrepresented in PR in the United States. The discourses of gender and race imbalance and unequal distribution of managerial status are not lost in international PR; they are ideologically transferred when agencies move across borders to establish new ventures (Curtin & Gaither, 2007). Therefore, PR needs to be mindful that not because an agency moves across frontiers, it means that the diversity problem is fixed automatically. They need to observe their ideologies and keep plans to change according to the needs presented.

Across the globe, organizations are more demanding of diversity and inclusion than ever before. The #MeToo and "Time's Up" movements currently place a public eye on sexual harassment and abuse of power in many corporations. "Companies worldwide are following initiatives to repel biases and remove boundaries that exclude underrepresented and marginalized groups from having a seat at the table" (Grissom, 2018, p. 242). With these initiatives, organizations are opening their doors to underrepresented minorities to participate in the PR process.

Misinformation has broadened discrimination and stereotyping of Latino immigrants in the field (Linares, 2018). However, globalization has prompted the world to get closer together; exposure to different cultures has increased the frequency and intensity of exposure (Chao et al., 2011). Fundamentally, workplace environments develop a level of cultural competence to effectively provide all workers with an environment suitable for an increasingly diverse workforce (Hutchins & Goldstein Hode, 2019).

However, PR professionals need to ensure that programs and product packaging do not reinforce negative stereotypes. An excellent example of racial insensitivity was the traditional figure of Aunt Jemima on packages of Quaker Oats food products. Her image was regarded in the black community as a condescending stereotype (Wilcox et al., 2015). This can become detrimental to the community that is affected but also to the company that launched such material. People will try to boycott their message or product due to negative stereotypes that create misperceptions on a general level.

Cultural Identity

The bicultural model considers that individuals can retain their cultural identity and establish a beneficial relationship with the dominant culture (Bacallao & Smokowski, 2011). Even though this is not impossible, it is tough to achieve a balance between the cultures. On the other hand, social dominance orientation is the predisposition to favor hierarchical relationships and believe that some groups are inherently superior or more deserving than others (Ward & Kagitcibasi, 2010). It becomes a personal choice of the immigrant to achieve the bicultural model, maintain their original culture as the dominant one, or blend in with the new societal norms. However, the choice will more likely be impacted by the perception of their new home country and the information available to them.

Part of the acculturation process is the mingling stage, which includes openness in understanding and accepting the host culture—at the same time, mingling consists of following traditions consistent with the dominant culture's value system (Kreuzer et al., 2018). Minglin might be more accessible for some but more challenging for others, and this also depends on the geographical area they are located. People from the host culture should have tactics to approach

their new integrants. This would reduce the anticipation and stress of thinking, "what if we are not accepted or fit in?"

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) defines *workplace diversity* as the collection of employees' backgrounds, knowledge, and experiences that must work together to achieve organizational goals (Policy, Data, n.d.). Multicultural approaches celebrate group differences and identities, encouraging individuals to learn about and accept differences among groups. As it may be known, some individuals can use strategies to cope with discrimination; the responsibility of addressing prejudice and discrimination should not rest only on the targets' shoulders. In addition to reducing the possibility of harm associated with these strategies, organizations should also take proactive measures to prevent them (Shih et al., 2013). The steps help alleviate the pressure on minorities who are trying to cope with discrimination, allowing companies to take part in helping while preventing this from happening.

Cultural Competence

In an organizational context, *cultural competence* is the ability to manage the different employee cultural characteristics (i.e., employees' diversity or cultural diversity) to build a competent organization (Borrego & Johnson III, 2012). Cultural competence is a crucial aspect to be considered in every work environment, and this can guarantee more acceptance and success within corporations on a national or international level. There are several ways to define globalization based on the increasing global interconnectivity as the result of constant exchanges of important factors across national borders, such as economy, culture, technology, finance, and human interaction (Heath, 2013). The global exchange of information is essential for success in the PR field.

Cultural competence can be used to reveal hidden discrimination in a workplace regarding immigration, globalization, colonialism, and personal forces like disability, color, and "queer" identity (Pompper, 2005). Members of an identity group and members of an organizational group define the essence of people in the organization (Ghosh, 2014). In addition to the essential value of involvement, organizations seek diversity for several reasons. These may include organizations that want to be diverse to gratify the goals stated in their mission statements. Others might do it because of applicable employment laws that regulate the industries in that area. And lastly, some organizations diversify in an attempt to deepen their knowledge of the beliefs and values of their employees and shareholders. By becoming proficient with this knowledge, these companies can adjust their guidelines and processes to improve the delivery of goods and services (Fisk et al., 2018).

Competence builds upon the ongoing process of learning and engaging with culturally different populations. This practice of "learning" can be characterized as an evolution from cultural awareness towards cultural competence (Carrizales, 2019).

Historically, cultural competence with diversified populations is attributed to individuals and groups from non-White racial, ethnic, or cultural origins. However, the term has progressed to include group differences relating to gender, sexuality, religion, age, ability, language, nationality, and others. (Abrams & Moio, 2009). Cultural competence also has the ability to work and communicate effectively and appropriately with individuals with different cultural backgrounds. While appropriateness implies not disregarding the valued rules, effectiveness means attaining the valued goals and outcomes in intercultural interactions (Alizadeh & Chavan, 2015).

Many people will agree that a workgroup composed of very diverse people can be more effective than a workgroup where everyone is similar. Diversity can enrich a group, but it can also bring in the possibility of misunderstandings and discord. To make the diverse workgroup perform effectively, the group's cultural diversity has to be managed so that it contributes to the members' coordinated efforts, and doing that requires cultural competence (Borrego & Johnson lll, 2012).

Cultural competence provides the capacity to function successfully with people from different cultural backgrounds. "It takes a crucial step beyond awareness-raising and sensitization, recognizing that dealing with individuals and communities from diverse upbringings requires particular skills that do not necessarily come automatically but can be acquired through training and improved by practice" (Matlin et al., 2019, p. 2913). Intercultural competence incorporates three related dimensions: skills, awareness, and sensitivity. Skills are emulated through effective communication and intercultural interactions. Awareness is associated with the ability to discern how culture affects thinking, behavior, and interactions. Lastly, sensitivity refers to an individual's scope to comprehend and appreciate cultural differences (Chiu et al., 2013).

Cultural awareness concentrates on learning about the rules and customs of multicultural groups. On the other hand, cultural competence is an established structure that broadens an organization's internal and external ability to support and enforce protocols that promote worker attitudes, staff diversity, cross-cultural communication, and continuing relationships with multicultural communities and shareholders (Shepherd et al., 2019).

Summary

Ultimately, the process of acculturation, immigration, and PR go hand in hand. Serving minority groups in the United States is a community effort that seeks to engage in the public interest and societal needs. Organizations are culture-bound, and culture affects communication and PR, and vice versa (Sriramesh, n.d.). From the material gathered on this literature review, it is evident that there is a gap in the information regarding the importance and impact of acculturation and adaptation and the room for improvement of PR with immigrant communities. This research sought to answer the following questions about PR:

> **RQ 1:** How has the acculturation of Hispanics/Latinos impacted the PR industry in the United States?

> **RQ 2:** What media channels can PR practitioners use to reach Hispanics/Latinos in the process of acculturation?

As shown by the literature, the PR industry needs to expand the scope of its work to the communities and the different cultural backgrounds involved. PR can help the sojourners adapt to a new culture on their own terms and educate the host country to be more welcoming and open-minded to new perspectives and cultures. The immigrant communities struggle with the lack of representation in the communication and the media field. Most people who decide to commence the immigration journey are aware that they need to adapt to the new geographic location and take on some of the values and traditions from their new home country to succeed and blend in within the community.

Considering we live in a globalized world, we would expect to see more accessibility and support in the communities where immigrants reside. However, we cannot eliminate racial bias

due to misunderstandings or lack of knowledge of the host culture. Some organizations are seeking more opportunities to deliver messages in different languages and with different cultural connotations. This goal's achievement will rely upon investigation and relationship with the community to know their needs and offer resources for potential assistance in the acculturation process.

The research reviewed information that is a foundation for a secondary research approach that aims to close the gap between PR and acculturating Hispanics/Latinos. This is outlined in the next chapter, titled "Methods."

Chapter 3

Methods

Introduction

The research problem that this project is exploring is the acculturation process and its significance in PR. Considering Hispanics/Latinos are the most significant minority in the United States, PR has to value their acculturation process and change the delivery methods to target that population.

To fully grasp the need to understand the relationship of PR and their communication approach to acculturating Hispanics/Latinos, this master project focuses on the impact of acculturation in PR concerning the growing minority of Hispanics/Latinos in the United States. This project analyses the media channels that best fit this population and their communication styles.

The emergence of globalization and immigration has modified the ways organizations and individuals communicate. Little research has been conducted about the influence of acculturation in PR, specifically regarding Hispanics/Latinos. In addition, there is not enough information regarding the media channels this ethnic group prefers to receive communication. There is a gap in how PR is willing to change tactics and strategies to produce campaigns that fit the Hispanic/Latino culture and effectively share this material with the public. Thus, it is crucial to gain a deeper understanding of the acculturation process of Hispanics/Latinos inside the PR field to rework the approaches and selection of media channels that can be modified to fit different cultural norms.

The research questions that guide this project are:

RQ 1: How has the acculturation of Hispanics/Latinos impacted the PR industry in the United States?

RQ 2: What media channels can PR practitioners use to reach Hispanics/Latinos in the process of acculturation?

Methodology

The operative words that hint at my methodology are impacted and reach. Secondary research is the best approach to determining the gaps in the literature and providing a roadmap for future scholars. Secondary research represents the analysis of published findings (Stacks, 2017). The secondary research analysis is crucial in determining if earlier material can withstand the current standards. "Secondary research can be conducted on both qualitative and quantitative data and analyzed specifically from a public relations perspective" (Stacks, 2017, p. 188).

This method is the best approach to answering the RQs, considering there is not enough information on the relationship between PR and acculturation of Hispanics/Latinos. This research method was selected because of its ability to yield various details regarding the topic at hand. With all the data, the researcher was able to use the information on familiar fields that allowed an association on the research topic to be able to determine the relationship between PR and acculturation of Hispanics/Latinos.

Qualitative research is an inquiry process based on distinct methodological approaches that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed participants' views, and conducts the study in a natural setting (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Qualitative research is used for narrative, content, discourse, archival, and phonemic analysis—even statistics, tables, graphs, and numbers. It also draws on selecting

approaches, methods, phenomenology, feminism, deconstructionism, ethnographies, interviews, cultural studies, survey research, and participant observation. No specific method or practice can be privileged over another. Each method bears traces of its disciplinary history (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

This study is also grounded on triangulation because the research was done using multiple and different sources, investigations, and theories to corroborate evidence for validating this study's accuracy (Creswell & Poth, 2018). On the other hand, this research was guided by themes or categories. Qualitative research is a comprehensive unit of information that gathers several codes to form a common interpretation (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Considering this research aims to analyze the existing literature on acculturation and PR, the method selected is the most fitting to achieve the goal of the investigation. This methodology guided the process of determining themes and categories that allowed the study to collect data and analyze it according to the guidelines established.

Data Collection

Academic resources constitute data in the project. This data can provide information regarding the lack of relationship between the acculturation process and PR and their correlation with media channels for effective communication.

All the data collected for this research was found on the Seton Hall Library Database. The search was based on the following key terms: acculturation, immigrants, minorities, migration, PR, Hispanic, Latinos, assimilation, and dominant culture. Initially, the results were not concise enough; a quick search on the database provided 87,766 results. The investigation was then narrowed down using advanced search settings within the database and combining key

terms with specific filters such as title, abstract, and time frame. The final list reviewed was 178 results. From this list, after reading general information, there was the possibility to narrow down the selected material by manually choosing which readings had similarities with the research subject.

This investigation was based on material that was investigating acculturation and its impact on PR. The research did not include thesis papers, dissertations, conference papers, dictionaries, or book reviews. This research aims to analyze the importance of acculturation and its impact on PR to become a more diverse society. This research is based on different sources that were selected upon investigation and selection. This list is based on 60% academic journals, 30% books, 5% web pages, and 5% encyclopedias. The reference list of the articles used was then checked for other relevant sources. Considering the findings from the journal articles fall within particular categories, the body of this paper is organized as such. The sources' spam is from 1997 to 2021, being the most recent.

The data collected after being carefully reviewed was separated into five categories. This classification included PR; immigrants/migration/Spanish language; minorities/discrimination; biculturalism/cultural identity/dominant culture; and lastly acculturation/adaptation.

The data was selected according to the value of the information presented. Each journal, book, literature, etc., will be examined by searching keywords and themes related to the overall project. Also, each source was reviewed on their reference list to obtain other valuable sources. The criteria for selection were based on the material found; this means recent information within the past ten years and keywords that fit the overall study being produced. This research will require large amounts of information regarding the amount of data needed.

Data Analysis

The project will be implemented within PR research, Hispanic/Latino information, media channels for effective communication, and the acculturation process. This project will guide individuals who seek information about the different themes discussed throughout the project. The research was conducted using Seton Hall Database and Google Scholar.

Secondary research is a method that aims to record the prominent features of existing literature using categories. These categories are directed toward producing data in response to specific research questions or hypotheses (Franklin et al., 2005). After collecting relevant data and reading all the information, a list was elaborated to find similarities and differences among the sources found. With the similarities in place, the researcher created themes by using color codes on the material. Also, excerpts from the journal articles were selected to demonstrate the classification of the categories.

Method Limitations

This study recognizes its limitations, the most prominent one being the amount of content found about a particular subject. Considering all the relevant information found on databases regarding PR, acculturation and Hispanics/Latinos, this study requires drawing samples of the available data to select the information pertinent to the subject.

Another limitation of this methodology is the access to databases by researchers who are seeking information on the field. Considering some information requires affiliation to an institution, this might cause a barrier due to the lack of information widely available for everyone to access.

Summary

This methods chapter aimed to address the research questions that guided this study. As previously stated, the researcher selected a qualitative textual analysis for the project's methodology. After examining the strengths and limitations of this method, it was determined that the qualifications needed for the research question were met.

The secondary research for this study focused on searching for the relationship and impact between Hispanics/Latinos and the acculturation process within the United States. The information was selected from the SHU database and filtered through different information levels. Once having a list of materials related directly to the study, the researcher broke down themes and color-coding information to discuss and create links among the data obtained. This process allowed the examination of the information regarding the subject of investigation.

The next chapter, titled "Findings," seeks to fill in the gap from the Literature Review in chapter 2 to effectively discuss the implications of media and ethnicity for PR practices. The upcoming chapter analyzed academic findings as a way to complement the information found in chapter 2, following the method described in this chapter.

Chapter 4

Findings

Since the role of PR is increasingly growing, it is critical to understand whether current PR professionals use distinctive methods of communication with different ethnicities, especially Hispanics/Latinos in the United States. Throughout this document, a gap in scholarly literature is present regarding whether PR considers the acculturation process of Hispanics/Latinos when creating effective campaigns that have a greater outreach in the community. The literature review in Chapter 2 acknowledges the shift of demographics in this country; however, there are no apparent attempts to increase ethnic and language intercommunication. As a result, this research project conducted an extended literature review related to PR, acculturation, and Hispanics/Latinos.

Acculturation has been conventionally defined as the process adopted by ethnic individuals who acquire social norms and values of dominant reference groups in mainstream society (Yun Kim, 1979). One can see this process taking place in people who have immigrated to the United States from all over the world. According to Berry (2009), acculturation can be assessed by identifying four types of adaptation: two positive and two negatives. The positive factors (or those moving towards adaptation) are assimilation and integration. Integrating means retaining cultural identity while assimilation is relinquishing it. Assimilation is joining the dominant society and abandoning cultural identity. Separation from the dominant culture and marginalization are the two negative aspects of adaptation. Separation is the withdrawal from traditional culture, and marginalization is being removed from it culturally and psychologically (Duty, 2015).

Previous research has identified several factors that impact the acculturation process, including language proficiency, demographic variables, length of stay in the host country, inter-ethnic marriage, and media use (Negy & Snyder, 2000). Media use is believed to be a critical factor in the acculturation process since it is significantly related to an individual's language skills, behavior, information-seeking options, and social interaction (Yang et al., 2004). A country that is open to helping individuals in the process of acculturation takes the initiative of leading new ways to communicate effectively by using any mass media available.

The rapid changes in the demographics of the United States are altering the way PR and marketing approach their campaigns. Increasingly, professionals in the field are changing their strategy from appealing to a single mass audience to targeting audiences based on ethnic and racial lines. Nowadays, it is required for an organization to target specific demographics by tailoring programs according to their needs (Nuiry, 1997). An organization aware of this potential would bring more inclusion and success in a given campaign or project and have more outreach to future target populations inside a geographical area.

Education and entertainment play a crucial role in the media industry. Many media companies have realized that part of reflecting diverse perspectives on-screen and in print is having a diverse workforce. As the US population becomes more diverse, a diverse workforce becomes more critical. Language can determine their success on many levels for individuals who are new to society, including financial, educational, and even health care access. Language use is related to ability and several other factors, such as historical, geographical, social contexts, social class, and identity politics (Kerevel, 2011). For Hispanics/Latinos, language is fundamental when establishing in this nation.

The Hispanic/Latino Market is challenging to define because this ethnic group is constantly evolving due to acculturation and immigration patterns (Puente, 2012). Something also important is that even though most of this population speaks Spanish, individuals native to Brazil speak Portuguese. With this being said, one can also point out the differences in dialect and meaning that each nation has regarding the Spanish language.

Marketing research suggests Spanish-language advertising is more effective at getting its message across than English-language ads (Kerevel, 2011). This ties directly into the accessibility of information people have and each household's language preference. The Spanish language is the predominant basis of U.S. Hispanic-driven media (Dávila, 2012). Most individuals, regardless of nationality, feel more identified and included when the mass media has a dedicated space or channel to address them in a language that they feel comfortable with.

With media being provided in another language, one problem might arise. Media and communication channels targeted at Hispanics/Latinos tend to reflect their ethnic culture; however, the communication is provided in a simplified manner compared to the host country's culture (Li & Tsai, 2015). The Hispanic/Latino community in the United States suffered centuries of social and political marginalization before the 1970s. This minority was non-existent for English-language mainstream media, government work, and academic research (Arias & Hellmueller, 2016).

Throughout the 1960s, the term "Hispanic" started to be used by American media institutions, which employed this terminology to cover issues related to Mexican-American and Puerto Rican communities (Mora, 2014). During the 1970s, the US Census Bureau created the demographic label for statistical purposes (Arias & Hellmueller, 2016). Television networks

began the production of documentaries, shows, and news in Spanish between the 1960s and 1980s in an attempt to target Hispanic audiences (Mora, 2014).

The data collected for this secondary research was found on the Seton Hall Library Database. The search was based on the following key terms: Media, immigrants, migration, PR, Hispanic, Latinos, ethnicities, and dominant culture. Due to the number of results, the investigation was then narrowed down using advanced search settings within the database and combining key terms with specific filters such as title, abstract, and time frame.

This search was based on material that investigated the media approach and its importance to Hispanics/Latinos. This overall research aimed to analyze the importance of acculturation and its impact on PR to become a more diverse society. Considering the findings from the journal articles fall within particular categories, the body of this chapter is organized as such. The sources' spam is from 1979 to 2021, being the most recent.

This research project conducted a qualitative secondary research analysis from academic literature regarding media selection for Hispanics/Latinos and the implications on PR, and it focused on answering the following research questions:

RQ 1: How has the acculturation of Hispanics/Latinos impacted the PR industry in the United States?

RQ 2: What media channels can PR practitioners use to reach Hispanics/Latinos in the process of acculturation?

Hispanics/Latinos and Media

Media

Media studies focus on understanding the nature, content, history, and social impact of a wide variety of media, including mass media (Rosteck, 2011). Media is a powerful social force that can reinforce, shift, or undermine a diverse range of cultural expressions and social injustices that occur every day. Media plays a prominent role in how Latina/o communities are imagined and treated in material and discursive contexts (Castañeda, 2017).

The foreign-language and ethnic press have traditionally been marginalized in the United States (Hayes, 2003). However, considering the growth of the Hispanic/Latino population in the United States, Spanish-language media have also increased in numbers. Since the 1960s, Spanish-language television in the United States has shown steady growth (Arias & Hellmueller, 2016). Due to the increasing fragmentation of the US media, Spanish language programmers have found an advantage to target audiences more precisely. Today, several sources exist, including multiple US broadcasting networks and TV channels that serve the Spanish-speaking population (Stilling, 1995).

A successful campaign requires making a return to the basic PR principles: study the demographics, research the market, conduct focus groups and take the time to develop an understanding of the potential customer base (Lynn, 1995). Researchers should consider the frameworks that media organizations implement to deal with and report on issues relevant to Spanish-speaking populations in the U.S. regarding the growth of Spanish-language media in the US and the rating numbers; researchers should examine how media organizations accomplish these objectives. (Arias & Hellmueller, 2016).

In recent years PR professionals have taken an interest in Hispanics/Latinos as an ethnic group. This attention is due to increasing population, better economic output, media representation, and globalization. There is increasing awareness among corporations to target people inclusively (Thelen, 2021). In addition to this, internet usage among the Hispanic population is increasing. Hispanic users rapidly adopt social media to communicate and ease relationships with family and friends and get information (Justice-Gardiner et al., 2011). This allows them to retain ties with their home country and create new interactions in the host country.

According to Abeyta and Hackett (2002), the PR practitioner's role will vary depending on the organization, the target population, and other extrinsic forces that need to be considered. Based on the evidence, one can see the increase of media in Spanish; however, effective communication will depend on the organization's approach and interest in sharing media inclusively.

Hispanic/Latino Media

Media selection and language play an essential role for minorities. Audience size, media, general consumption, and socioeconomic status drive ethnic media outlets in the U.S. to become more diverse and inclusive (Lee, 2007). News media content has become essential in the acculturation process for immigrant populations (Arias & Hellmueller, 2016). Immigrants want to obtain information relevant to their status as new members of society. While they are adapting, they seek information that is easy to recognize and understand. Due to language, cultural, and media use differences, the US Hispanic population may not access and use the same information as non-Hispanics (Williams et al., 2006).

Because Hispanics/Latinos are still considered minorities, they might face some challenges. Particularly, when one ethnic or racial group occupies a dominant position numerically and socially within a nation or culture, it is hardly surprising to see media catering to the dominant group (Ferguson, 2015). Furthermore, besides providing news and information that the Hispanic community needs, Spanish-language media plays an essential role in connecting them to their cultural heritage (Allen, 2020).

Despite living in a technological era, there is a divide in the information available between Hispanics/Latinos and other ethnic groups (Clayman et al., 2010). According to Ferguson (2015), media representation is still reduced. When there are representations of racial and ethnic minorities in mainstream media, they tend to be portrayed based on stereotypes and prejudices of the dominant group. Lee (2007) suggested it is not surprising that different ethnic groups are heavy media consumers. Considering the large amounts of Hispanics/Latinos and their ties to their home countries and language, we can anticipate this group relying on their native language for media selection such as TV and radio more than other groups outside this ethnicity.

Clayman et al. (2010) argued that Hispanics/Latinos who are not comfortable speaking English could be challenging to reach using traditional and new media channels. It is important to note that the Hispanic population does not constitute a homologous market. As Hispanics/Latinos have migrated to the USA from many different areas and cultures, the Hispanic market includes several subgroups. These smaller groups can be identified in multiple ways: country of origin, reasons for emigrating to the United States, and how well they have assimilated into US society (Korgaonkar et al., 2000).

According to Molina-Vicenty et al. (2021), it is fundamental to highlight the importance of using language-appropriate and culturally equivalent materials when reaching out to Hispanics/Latinos through media. The Spanish-speaking immigrant population in America has prompted marketers to pay attention. As a result, there are many Spanish-language billboards and TV and radio stations. Marketers also use other ways to reach Hispanic consumers. Many companies now package their products in English and Spanish, and customer service hotlines let callers choose the language they want to use (Glassman & Glassman, 2017).

Upon arrival to the United States, most immigrants only speak their native language. The language becomes a common denominator when populations concentrate in one geographical area. When the media realizes there is a lack of translation in their work, they usually know they are failing to achieve their objectives. Ultimately, the Spanish Language press serves the community by providing valuable information (Amaya, 2013). In the past, Hispanics/Latinos have been considered a low-income group with little education and lacking in credit instruments. However, this perception is changing due to globalization and more people prioritizing education and English language knowledge (Korgaonkar et al., 2000).

Importance of Media Selection for Different Ethnicities

Assimilation is a common concern among all immigrants, regardless of their country of origin. Many immigrants have assimilated into the US culture and influenced its development. In addition to their own values, habits, and perceptions, they also bring their own mixture of ideas and values. This diversity is a great strength for the United States and a source of friction and, at times, negative stereotyping (Wilcox et al., 2015).

Immigration patterns changed historically in the United States following 1965's immigration law reform, resulting in an influx of millions of immigrants from Asia and Latin

America. A result of globalization and the increasingly interconnected global economy is that individuals with diverse ethnicities are becoming more prevalent, resulting in a rapidly changing society (Lee, 2007). With the increase of ethnic communities, ethnic mass media plays a significant role. The ethnic press has influenced immigrants in the US to assimilate and reinforce their ethnic identity (Lee, 2007). This section will provide some background information from the larger ethnic groups in the United States.

Black and African American Media. The first African American press appeared in the early 1800s, mainly as a means of protesting against slavery and combating the racist remarks in the mainstream media. As the African slave trade started to unravel, the monthly journal African Observer published articles providing insight into the past of slavery and viable solutions to end it (Lee, 2007). Although such journals provided news and information from home countries, enhanced readers' knowledge of the world, showcased renowned black figures, and printed birth, death, and other news included in these publications also served many of the other functions common to ethnic media. Caribbean immigration has led to the creation of several new publications. The US Ethnic Media Directory currently lists 33 Caribbean/West Indian media outlets for distribution (Lee, 2007).

In addition to a wide range of publications targeted toward specific subgroups of Haitian, Guyanian, and Jamaican immigrants, these media outlets include several weekly newspapers published in New York, Boston, Atlanta, and Miami. On the other hand, New Jersey's Caribbean American and Hispanic Business Journal is one example of niche trade publications that serve immigrant audiences (Lee, 2007). As of July 2002, African American cable television is available; the African TV Network provides African immigrants with news and programming 24 hours a day. Meanwhile, African American radio is available predominantly in California and on

the East Coast. The newscasts serve various cultures and communities in English, Amharic, Tigrinya, and Woluf (Lee, 2007).

Despite the long history of African Americans in the United States and the fact that English is their native language, African American media are less accessible and significant than Hispanic media. There are only about 175 black newspapers in the United States; however, the Black Entertainment Television Network has a large audience (Wilcox et al., 2015).

Asian American Media. According to a report titled "The State of the Asian American Consumer," the number of Asian Americans in the US is now over 18 million. Furthermore, the Asian American community is among the most affluent and educated in the US (Wilcox et al., 2015).

Many different ethnic groups are covered by Asian American media, including Chinese, Japanese, Koreans, South Asians, Filipinos, Vietnamese, Cambodians and Laotians, and Pacific Islanders. Initially, these media were used to report local news and promote cultural ideals like their counterparts (Lee, 2007). Considering the wide range of trajectories, languages, dialects, and cultures represented in Asian American media, it is difficult to summarize the 150-year history of this ethnic group.

In the mid-19th century, Chinese immigrants in the Bay Area were beginning to publish newspapers to meet their needs. The first Asian American paper, Golden Hills News, appeared in San Francisco in 1854. Similarly, Japanese newspapers and magazines have roots in San Francisco, as the newspaper Nineteenth Century and the magazine Ensei (Explorer) started in 1892. Asian-Indian newspapers started in Seattle in 1908, reflecting the nationalist aspirations of Indian immigrants. In Honolulu, the Korean Times was founded in 1905 (Lee, 2007).

News from the homeland, articles on their struggles for recognition and fair wages, and articles related to discrimination were common subjects of early Asian American newspapers. The Korean, Asian Indian, and Chinese press also expressed nationalistic aspirations (Lee, 2007). Asian media were refocussed after World War II due to political and social changes. Repeal of discriminatory laws such as the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1943 and an influx of middle-class immigrants prompted ethnic media outlets to broaden their coverage of life in the United States to include perspectives on the new citizens' experiences. After World War II, Asian-American publications experienced a resurgence of sorts. The younger generation could not read their ancestral languages; therefore, readership declined. Furthermore, bilingual media began to appear, such as East/West, which first appeared in 1967 and bridged generational gaps (Lee, 2007).

Arabic Media. According to Lee (2007), Kawkab Amrika (The American Star) was the first Arabic-language publication in 1892, providing insight into American society and direction through Syrian immigrants' many new experiences. In the early days of newspapers, they had small circulations, reported social news, praised individual accomplishments, and dealt with the challenge of maintaining cultural values in the face of economic hardship. Biculturalism was promoted by Arabic-language media, which educated immigrants about American customs and English and their own ethnicities.

After the 1920s, Arabic journalism and interest in Arabic culture and language declined. The press adapted by publishing at least partly in English, as the second-and third-generation Arabs emphasized learning English more than Arabic. Non-Arab speakers gained an appreciation of Syrian culture through publications like The Syrian World in New York. Until the 1940s, the future of the Arabic-language press was questioned due to a weak connection with the language

and an inability to create publications that transcended cultural, religious, political, and geographical barriers (Lee, 2007).

By 1950, however, the political climate and US foreign policy in the Middle East had changed, and Arabic-language publications had found a new life. Among the 27 Arabic language media sources listed by New California Media, Arab Gateway features three weekly newspapers and one magazine. Featured articles have discussed the economic, political, and social conditions of the Arab world, and editorials have opposed US involvement in the region (Lee, 2007).

White/Caucasian Media. For this ethnic group, media have been influential in life and culture for many reasons. Firstly, belonging to the New World required communication at long distances. Enormous costs and efforts were spent attempting to link the West with the East through stagecoach, Pony Express, and telegraph. It was crucial for mobilization and defense to be able to communicate over long distances during wartime. Secondly, In the United States, society has been largely democratic. Democracies must encourage citizens to express their views freely. At the start of the 21st century, cable television was packed with political pundits debating the latest issues for the entertainment and benefit of the general public. Thirdly, America's historical commitment to progress and technology plays an essential role in media history and culture (Brummett, 2018).

The late nineteenth century was a critical period in media history in American culture. Various factors combined to make media the most powerful and influential force in American culture, dethroning all other powers simultaneously. During the late nineteenth century, technology, industry, government, and business changed rapidly, as did the humanities and the expansion of leisure and capital (Brummett, 2018). Media target audiences with messages about goods and services, and many programs on television exist merely to deliver audiences to

businesses that sell products. American citizens have an insatiable desire for goods and services, a desire that is fueled by advertising.

Because this racial group established and used media, there is not enough information about representation preferences vs. other races/ethnicities. It is assumed that most of the mainstream media is dedicated or somehow targeted to White/Caucasian individuals. This group is not considered a minority, and therefore, there is no concern for lack of representation.

Answer to Research Questions

In this project, the purpose was to identify if PR is adjusting the media selection to target effectively Hispanics/Latinos living in the United States. The project aimed to answer the following questions:

RQ 1: How has the acculturation of Hispanics/Latinos impacted the PR industry in the United States?

RQ 2: What media channels can PR practitioners use to reach Hispanics/Latinos in the process of acculturation?

To help answer these questions, the researcher conducted a secondary research analysis. The first section, titled "Media," analyzed what media is and how it relates to Hispanics/Latinos regarding language. This section allowed the researcher to find information relevant to the study and deeper examine the correlation between the variables. The data found correlates to the increasing need for more media appropriateness to target minorities within the United States. Steps have been taken to increase the use of Spanish media to increase levels of acculturation. However, more needs to be done in regards to PR and companies to facilitate the targeting of this ethnic group.

The second section is titled "Importance of media selection for different ethnicities and audiences." This section directly relates to the changes in demographics the United States has experienced in the past seventy years. The leading group is Hispanic/Latinos, and this group is changing the perception of media communication and language selection. However, considering this study looks only into Hispanics/Latinos as a minority, it was critical to understand what media channels are the most appropriate to reach this demographic group. Professionals should recognize all types of ethnic groups and minorities when creating target campaigns.

Overall, this project has achieved the goal of finding more profound connections between PR, acculturation, media, and the Spanish language. As professionals living in this current time, one can experience different communication levels and the correlation with the acculturation process of people who have decided to move across international borders. There is some inconsistency in the material found because there is not much information regarding the PR field. Also, some of the most relevant sources wherefrom multiple years ago, and it allows one to think that most of the relevance was when diversity was becoming part of the day-to-day. However, it seems like researchers do not find the need to keep this subject as a matter of constant evolution.

Summary

Hispanic and Latinos who obtain a lot of information from the media, whether radio, Internet, television, or print, are more likely to interpret and use the information (De Jesus, 2012). This helps this group to achieve higher levels of acculturation within the United States. Since the beginning, the Spanish-language and bilingual newspapers served as an ideal medium to help immigrants assimilate and keep readers informed about their homelands. They reported on sports and politics as well as business and births and deaths in Latino communities in their native languages (Kanigel, 2019).

The Hispanic population is aware of the importance of speaking English. English fluency increases with the generations; however, this does not mean they have abandoned the Spanish language (Glassman & Glassman, 2017). Most Hispanic/Latino families implement Spanish at home regulations so the newer generation would be exposed to the language and hopefully become proficient in it as a sign of respect for cultural tradition.

Dual language marketing can positively impact Hispanics since it validates the Hispanic/Latino culture (Glassman & Glassman, 2017). With this in mind, organizations and PR professionals need to keep adjusting accordingly to the diversity of race and ethnicity within the United States.

This chapter provided a detailed collection of academic sources that guided the investigation and research questions. The findings revealed that acculturation exists in the PR industry; however, there are few studies in the field to determine whether or not PR professionals are taking this into account when drafting new PR plans. Another essential point to consider is language selection when communicating any type of information to the public. Is English enough nowadays to communicate effectively with society? Based on the report found, no. The English language is mandatory because it is the primary language in the United States. However, Spanish use has increased so rapidly that corporations are requesting more bilingual individuals who can represent the organization's interest during communication in the mother language of the potential clients. Suggestions for future research and conclusion are presented in the next chapter titled "Conclusion."

Chapter 5

Conclusion

Research about Hispanics/Latinos in the United States has been centered around

immigration, referring to the act of establishing permanent residence in a political unit, usually a

state (Anheier, 2012). A total of 62.1 million Hispanics resided in the United States in 2020,

growing by 23% over the prior decade, outpacing the country's overall population growth of 7%.

At the county level, Hispanic growth played out unevenly, which led to the Hispanic population

being spread throughout the country (Passel et al., 2022).

This project sought to comprehend whether the acculturation of Hispanics/Latinos has

impacted the PR industry. Secondary research was completed to determine the relationship

between ethnicity and communication media selection from the PR perspective. Each ethnic

group has a preference regarding media channels that assist them in the process of acculturation

and also the best approach PR professionals can use to communicate effectively. This led to the

following research questions:

RQ 1: How has the acculturation of Hispanics/Latinos impacted the PR industry in the

United States?

RQ 2: What media channels can PR practitioners use to reach Hispanics/Latinos in the

process of acculturation?

Summary of the Study

The information gathered in chapter 1 discussed the purpose of the study and its

rationale. Chapter 2 analyzed the relationship between acculturation and PR by reviewing

research grounded in keywords, *acculturation, immigrants, minorities, migration, PR, cultural*

competence, Hispanics, Latinos, assimilation, and *dominant culture*. This chapter analyzed

existent material on acculturation and PR and the relationship with the Hispanic/Latino

community. Serving minorities in the United States is a community effort to meet the needs of

society and the public interest. Immigration, acculturation, and PR are all interconnected.

Communication and PR in organizations are affected by culture and vice versa (Sriramesh, n.d.).

In chapter 3, the methodology of choosing was discussed. Secondary research was

selected because of its ability to yield various details regarding the topic at hand. With all the

data, the researcher was able to use the information on familiar fields that allowed a link on the

research topic to determine the relationship between PR and acculturation of Hispanics/Latinos.

The material found in chapter 4 reinforced the research questions and the literature found in

chapter 2 regarding media selection and its importance regarding different ethnicities and PR,

particularly Hispanics/Latinos.

Summary of Key Findings

After examining the literature, it was clear that PR professionals are aware of the changes

in demographics in the United States. However, there is no plan of action to acknowledge and

target Hispanics/Latinos in the same way that they target ethnicities who are English speakers.

PR needs to become mindful of how to target this population correctly. Spanish-language media

provides Hispanics/Latinos with more information that matches their interests. Researchers have

found that consumers of Spanish-language media perceive preserving their culture as a necessity

(Len-Ríos, 2017).

This study yielded multiple findings. It is becoming increasingly apparent that the PR

field has to face the upcoming changes related to the diversity of backgrounds. In order to

achieve acculturation, it is necessary to engage diverse people, encourage them to share their

own opinions, and educate everyone about cultural differences that they may encounter in your society (Goldberg et al., 2019). With the RPIE model's guidance, one can transform PR measurement from output-based to outcomes-based. In the United States, the ethnic and foreign-language press are still marginalized (Hayes, 2003). According to the study's findings, Latinos who prefer Spanish-language sources have an increased amount of content geared towards what they do than those who only read English-language news.

Strengths and Limitations of Study

As a result of the research project, multiple factors make the results strong and credible. First, as the sample assessment complied with the research questions, data collection was performed in a reliable manner. Second, the material presented assumptions that were based on research and could be supported with evidence, making the study's results clear and unambiguous. Third, the study was framed in light of the results and assumptions about the subject. Conclusions were reached from the information available for review; however, it might not be generalizable because of the amount of information that was presented. Finally, the study addressed issues determined by the literature review and found a lack of research about acculturation and PR in communication media regarding the Hispanic/Latino community.

With the intention of filling the gap in the literature, this project contributes to knowledge about the PR approach and the acculturation phenomenon. It provides a focused understanding of the importance of media selection for PR campaigns at the moment of targeting different ethnicities, in particular Hispanics/Latinos who are part of the acculturation process.

It is essential to be aware that the project has some limitations. Hispanic/Latino PR campaigns cannot be generalized from the results of this study. The researcher evaluated the

available material on the database used while also obtaining information from fields that correlate to PR.

The objective of the research was to contribute to the literature and discuss the best approaches for PR professionals to reach ethnic minorities in continuous growth within this nation. Although the role of language preference in PR is gaining recognition, research on acculturation as a factor for language and channel communication has not been studied. This project sought to open the conversation on how PR campaigns can gain more success and outreach in the context of Hispanics/Latinos. The following section will provide directions for future research.

Direction for Future Research

As mentioned in the limitations, this project aimed to find a connection between PR and acculturation and the best channels to outreach the Hispanic/Latino community. This was achieved by collecting existing data to be able to examine the progress PR is making to become more diverse and ethnically accessible. Future researchers need to continue studying how acculturation directly impacts the PR industry and its practices. Moreover, such a study would provide us with insight into the fact that PR as a profession is culturally and linguistically diverse.

Overall, acculturation and PR are not new; however, research is still needed to understand the implications and best approaches to practice PR within the everchanging society. There are several ways that PR can build more knowledge on acculturation and the preferred language and media channel for minorities within the United States

Presentation of Artifact

The title of the best practice guide is: Adapted RPIE Model for Reaching Hispanic/Latino Populations. On the basis of key findings in the study, the best practices guide consists of five sequential steps. The first step, an addition to the RPIE, is to acknowledge ethnic biases and discrimination against immigrants. The second step is to research people's preferences related to communication styles. The third step is planning, where a PR practitioner develops a strategy to influence a targeted audience by allocating budget, time, and other resources. The fourth step is implementation; here, PR practitioners implement a campaign to influence the target audience once a specific strategy has been determined. And lastly, the fifth step is the evaluation, where the professionals analyze if they were successful in developing culturally inclusive PR campaigns. The complete guide can be found in Appendix A.

Acknowledgment

In addition to growing, the field of PR has also become more diverse and inclusive. Acknowledging diversity is the ability to recognize each individual's differences, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, age, physical abilities, or political beliefs; it is essential to know that we are all unique (Pill, 2009). As previously discussed throughout this Master Project, PR professionals are aware of the demographic changes; however, there is a gap in acknowledging the variations that need to be implemented.

Research

Diversity-centered research can cover a wide range of topics and be conducted across a range of disciplines. Its distinctive characteristic is the emphasis placed on considering as many perspectives as possible. Research that promotes diversity may address issues of racial, cultural, racialized, sexual, age, and disability identities, as well as a wide range of other perspectives and

conditions (Alexander, 2011). PR professionals need to increase the research level with each

community because not every ethnic group will assimilate information in the same way.

Therefore, to be successful, there needs to be an interest in knowing who the target population is

and their preferences.

Planning

Planning is an essential aspect of analyzing the surrounding conditions of a potential

campaign. Diversity influences an organization's decision-making and affects its strategies. In

addition, part of the planning involves reviewing the necessities that minority communities have

to be able to fulfill their needs (Langley, 2009). PR professionals should be required to immerse

themselves in the culture they are trying to reach; that way, they find information that will

determine the success of a project.

Implementation

The implementation of cultural diversity as a core feature becomes essential at the

moment of promoting cultural literacy and awareness. In this stage, individuals can implement

the key messages on how to approach Hispanics/Latinos and any other ethnicities according to

the demographics of a particular area. PR professionals who immerse themselves in

implementing ways to communicate effectively are one step closer to adequately reaching the

communities in the process of acculturation ("Human Development," 2009).

Evaluation

Evaluation is the process of measuring the outputs, outtakes, and/or outcomes of specific

PR programs, strategies, activities, or tactics against a predetermined set of objectives to assess

the success or failure of those programs (Pill, 2009). A diverse program will be successful if the

professional has taken into account all the information obtained in the previous steps relating to

Hispanics/Latinos, their acculturation process, and their media preference to achieve the goals previously established successfully.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to determine what steps PR is taking to include different preferences among populations, particularly the Hispanics/Latinos, in the process of acculturation. This answer was reached by exploring topics related to immigration, Spanish Language, PR, acculturation, and diversity. PR professionals need to be open-minded and willing to do more research on the target population to be able to be successful with the projects at hand. Professionals who are eager to work with each community will obtain greater outreach and responses for each particular objective.

The increasing diversity in the United States is notorious, and it is more likely to keep increasing. Hispanics/Latinos are the most significant minority this nation has; however, there is still some fear of using their preferred language and media channel. Moreover, the PR industry has the opportunity to embrace diversified approaches to reach equality for all within the industry.

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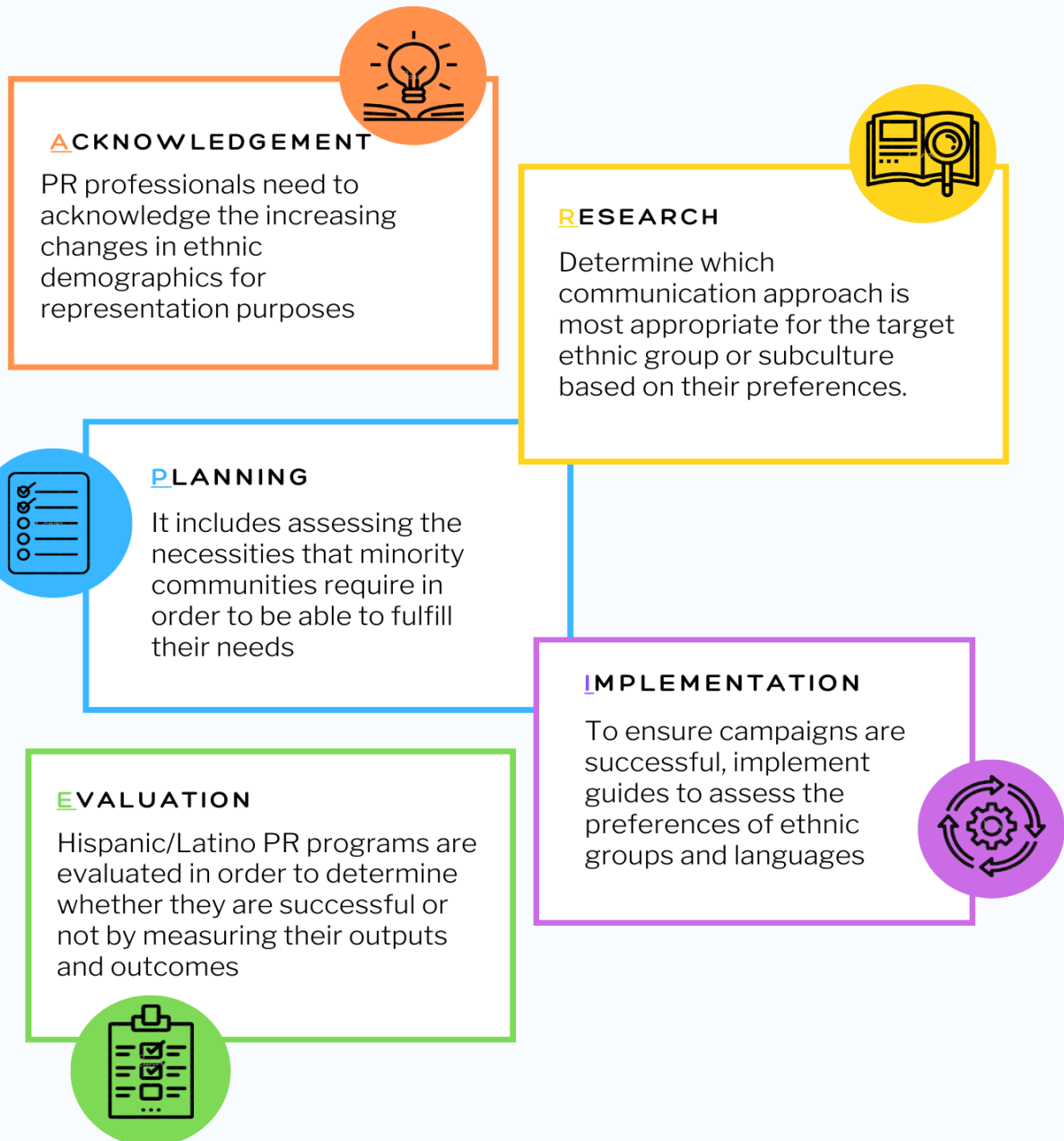
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Appendix A

Adapted RPIE Model for Reaching Hispanic/Latino Populations.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

PR professionals need to acknowledge the increasing changes in ethnic demographics for representation purposes

RESEARCH

Determine which communication approach is most appropriate for the target ethnic group or subculture based on their preferences.

PLANNING

It includes assessing the necessities that minority communities require in order to be able to fulfill their needs

IMPLEMENTATION

To ensure campaigns are successful, implement guides to assess the preferences of ethnic groups and languages

EVALUATION

Hispanic/Latino PR programs are evaluated in order to determine whether they are successful or not by measuring their outputs and outcomes

Adapted from *Study guide for the examination for accreditation in Public Relations*. (2021). Public Relations Society of America. https://www.prsa.org/docs/default-source/accreditation-site/apr-study-guide.pdf?sfvrsn=3023e23c_2