

**Faculty Mentor:** Dr. Fiorella Carlos Chavez, Human Development & Family Science

## Understanding the Motivations and Cultural Work Values of Male Mexican H-2A Migrant Farmworker Youth

Taylor N. McDonald, Grace J. Patton, and Fiorella L. Carlos Chavez

**Background.** Latinx migrant farmworker adolescents (LMFAs) are foreign-born, unaccompanied, and one of the most vulnerable and underrepresented subgroups of migrant farmworkers (Arcury et al., 2014). Despite their young age, LMFAs work under poor weather conditions (i.e., rain and heat) in exchange for income. Although previous research has shown that remittances to family is a key factor for migration (Carlos Chavez et al., 2021, in press), little is known about their intrinsic and cultural motivations. We argue [im] migrant Latinx adolescents come to the United States with *ganas*, a culturally inherited motivation to hard work and sacrifice for one's family (Easley et al., 2012).

**Purpose.** The present qualitative exploration focused on Mexican H-2A migrant farmworker adolescents' work motivation, work advice for other migrant adolescents, and cultural values toward work. Our research questions included:

- 1) What leisure activities do migrant adolescents focus on when they are not at work?
- 2) What is the direct advice migrant farmworker adolescents give to other youth to stay motivated?
- 3) How do cultural values manifest or influence work motivation for Male Mexican H-2A migrant farmworker adolescents?

**Method.** Data came from Mexican H-2A migrant workers in Georgia ( $n = 10$ ; 100% male, aged 18 to 20, 70% financially supporting their parents). Participants received a \$10 incentive for their participation. An NIH Certificate of Confidentiality was obtained to further secure participants' information.

**Results.** Thematic analysis highlighted four core themes were found: (1) "getting distracted" (2) "this work is temporary" (3) "respect and responsibility of oneself" (4) "put *ganas* forward".

**Conclusions.** Mexican H-2A migrant farmworker adolescents confront environmental and emotional stressors. However, to distract themselves they turn to leisure activities (i.e., playing soccer, talking/playing on their phone) and motivate themselves and others through *ganas*.