

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of The Study

The United States is a country with great ethnic diversity, including Native American, White, Asian, African, Latino, and multiracial populations. This diversity is the result of colonization and centuries of immigration waves. Such ethnic diversity has shaped a unique and complex cultural identity, where various traditions, languages, and cultural values interact and encounter acculturation, ultimately forming the national character. As a nation with a long history as an immigration destination, the population of the United States continues to grow, including the Mexican-American community. Mexican-Americans community is one of the largest ethnic groups in the U.S., particularly in California. According to the 2020 U.S. Census, Hispanics and Latinos of any race accounted for 39.4% of the country's total population. Mexican-Americans have developed its cultural identity and known as Chicanos. Chicanos refer to individuals of Mexican descent who were born or raised in the United States, representing a cultural identity that blends both Mexican and American elements.

Mexican-Americans are renowned for their work ethic, cultural diversity, and bilingualism—all of which contribute to the uniqueness of their cultural identity. American culture is known for placing value on individualism, but Mexican-Americans tend to place more significance on family values. The concept of Mexican-American familism, which revolves around family identity, expands

beyond the immediate family unit (referred to as 'la casa') to encompass two additional systems, namely 'la familia' (extended family) and 'los compadres' (godparents) (Jack Rothman, 1985:201). Therefore, Mexican-Americans perceive their family as a crucial support system and identity during various circumstances. In addition, as immigrants to the United States, Mexican Americans also shows their solidarity within their communities, fostering a sense of unity and shared experiences. This solidarity contributes to a strong sense of identity and mutual support among Mexican-Americans in the US.

A Day Without A Mexican (2004) is a movie directed by Sergio Arau, marking his debut as a director and co-written by Yareli Arizmendi and Sergio Guerrero. This movie explores a hypothetical scenario in which Mexican-Americans disappear from the United States. The narrative revolves around the main character named Lila Rodriguez, a Mexican news reporter in California under stage name Lyla Rod. Suddenly, the Mexican-Americans disappeared from California due to a mysterious fog that spreads over the California and caused chaos in daily life. The disappearance caused chaos in daily life in California because the contribution of Mexicans is crucial to California's economy, as several major sectors, depend on Mexican's worker. Furthermore, aside from highlighting the influence of Mexican-Americans, the movie also portrays the experiences of American families, with a specific focus on the cultural identity of Mexican-American family. Cultural identity is the sense of belonging to a culture and cultural group that an individual perceives from within them. This involves their cultural heritage, including family values, social values, language usage, religious belief, art and other related aspects

which become their identity (Bo Yang & Lu Liu, 2021:183). Therefore, this study focuses on examining the cultural identity of Mexican-Americans, specifically, the sense of belonging, family values, and the acculturation as depicted in *A Day Without a Mexican* (2004) movie.

1.2 Research Questions

1. How does *A Day Without a Mexican* (2004) movie portray the intrinsic aspects ?
2. How does the cultural identity of Mexican-Americans depicted in *A Day Without a Mexican* (2004) movie ?
3. In what ways does *A Day Without a Mexican* (2004) movie portray the cultural acculturation in California ?

1.3 Aims of The Study

1. To examine the intrinsic elements of *A Day Without a Mexican* (2004) movie.
2. To examine the cultural identity of Mexican-Americans depicted in *A Day Without a Mexican* (2004) movie.
3. To examine the portrayal of the cultural acculturation in California as depicted in *A Day Without A Mexican* (2004) movie.

1.4 Scope of The Study

In this research, the writer will analyze the intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of *A Day without a Mexican* (2004) movie. The intrinsic aspects that will be used are character and characterization, setting, conflict, plot and theme. Apart from the

intrinsic aspects, the writer will analyze the extrinsic aspects by applying Cultural Identity theory by Stuart Hall. This research will be focused on the cultural identity of Mexican-Americans community including the main character and the Mexican family. Cultural identity theory will help to analyze how identities are constructed, negotiated, and understood through the process of representation and social contexts in the movie *A Day without a Mexican* (2004). Therefore, the cultural identity that will be analyzed focuses on the sense of belonging and the family value of Mexican-Americans. Also, the acculturation that occurs in California which is depicted in the *A Day Without a Mexican* (2004) movie.

1.5 Previous Studies

According to the article *Clash in Paradise: A Fantasy Theme Analysis of A Day Without a Mexican* by Marambio and Tew (2006), the authors use a fantasy theme analysis lens to analyze this film. The authors suggest that the film reinforces two existing views in society: one that emphasizes the importance of appreciating Mexican workers for societal satisfaction, and the other highlighting the challenges faced by Latinos in maintaining their cultural integrity and achieving economic improvement. Also, it is argued that the film's lack of advocacy for solutions and its failure to address Latino identity hindered its success in reaching a broader audience.

Following by an article by Sarah Barrow's (2012), *Deconstructive Humour: Subverting Mexican and Chicano Stereotypes in Un Día Sin Mexicanos* (Sergio Arau 2004) (2012), explores how the film *A Day Without a Mexican* (2004) by Sergio Arau employs humor and a blend of stylistic approaches as a deconstructive

strategy to challenge oppression and stereotypes aimed at Mexicans, Hispanics, Latinos, and immigrants in the United States. Barrow connects this analysis to Ramírez Berg's framework of the three waves of Chicano cinema: the first wave (1969–76), consisting of radical, Cuba-inspired documentaries intended to mobilize La Raza; the second wave (1977–present), still politically charged but more accessible and supported by some institutional funding; and the third wave (late 1980s onward), characterized by genre films whose political messages are embedded within familiar narrative formulas.

A thesis entitled *An Analysis of Cultural Identity of Indian Immigrants After 9/11 WTC's Tragedy in The U.S.A Through The Two Main Characters in Film My Name Is Khan By Karan Johar* by Nilam (2011) from State Islamic University, explores the cultural identity of the two main characters in the movie using cultural identity theory. The author emphasized that both characters undergo assimilation into American culture as a means of adapting to American Culture. In addition, both characters also preserve their Indian cultural heritage, including speaking the Indian language, wearing traditional Indian clothing, enjoying Indian cuisine, and participating in Indian wedding ceremonies.

This is also supported by Bo Yang and Lu Liu (2021) article, *An Analysis of Hall's Theory of Cultural Identity and Its Application in Flipped Class*. In this article, the author conducted an investigation into the comprehension of the concept of ethnic diaspora and Hall's cultural identity theory. Furthermore, the author suggest that Hall's research of the cultural identity issue is instructive, which can be seen from the solution of the issue in the British society and it serves as a

theoretical foundation for examining China's establishment of cultural identity in a foreign country. In addition, the author suggests that as the world develops into a new world full of diversity, everyone, especially students in cross-cultural teaching, have an awareness of their original culture, preventing them from being confined to national-centered ideologies.

This research differs from the previous study because there has been no previous exploration of cultural identity in the movie *A Day Without A Mexican* (2004). Therefore, the writer will analyze cultural identity and acculturation in the film *A Day Without A Mexican* (2004). The main focus of this research is on Mexican-Americans and the main character in relation to their community. This particular perspective has not been explored by any researcher before.

1.6 Research Method

This research will employ research methods to gather and analyses the data from the object of the research. There are three categories in which the research methods employed are classified: data and the sources of data, method of collecting data, and method of approach.

1.6.1 Data and The Sources of Data

The writer will be employing qualitative data in this research. Qualitative data means information that describes how individuals or groups understand and interpret social or human issues. This type of data is analyzed by identifying patterns and themes, allowing researchers to interpret its meaning rather than relying on numerical measurements (Cresswell, 2014:32). The movie *A Day*

Without A Mexican (2004) is the primary source for the data used. *A Day Without A Mexican* (2004) is a satirical fiction movie directed by Sergio Arau, marking his debut as a director and co-written by Yareli Arizmendi and Sergio Guerrero. This research will be supported by relevant pictures or scenes. In addition, the writer also use of secondary data such as previous studies, published books, and articles to further support the topic and strengthen the findings.

1.6.2 Method of Collecting Data

The writer observed *A Day Without A Mexican* (2004) movie in order to gather the data. First, the writer will watch the movie multiple times and take note of important points that will be used as data for this research. Second, the writer will classify the data that has been collected. Last, the data that has been classified will serve as the primary source of data for further analysis by employing relevant theory in this research. Furthermore, the writer conducted library research in order to obtain secondary data. This method requires understanding and interpreting data that available in the form of books, journals, or scientific articles related to the primary data.

1.6.3 Method of Approach

The writer will use Objective approach to analyze the data. Objective approach is an approach proposed by Meyer Howard Abrams in his book *The Mirror and the Lamp* (1971). Abram's theory views a literary work as independent of external factors, focusing solely on its internal elements. Similar to other literary works, such as novels or short stories, films also have narrative elements such as plot, characters, setting, theme, and so on, which convey the narrative or story of

the film. The objective approach emphasizes these intrinsic aspects, considering how the work is structured and developed without reference to the author, reader, or the outside world (as cited in Warniati, 2020:19). In *A Day Without A Mexican* (2004) movie, the intrinsic elements can be observed from the characters and characterizations, settings, conflicts, plot and theme. Furthermore, since the objective approach focuses on its internal aspects, the writer will also use Stuart Hall's Cultural Identity Theory to understand cultural identity, including family values, the sense of belonging of Mexican immigrants, and the acculturation that occurs in *A Day Without a Mexican* (2004) movie.

1.7 Organization of the Writing

This research will be divided into the following chapters:

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

This chapter is divided into seven sub chapters: the background of the study, research question, scope of the study, aims of the study, previous studies, research method, and organization of the writing.

CHAPTER II INTRINSIC THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

This chapter includes the theories that analyze the internal aspects of the object of research.

CHAPTER III EXTRINSIC THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

This chapter includes external factors that influence the object of study, along with relevant theory and perspective.

CHAPTER IV: ANALYSIS

This chapter includes the discussion and findings of the movie. The theories from the previous chapter will be used in the analysis of the data and findings.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

This chapter provides an overview of the entire content and the result of the research.