

Living in the Community: Perceptions of Latina Women in Iowa

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Introduction

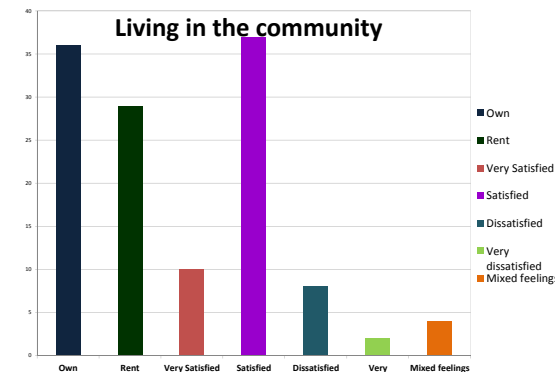
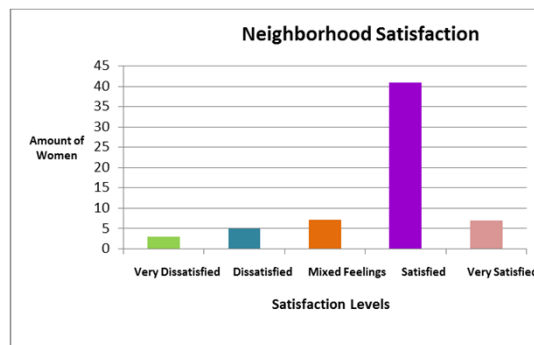
This study explored perceptions of rural Latino immigrant mothers regarding the community they live in. Mothers reported satisfaction in their current housing and neighborhood.



Sample and methods

Sixty-three low-income Latina women were interviewed to better understand their experiences living and raising families in rural Iowa communities. Interviews were conducted in Spanish and later transcribed to English. "Living in the Community" is one portion of a larger research project, NC1171, Rural Families Speak About Health. Mothers with at least one child aged 12 years old or younger answered detailed questions about their housing histories since arriving in the U.S, and neighborhood and housing characteristics. A qualitative methodology was employed to examine responses and preliminary coding and identification of themes is in progress. This presentation will describe findings about the rural community context and circumstances of immigrant families.

Data



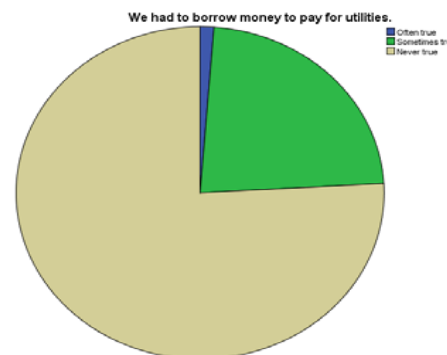
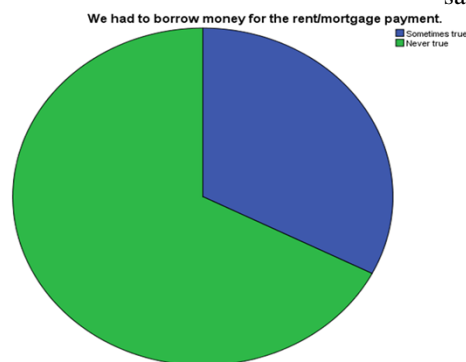
Mortgage Payment

Range	\$0- 776.43
Mean	\$327.38
Median	\$350.00
Mode	\$350.00

"For me this neighborhood is very calm. I can live ok without worrying about crime."

"I like my neighbors, they are nice people. I like this neighborhood but I don't like that we don't have light and it looks very dark at night."

"I like it because we are free to do things. My kids can play outside and our neighbors don't say anything. But I don't like the fact that the cars speed a lot and that is no safe for our kids."



Findings:

Common themes found in the data suggest that safety concerns about the neighborhood and home affect mothers' perceptions of and outlook on home including satisfaction with housing and neighborhood. Some families live in mobile and shared housing with extended family members, while others lived alone. Shared housing seems to relieve some financial burden, but was described as uncomfortable if the home became overcrowded. Families usually described moving as motivated by seeking employment opportunities or more affordable housing. Most women indicated they are content with their living arrangements, but a few desired access to more resources, such as a larger grocery store.

Discussion

This data suggests that more women own their homes and are more satisfied with their housing. Mothers tended to be satisfied with their neighborhood. They found them to be calm and safe. Mothers who felt their neighborhood lacked these characteristics were less satisfied. There seemed to be no significant correlation between satisfaction of the community and the amount of monthly mortgage payment.