



## THE REPRESENTATION OF MEXICAN CULTURE IN DISNEY PIXAR'S MOVIE ENTITLED "COCO"

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**Abstract** : The aims of this research are (1) to find out the meaning of the day of the dead holiday (Día de Los Muertos) based on the movie; (2) to elaborate on the importance of the day of the dead holiday (Día de Los Muertos); and (3) to find out how to deal with a family conflict during the day of the dead holiday (Día de Los Muertos). This study uses a qualitative approach to address research problems as it enables the researcher to perform in-depth studies of a specific phenomenon. The findings of this research are (1) The meaning of the day of the dead holiday (Día de Los Muertos) based on Coco has some indicators such as symbols, heroes, and ritual (2) How the main character deals with his family conflict is that (a) The conflict which comes from the family culture is making the main character to become a rebel. Conflict is highly present in families; however, in general, the presence of conflict is not problematic by itself. (b) parents are making decisions about what they consider is best for all family members.

**Keywords:** *Mexican culture; conflict; culture.*

### INTRODUCTION

Every good nation must certainly appreciate the culture that its ancestors created. Since it is difficult to build a culture in only one or two days, but it takes time and changes, as well as whether the group will tolerate it or not. Culture can be said as an unwritten

agreement formed by itself. Even though it may seem illogical, we still have to respect that.

According to Andreas Eppink (2013), culture includes the whole understanding of the culture of social values, social norms, knowledge and general social structures, religion, and others, as well as all the intellectual and artistic expression that characterizes a society. It is important to understand

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a culture not only for its society but also for people around the world so there will not be any negative thoughts about other cultures that spread within society that leads to prejudice and racism.

It's also important to understand our own culture and history before we start learning about other cultures because knowing about our history and culture can help us develop a sense of pride. Besides that learning about our past by listening to the stories told by the elders would allow us to know how much it means to them. Marcus Garvey (2018) quoted a person is like a tree without roots, without knowing its history, birth, and culture. In other words, past events can teach one how to make the right choices and what circumstances to avoid. In this topic people who will be able to appreciate other cultures are the people who know their past and understand its meaning.

Culture theme is always interesting to talk about, aside from knowing about other cultures, this topic allows analyzing the cultural problems that are occurring in society. This theme related to the film that the researcher would study is Pixar's *Coco* movie. Apart from its good portrayal of Mexican culture, *Coco* has also won many awards, some of the awards are: Golden Globe Award for Best Animated Feature Film (2018); BAFTA Award for Best Animated Film (2018); and Teen Choice Award for Choice Movie: Fantasy (2018).

The concept for *Coco* is inspired by the Mexican holiday *Día de Los Muertos* (the Day of the Dead). This film beautifully represents Mexican culture, it allows millions of Mexican descent children to see their histories, their culture, their beliefs, and for non-Mexican will have a chance to see and learn about Mexican culture, especially about the Day of the Death (*Día de Los Muertos*) holiday and its language. So, people will understand the beauty of Mexican culture, how they celebrate their tradition, prioritize family, and put themselves together.

*Coco* is an image of all the things that we are not for this moment, an exploration of values that feel increasingly difficult to practice in the real world. It is a tale of a multigenerational matriarchy

rooted in the past. Whereas real-life nowadays feels like a man-ruled, timeless, structural nightmare. This movie is about tradition and continuity at a time when we feel like our brain is being washed and battered every morning with new flashes of violence as if history is being lost and only the worst sections are being written (Tolentino, 2018).

The objectives of this research are (1) to find out the meaning of the day of the dead holiday (*Día de Los Muertos*) based on the movie; (2) to find out how to deal with a family conflict during the day of the dead holiday (*Día de Los Muertos*).

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Another researcher had examined the *Coco* movie. Xue Xin Du has written an *Analysis of the Motifs of Animation Film "Coco"* (2018). This earlier study centered on the use of traditional motives such as dream motif, kinship motif, death motif, mystical animal motif, and trauma motif. These motifs formed a narrative framework and a touching tale. The goal of this study is to make it more comprehensive and different from the previous study. The researcher uses the idea of representing a culture to provide a greater understanding of the Mexican culture depicted in the film.

### **Culture**

Culture is a region of action, in line with Ernest E. Boesch (2001) in his book *Symbolic Action Theory and Cultural Psychology*, whose contents vary from objects created and used by human beings to structures, concepts, and myths. Being an action area, culture provides possibilities of action, but at the same token stipulates requirements for action; it circumscribes objectives that will be accomplished by certain means, but it also sets criteria for reasonable and deviant action to be correct. The connection between the various material moreover ideational contents of the cultural field of action could be a systemic one; transformations in one part of the system can have an impact on the other part. As an action field, culture not only induces and controls action but also continuously transformed



by it; therefore, culture is as much a process as a structure.

Samovar and Porter (1996) stated Culture refers to the accumulated deposit of knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, attitudes, meanings, hierarchies, religion, conceptions of time, responsibilities, spatial relationships, concepts of the world, and material objects and possessions acquired through individual and group efforts by a group of people over centuries. Gudykunst (1992) sees culture as a relatively large group of individuals sharing information systems.

Another well-known cultural theory said that culture is a way of life of a group of people that encompass behaviors, beliefs, values, and symbols that are accepted and passed along, by communication and imitation, from one generation to the next (Geert et al., 2010).

Based on several theories above it can be concluded that culture is a way of life that inherits from generation to generation and might be accepted by community which contains knowledge, act, attitudes, beliefs, values, and rules.

### Types of culture

To understand more about this topic the researcher has also classified the types of culture mentioned by Umar Farooq in his article “*Types of Culture Ideal, Real, Material & Non-Material Culture with Examples*” as follows:

- a. Real Culture, can be observed in our social life. In our social life, we act on culture that is real, the role that people take in their social life is their real one. The entire one is never real because there remains a part of it without practice.
- b. Ideal Culture, The culture which is presented as a pattern or model to the people is called ideal. It is the goal of the society. It can never be entirely done because some component of it stays out of practice. True and ideal cultures are both connected and different from each other.

- c. Material Culture consists of man-made objects such as furniture, automobiles, buildings, dams, bridges, roads and in fact, the physical matter converted and used by man. It is closely related to the external, mechanical as well as useful objects. This includes technological and material equipment such as railway engines, machines for publication, locomotives, radios, etc. It requires and is referred to as society by our financial institutions, parliaments, insurance plans, etc.
- d. Non-Material Culture, This term when used in the ordinary sense, means non-material. It is something that includes values, beliefs, symbols, organizations, and institutions that are not physical ideas, etc. Non-material culture includes the words we use, the language we use, the ideals we hold, the values we cherish, and the observance of all ceremonies.

### Manifestations of culture

Cultural differences manifest themselves in different ways and differing levels of depth. G. Hofstede (1997) quoted, the most simplistic images and ideals, with heroes and traditions in between, are the deepest manifestations of culture.

- a. **Symbols** are words, gestures, pictures, or objects that have a specific meaning that only those who share a specific culture know. New symbols grow quickly, old ones disappear. Symbols from one specific group are copied by others frequently. That is why symbols represent a culture's outermost layer.
- b. **Heroes** are people, past or present, actual or fictitious, who have qualities that are highly regarded in a society. They also act as models for behavior.
- c. **Rituals** are collective practices, which are often unnecessary in achieving desired goals, are considered socially important. Therefore, they are carried out most of the time (ways of greeting, honoring others, religious and social practices, etc.) for their own sake.

**d. The core of a culture is formed by values.**

They are broad patterns (good-evil, right-wrong, natural-unnatural) for the desires of some states of affairs to others. To those who keep them, many beliefs remain unaware. Therefore, they can not always be discussed, nor can others directly observe them. Only from the way individuals behave in various conditions can beliefs be learned.

The visible or visual elements of a culture's traditions are symbols, heroes, and rituals. The true cultural sense of the practices is intangible; this is only revealed if the insiders understand the practices.

**Mexican Culture**

Mexican cultures beliefs and customs are numerous and complex. They pride themselves in their ancestral roots and each area has their cultural traditions and festivities. (Dwyer, 2017) To get a clear understanding of Mexican culture, the researcher would identify some of the Mexican cultures associated with the *Coco* movie plot. Four parts will be described in the next following paragraphs; Mexican religion, house design, traditional clothes, culture, and tradition.

**a. Mexican Religion**

During the colonization, the Spanish introduced Roman Catholicism to Mexico. A growing number of Mexicans say religion is a crucial element in their lives. Belief in Religion, respect for the priests, faith in Catholic institutions, and Catholicism in home education are seen as essential factors in Mexican culture. (Camp, 2000) Therefore, the presence of Catholicism in Mexico is a visual symbol, with the showing of Catholic artifacts in houses like crosses, as well as Catholic rituals.

**b. House Style**

A design's identity goes hand in hand with the cultural identity that is influenced by the social community and its collection of symbolic

values and beliefs, for which industrial design can be said to be an expression of itself (Martel et al., 2019). As written in the article "Mexican Homes Traditional Styles":

"Traditional Mexican homes, from native land haciendas and colonial homes to rustic adobe ranches and tiny casitas, are typically painted in an incredibly bright palette of colors. Larger buildings, suited to the tropical climate, frequently feature high wood-beamed ceilings, tiled interiors, and paved courtyards, enabling air to circulate freely and keeping floors and other surfaces cooler. Mexican architecture developed in Spain's colonial empire's richest area was heavily influenced by Mediterranean and Moorish styles." (Dodman)

There are three types of Mexican house style defined by Clara Dodman:

- 1) Spanish colonial style. There are many distinct features, the buildings are constructed with very thick walls, usually white stucco over adobe brick or stone, and have a limited number of small window openings; In early homes, these tiny windows had no glass, only holes with wooden shutters that opened and closed.
- 2) *Haciendas* (Mexican ranch style). Included the rooms of a principal residence, guest quarters, stables, and servants. Large stone-walled houses, with high ceilings, also contain several beautifully hidden interiors. As symbols of the prosperity and culture of a family, haciendas have been-and are now-decorated with ornate architectural features and artwork.
- 3) Adobe house. Historically, the adobe houses were home to lower-income families and the peasants who worked the haciendas. This traditional Mexican house was built from a



mixture of clay-based soil, straw, and water, supported by a wooden frame.

### c. Traditional Clothes

National Mexican clothing is incredibly beautiful and bright. In reality, there are several different traditional costume designs. Some of them are used for festivities and holidays, others for festivals, rituals, etc. Mexican national attire's main characteristics are: bright, extensively embroidered, often colored ribbons are used, beautiful and not obscene. These are some of the traditional Mexican clothes the researcher mentions:

- 1) *Charro suit*, a finely embroidered suit worn on the Day of the Dead. (nationalclothing.org, 2014)
- 2) *Sombrero* is a recognized traditional element of Mexican wear. Although a festival *sombrero* would be vibrant with blooms around the edges, and everyday *sombrero* is just a straw hat to prevent the sun from the man's face. (nationalclothing.org, 2014)
- 3) *Tehuana*, this traditional dress is made of a shirt (called a *huipil*), and a full skirt. *Tehuana* is renowned for its vivid colors and its beautiful floral and abstract embroidery. (Victoria, 2018)
- 4) Blouse has a box-like appearance: characterized by square base panels and necklines, the yokes and sleeves are often richly embroidered. (Victoria, 2018)

### d. Culture and Tradition

The most notable symbol in Mexican national culture is the Virgin in Guadalupe, which reflects Roman Catholicism's invisible influence in national culture. She is known to be the "mother" of all Mexicans. The dark-skinned Virgin is the Virgin Mary's Mexican version and as such represents national identity

as a result of the mixture of European and Mesoamerican religions and cultures. Her portrait was used in the war for independence against the Spanish. (Pansters, 2006)

In this section some of the Mexican cultures and traditions are mentioned:

#### 1) *Día de Los Muertos* (Day of the Dead)

*Día de Los Muertos* is a significant Latin American cultural festival, with an especially long background in Mexico. *Día de Los Muertos* is mistaken as a Halloween variant because it's a very different celebration. It is a season in which families are remembering and honoring their deceased loved ones. Death is a common and natural part of life. It is assumed that the souls of those that have passed away return during *Día de Los Muertos* to visit their families and loved ones who are still alive. *Offrenda* (altars) filled with brightly colored flowers, *papel picado*, sugar skulls, photographs of the deceased, and favorite foods are made by families and communities. They sweep and decorate cemeteries. Much of this is done as a way to welcome our loved ones' spirits back to join us for a day of the year. (Costen, 1992)

The holiday takes place on 1 and 2 November, respectively, coinciding with the Roman Catholic traditions of All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day. In Spain, All Saints' Day is referred to as the *Día de Todos Los Santos* and the *Día de las Animas* is known as All Souls' Day. The two days are conceptualized together as the *Día de Los Difuntos* or, more generally, the *Día de Los Muertos*. The first day is reserved for those who celebrate *Día de Los Muertos* to remember young children who have passed away while the second day is

intended to honor all the others. (Costen, 1992)

In contemporary Mexico, and among those of Mexican descent in the United States and around the world, the origins of Día de Los Muertos go back about 3,000 years to the rituals that remember the dead in pre-Colombian Mesoamerica. In what is now central Mexico, the Aztecs and other Nahua people held a cyclical view of the world and saw death as an unavoidable part of life. A person was believed to be traveling to *Chicunamictlán*, the Land of the Dead, when he died. This influenced the contemporary tradition of the Day of the Dead in which people leave food or other offerings on the graves of their loved ones or set them up in their homes on makeshift altars. (Dobrin, 2017)

2) *Mariachi*

*Mariachi* is a musical group of eight to twelve performers dressed in *trajes de charros* (*charros* suits), playing a variety of string instruments including many violins, guitar, *guitarron* (a big bass guitar), *vihuela* (a small, five-string guitar with a rounded back), often a harp, and one or two trumpets. *Mariachis'* music includes various genres of songs that narrate nostalgic, humorous, and emotional stories of love, heartbreak, death, drinking, and place. *Mariachis* are most usually made up of men and closely associated with drinking, open emotionality, fiestas, and cowboys and are practically synonymous with the Mexican macho stereotype. While there are variations in mariachis, including traditional mariachis (sometimes referred to as 'mariachis antiguos' or 'indigenous

mariachis'), female mariachis (all-female mariachis) and mixed mariachis (male and female mariachis), the vast majority of Mexican *mariachis* are all-male *mariachis*. (Mulholland, 2007)

3) *Corrida de toros* (Bullfighting)

Bullfighting is one of Mexico's oldest and most popular practices-and one of the most divisive as well. The purpose of bullfighting is for the matador, or bullfighter, to kill the bull by putting a sword between the shoulders of the animal in a particular area. Sport is legal in only a few countries around the world, including Mexico, Spain, France, Portugal, Colombia, Venezuela, Peru, and Ecuador. Twice in its history, Mexico has banned bullfighting but the sport is still legal. While bullfighting is a 500-year-old practice, it is regarded by many Mexicans as barbaric and needless and they press for its prohibition, even taking part in anti-bullfighting protests. Animal rights activists claim that while the sport's goal is to kill the bull quickly and cleanly, this is often not the real result, as many attempts to kill the animal successfully with a sword of a matador. (Swanston, 2018)

e. **Language**

In Mexico, Spanish is the government's official de facto language and 90 percent of the population's first language. Because of its historical and legislative roles and because it serves as a lingua franca for indigenous speakers. The indigenous languages have also recently been recognized as national languages owing to their historical origins from before the Spanish colonial era. (Terborg et al., 2006)

**Family**

Beginning with Burgess's (1926) classic definition of a family as a unity of interacting personalities,



scholars have offered a host of formal definitions of family. The different concepts were grouped into three general perspectives by Koerner and Fitzpatrick (2004). The first view involves structural concepts, such as parents, children, and extended family members, "based on the existence or absence of certain family members." Definitions within this perspective include the presence of people related through blood or marriage. In this vein, Murdock (1949) first introduced the term nuclear family and defined it as a social group characterized by common residence, economic cooperation, and reproduction. This involves adults of both sexes, at least two of whom have a socially acceptable sexual relationship, and one or more children, owned or adopted, of adults who cohabit sexually (Weigel, 2008). Based on the definition that had been written above, it can be implied that a family is a group of people who live together usually related through blood or marriage.

### **Mexican Family**

Family is an important aspect of Mexican culture; in reality, it appears that interdependence and close family association are cultural regulations. Family will serve as a first resource for support for people of Mexican descent. Besides, family interaction is related to positive mental health outcomes in Mexican-Americans (Castillo & Hill, 2004; Crockett et al., 2007; Morgan Consoli & Llamas, 2013; Morgan Consoli et al., 2016).

According to Carlos P. Hipolito Delgado (2018), several aspects become the assets of Mexican descent families that will be addressed as follows: cultural pride, parental support, religion, and spirituality:

#### **a. Cultural Pride**

Several studies highlight how Mexican descent youth identified pride as a source of strength and resilience for their community (Malott, 2010). Similarly, students of Mexican descent have described taking strength in their cultural heritage (Morgan Consoli & Llamas, 2013).

Therefore, teachers are encouraged to help the youth of Mexican descent learn about their original culture. Additionally, teachers are encouraged to facilitate youth participation in cultural activities and festivals of Mexican origin (Malott, 2010).

Moreover, Morgan Consoli, Llamas, and Consoli (2016) found that association with traditional Mexican cultural values predicted success in college students of Mexican descent and that traditional Mexican cultural values led to psychological well-being and positive mental health outcomes. Perhaps the reason that connection to culture protects mental health issues is that connection with traditional cultural values contributes to more family cohesion and access to community services (Falicov, 2005).

#### **b. Parental Support**

An important part of Mexican culture is family relations and interdependence (Caldera et al., 2014). Family meaning can be strongly connected to traditional family relationship principles, family interdependence, including extended family members (Caldera et al., 2014; Falicov, 2005), and appreciation, the principle of respect, and deference for people of significant social status and older generations. (Caldera et al., 2014; Morgan Consoli & Llamas, 2013). It is in Mexican families, a hierarchy is common, with parents being high and children being low (Caldera et al., 2014; Falicov, 2005). Older siblings get more attention within the child sphere than younger siblings do. Family can be the first resource they seek emotional support for people of Mexican descent. Family also offers identity, a sense of stability, and social and financial support (Morgan Consoli & Llamas, 2013; Ramos-Sánchez, 2014); Mexican youth described themselves as being motivated to succeed academically through their parents' sacrifices and hard work (Malott, 2010) and the idea that family should come before anything else (Malott, 2009).

**c. Religion and Spirituality**

Family feasts and important markers of life are frequently associated with religious activities. Identifying Catholic holidays feels more like a traditional celebration. A prime example of this is Día de Los Muertos (Day of the Dead), a combination of indigenous and Catholic holidays, and a celebration and remembrance of loved ones who have died have become an important Mexican family holiday. It is proposed that faith and spirituality be viewed with individuals of Mexican descent as a source for help and problem-solving.

**METHOD**

This study uses a qualitative approach to address research problems as it enables the researcher to perform in-depth studies of a specific phenomenon. Flick (2014, p. 542) sees that qualitative analysis aimed at examining contextual meaning or the social development of problems, events, or activities by gathering non-standardized data and analyzing texts and images rather than numbers and statistics. And the purpose of this study is to develop the knowledge of cross-culture understanding, Mexican culture, and tradition in the movie *Coco* as the main source of this analysis, while the data are taken from the film and its transcript.

A primary source provides direct or first-hand evidence about an event, object, individual, or artwork. *Coco* movie is the primary source in this study. *Coco* cinema is the primary source of this report. The researcher uses a content analysis method to collect primary data, such as watching and evaluating the movie.

Secondary source means the source or data already available, it refers to data already obtained and analyzed by someone else. The researcher should look at different sources from which they can be obtained by using secondary data. The researcher had taken data from internet browsing to help in the completion of this study. It helps the researcher find the definition of the word. The Internet is used as a resource for finding written content from other

papers, books, public records, historical documents, and other sources.

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

**Findings**

The researcher chose Hofstede, G. (1997) culture's manifestations along with the indicators, with the consideration that these indicators are the closest ones to get to the objectives of this analysis by staying with the movie's roots, which are representing the cultures and family.

**1. The meaning of the day of the dead holiday (Día de Los Muertos) based on *Coco*.**

To reach the first objective of this research, the researcher uses the indicators of culture's manifestation by Hofstede (1997) that will be addressed as follows:

**a. Symbols**

The importance of the *Ofrenda* is emphasized by including it in the storyline to this extent. The *Ofrenda* of the Rivera family is shown above, including the elements mentioned above that are essential to the *Ofrenda*.

An *Ofrenda* is not solely linked to family, but can also be for someone that is admired. In *Coco*, this is displayed by Miguel, who has an *Ofrenda* for his idol Ernesto de la Cruz. In the image above the candles and the flowers indicate that he remembers Ernesto de la Cruz on *Día de Los Muertos*.

In the courtyard, two toddler cousins haphazardly scatter marigold petals from their baskets. Mamá corrects them, creating a path from the *ofrenda* room to the front gate.

Mama : "No, no, no, no, no. We have to make a clear path. The petals guide our ancestors home. We don't want their spirits to get lost. We want them to come, and enjoy all the food and drinks on the *ofrenda*, sí?"

The bridge extends into the mist. A stream of skeletons amble across for the holiday. The





family passes through an invisible barrier onto the bridge. Their bodies change from ghostly to solid.

A path of marigold petals leads up to an altar lovingly arranged in a humble cemetery with a skull and candles around it.

*Coco* describes *la catrina* as a female skeleton attired in her elegant long dress, fancy shoes, and her everywhere makeup during the Day of the Dead celebrations.

*Papel picado* is a decorative craft made by cutting elaborate designs into colorful sheets of tissue paper. *Coco* uses *papel picado* as a decoration on the Day of the Dead.

The characteristics that make Spanish Colonial homes so desirable—red roofs and white stucco exteriors. Those characteristics appear on *Coco* as the House of Rivera. In the dining area, Miguel introduced his grandmother in Spanish.

Miguel : My *Abuelita*? She's *Mamá Coco*'s daughter.

### b. Heroes

The spirit of Rivera's ancestors plays the important role in *Coco* because *Coco* is focused on the Day of the Dead holiday which aims to remember and honor the ancestors and delay their final death.

Miguel sees fantastical creatures crawling, flying, making nests in the nearby architecture.

Miguel : Are those? *Alebrijes*!

Tio Oscar : Real *alebrijes*. Spirit creatures.

Tia Rosita: They guide souls on their journey.

### c. Rituals

Miguel follows his *Abuelita* to the family *ofrenda* (altar), holding the pile of flowers as she arranges them on the altar.

*Abuelita* : *Día de Los Muertos* is the one night of the year our ancestors can come visit us. We've put their

photos on the *ofrenda* so their spirits can cross over.

Miguel peeks over the headstone to watch the skeletons engaging with their living families. One couple dances. Another man reaches for offerings on his grave, which solidify in his hands when he takes them.

d. The core of cultural ideas formed by values. The *ofrenda* (altar) is the most important element in *Día de Los Muertos* (Day of the Dead). It symbolizes four elements, earth, water, fire, and air.

### 2. How the main character deals with his family conflict.

*Abuelita* (grandmother) hands *Papá* (father) a leather apron, which he hangs over Miguel's shoulders.

*Papá*: No more shining shoes, you will be making them! Every day after school!

Miguel : But what if I'm no good at making shoes?

*Papá* : Ah, Migue, You have your family here to guide you. You are a Rivera. And a Rivera is?

Miguel : A shoemaker. Through and through.

Miguel runs to the edge of the roof, overlooking the courtyard, photo in one hand, guitar in the other.

Miguel : *Mamá Coco*'s father was Ernesto de la Cruz!

*Papá* : What are you talking about?

Miguel : I'm gonna be a musician!

Miguel's guitar is cast at his feet, along with his de la Cruz albums. The whole family encircles the boy.

Miguel : But *Papá*, you said my family would guide me! Well, de la Cruz is my family! I'm supposed to play music!

*Abuelita* : Never! That man's music was a curse! I will not allow it!

*Papá* : You will listen to your family. No more music.

*Abuelita* : There. No guitar, no music. Come. You'll feel better after you eat with your family.

Miguel : I don't wanna be in this family!

Miguel drops down to the De La Cruz's mausoleum floor and looks up to the portrait of de la Cruz.

Miguel : *Señor de la Cruz?* Please don't be mad. I'm Miguel, your great-great-grandson -- I need to borrow this. Our family thinks music is a curse. None of them understand, but I know you would have. You would've told me to follow my heart. To seize my moment! So if it's all right with you, I'm gonna play in the plaza, just like you did!

Miguel realizes something. He sheepishly pulls out the folded photo and unfolds it.

*Mamá Imelda* : How do we send him back?!

Clerk : The way to undo a family curse is to get your family's blessing.

*Mama Imelda* : I give you my blessing to go home. To put my photo back on the ofrenda. And to never play music again!

Miguel still does not want to give up on his dream, he ran over from his family and found his great-great-grandfather, Ernesto De La Cruz, and hope De La Cruz will give Miguel his blessing to be a musician.

When De La Cruz is about to give Miguel his blessing Héctor comes and tells the truth that De La Cruz had stolen Hector's songs and killed him, so Hector could never come back to his family.

De La Cruz : My friend -- you're being forgotten.

Héctor : And whose fault is that? Those were MY songs you took. MY songs that made YOU famous. If I'm being forgotten, it's because you never told anyone that I wrote them.

De La Cruz : Héctor, I never meant to take credit. We made a great team but you died and I -- I only sang your songs because I wanted to keep a part of you alive.

Héctor : You -- POISONED me. All this time I thought it was just bad luck.

Miguel and Héctor run to each other. Héctor embraces Miguel. But Miguel is overcome with shame.

Miguel : You were right. I should have gone back to my family. They told me not to be like de la Cruz, but I didn't listen. I told them I didn't care if they remembered me. I didn't care if I was on their stupid *ofrenda*. I told them I didn't care.

*Hector* tells the story about his daughter, and the truth reveals that Héctor is a great-great-grandfather Miguel's looking for.

Miguel : That's my *Mamá* Coco. That's my *Mamá* Imelda. Is that -- you?

Héctor : We're -- family? I always hoped I'd see her again. That she'd miss me -- maybe put up my photo. But it never happened. Do you know the worst part? Even if I never got to see Coco in the living world -- I thought at least one day I'd see her here. Give her the biggest hug -- But she's the last person who remembers me. The moment she's gone from the living world.

Miguel : You disappear -- from this one. You'll never get to see her -- ever again.

Héctor : You know, I wrote her a song once. We used to sing it every night at the same time, no matter how far apart we were. What I wouldn't give to sing it to her -- one last time.

Imelda's eyes fall on Héctor, who holds his hat in his hands sheepishly.



Miguel : He was just trying to get me home -  
- I didn't wanna listen, but he was right, nothing is more important than family. I'm ready to accept your blessing -- and your conditions. But first, I need to find de la Cruz. To get Héctor's photo. So he can see Coco again. Héctor should be on our *ofrenda*. He's part of our family. You don't have to forgive him. But we shouldn't forget him.

Miguel finds himself back in the land of the living and he runs for *Mamá* Coco's bedroom.

Miguel : *Mamá* Coco? Can you hear me? It's Miguel. I saw your *papá*. Remember? *Papá*? Please -- if you forget him, he'll be gone -- forever! Here -- this was his guitar, right? He used to play it to you? See, there he is. *Mamá* Coco, please, don't forget him.

Miguel starts to sing "Remember Me" the way Héctor sang it, softly, from the heart.

Miguel : *Remember me though I have to say goodbye remember me—don't let it make you cry-- for even if I'm far away, I hold you in my heart—I sing a secret song to you each night we are apart—remember me though I have to travel far—*

*Mamá* Coco joins Miguel in song, her voice scratchy with age, his clear with youth.

*Mamá* Coco : *Remember me each time you hear a sad guitar—Know that I'm with you the only way that I can be until you're in my arms again—remember me.*

Finally, Rivera accepted music as part of their lives. They allow Miguel to be a musician and the whole family come together on the next *Día de Los Muertos*.

## Discussion

In this part, the researcher will elaborate on the detail of the findings above. Based on the types of culture, *Día de Los Muertos* (Day of the Dead) is a real culture which means it is socially impacting people in a real life. It is proved by the Mexicans who are still celebrate this holiday and how it is impacting their beliefs that the ancestors' spirits are living another life after death.

As to give more details about the findings of the research problems, the researcher will give further explanations as follows:

### 1. **The meaning of the day of the dead holiday (*Día de Los Muertos*) based on *Coco*.**

According to Hofstede (1997) manifestation of culture has some indicators they are:

#### a. **Symbols**

Symbols are words, movements, photographs, or artifacts that bear a specific meaning that is understood only by those who share a specific culture. Words and gestures in *Coco* help the viewers to get the same experience as the characters in the movie that represent the layer of *Día de Los Muertos* (Day of the Dead), such as:

- 1) The Aztecs used to give water and food to the deceased to support them on their journey to the land of the dead. Now, Mexican families set up beautifully decorated altars in their homes and place images of the loved ones they have lost along with other objects. The *ofrenda* generally consist of water, the favorite food and drink products of the loved one, flowers, bread, and other things that honor the life of the deceased person.
- 2) Marigolds are used during *Día de Los Muertos* celebrations by being placed on the altars and the burial sites. It is believed that during the festival, the spirits of the deceased visit the living. Marigolds use their vivid colors and pungent fragrance to lead the spirits to their altars.
- 3) Skulls are a huge part of the holiday. In the Aztec period, skulls were used in ceremonies

and passed on as trophies during wars. Today, during *Día de Los Muertos*, small decorated sugar skulls are placed on the altars and cemetery. There is nothing grim about these skulls. They are decorated with colorful edible paint, glitter, beads, and huge smiles.

- 4) *La Catrina* is described as an elegant female skeleton dressed in an elegant cloth. The sketch itself is simple, but the message that lies behind it is very complicated. At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Cartoonist José Guadalupe Posada used this art piece to send a message that no matter your social class or ethnicity, we will all end up equal at the end of life. *La Catrina* is used on *Día de Los Muertos* as an illustration of what the holiday is all about; equality and solidarity. This tradition brings people together and a reminder that no social group or race is more superior than another. (Kelly et al., 2018)
- 5) *Papel picado* means perforated paper and is an important part of Mexican culture. The art comes from the Aztec custom of wood cutting spirit figures. It is used by stringing them on altars and in the streets during Day of the Dead celebrations. *Ofrendas* showcase fire, water, earth, and air. *Papel picados* represent air on the altar.
- 6) Spanish colonial house appears in *Coco* as the Rivera house. It is proved by the existence of several characteristics of Spanish colonial house, such as red roofs, white stucco exteriors, and a big private courtyard.
- 7) Mexican traditional clothing is very bright and beautiful. The main characteristics of Mexican traditional clothing are: First, sun protection, that is the reason why *sombrero* has such a wide brim and the clothing itself is made of natural materials. Second, brightness, the fabric for garments is mostly colorful and heavily embroidered, and a lot of colorful ribbons are used.

- 8) *Coco* is an English movie, but the Spanish language is present since it takes place in Mexico, a Spanish speaking country. The use of Spanish words intended to make the viewer feel more of the Mexican atmosphere in the movie. Spanish words in *Coco* are supported by the visuals of the movie, and when these words are used, the context of the story still can be understood. In *Coco*, for example, the main character replaced the word 'grandmother' with '*abuelita*', the viewers will understand that the word '*abuelita*' refers to 'grandmother' because the visual still provide the information to understand the story.

#### b. Heroes

Heroes are persons, past or present, real or fictitious, who possess characteristics that are highly prized in a culture. They also serve as models for behavior. Heroes in this movie are the ancestors and *alebrijes*.

- 1) Ancestors play an important role in *Día de Los Muertos* (Day of the Dead). The reason of Mexicans celebrate this holiday is to honor the ancestors on their visit to the living world. As in *Coco*, the characters celebrate the Day of the Dead to honor and remember their ancestors.
- 2) *Alebrijes* do not come from a mythical or religious background. The first *alebrijes* was created in the 1930s after Pedro Linares dreamed of being in a colorful forest where the mixed matched animals started to appear. Later he started making those animals from woods and painting them in vibrant colors (Taty, 2017). The creators of *Coco* decided to use them in the movie because of their vibrant colors. Even though they are not related to *Día de Los Muertos* (Day of the Dead). There are two main *alebrijes* shown in *Coco*, Pepita, and Dante. They are presented as spirits guide of Mama Imelda and Miguel.

#### c. Rituals



Rituals are collective activities that are considered as socially essential. Three rituals appear in the movie.

- 1) More than 3,000 years ago, the Aztec Indians, who stayed in Mexico, spent four months each year honoring their deceased family with ceremonies and rituals. Spanish colonials arrived in Mexico in the 16th century, they tried to erase the traditions associated with the holiday and replacing them with practices associated with and allowed by the Roman Catholic Church. Rather than turn their backs on their history, native Mexican chose to combine the ancient traditions with those of the church (Rafts, 2008).
- 2) *Día de Los Muertos* (Day of the Dead) is an essential ritual. Mexican celebrate this holiday to honor the deceased family, it is also special because on this holiday all of the family members will gather in the house, not only the living family but also the spirits of the deceased family. Lucero M. Cano (2017) mentioned the spirits of the deceased family return to the living world at the specific times and days, On October 28, the spirits of those who died in accidents; on October 31, children spirits; on November 1, the spirits of adults; and, On November 2, the spirits of all others will return.
- 3) The presence of Catholicism in Mexico is a visual symbol, with the display of crosses, as well as Catholic rituals. Catholicism is present at least twice in *Coco*. During one of the interactions between Miguel and his grandmother, his grandmother uses the sign of the cross. The meaning of this ritual in Catholicism is to bless yourself, which grandmother does because she has destroyed Miguel's guitar and asked God for forgiveness. Another example of Catholicism is the presence of Nuns. They

are shown during a music competition with their clothing identifies them as nuns.

## 2. How the main character deals with his family conflict.

In this part, the researcher will focus on how the main character tries to face the conflict in his family. The conflict which comes from the family culture is making the main character to become a rebel. Conflict is highly present in families; however, in general, the presence of conflict is not problematic by itself. Rather, it is the ability to manage and recover from it and that could be problematic (Floyd, 2014).

Related to *Coco* movie, parents are making decisions about what they consider is best for all family members. In this case, Miguel's family decides to ban music from their lives. They believe that music has a curse, whoever plays music in the family will be forgotten as Miguel's great-great-grandfather. They even keep in mind that their family, a Rivera, is a shoemaker through and through. That is why they want Miguel to forget his dream about being a musician, no matter how Miguel loves to play music. To stop Miguel from achieving his dream, his *abuelita* (grandmother) smashed his guitar and think that everything will be fine without music.

This situation makes Miguel becomes rebellious and leaves home. Miguel did something bad that was stealing the guitar to join the music competition. The guitar that was stolen by Miguel was de la Cruz's who was a great musician in history. After stealing the guitar, Miguel caught up in the land of the dead. In the land of the dead Miguel met his deceased family. Miguel thought if he could not get the blessing from his living family, he could get the blessing from his deceased family. No matter how painful the reality he has to face regarding her family, he keeps trying until he finally gets the blessing.

From this story, it can be understood that one of the most important aims of our life is to build a successful career. Family helps us in creating a

strong future. Family guides us in choosing the best and making a good future. It is reflected when Miguel still trying to find his family even though he is in the land of the dead, he does that thing to get his great-great grandfather's blessing to chase his dream to be a musician.

After knowing the truth behind his family conflict, Miguel decides to help his great-great-grandfather by getting his picture on the family *ofrenda* (altar). To make his great-great-grandfather able to cross over the living world and visits his living family on the Day of the Dead. No matter what he has done in the past he is still part of the family. None of the family members should forget one of their families. Because family belongs to each other.

## CONCLUSIONS

*Coco*, a Disney Pixar's animated movie, is a movie with the theme of Mexican cultures. *Coco* describes Mexican cultures from the beginning of the movie until the end. This study revealed how the Mexican cultures are represented in the movie. The answer to the research question by using the cultural manifestation with the reflective approach of Hofstede, G. (1997) this research give the highlight conclusion based on the research findings such as: (1) The meaning of the day of the dead holiday (Día de Los Muertos) based on *Coco* has some indicators such as symbols, heroes, and ritual (2) How the main character deals with his family conflict is that (a) The conflict which comes from the family culture is making the main character to become a rebel. Conflict is highly present in families; however, in general, the presence of conflict is not problematic by itself. (b) parents are making decisions about what they consider is best for all family members.

The main purpose of *Día de Los Muertos* (Day of the Dead) is togetherness and remembrance of the family. The idea of "nothing is more important than family" is repeatedly shown in the movie, as when Miguel's ancestors tell him, "never forget how much your family loves you." *Coco* delivers an important message that

respect your living family and remember those who have passed away are both important.

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