

Socio-cultural Factors That Influence Transfer Latino Male Matriculation into Four-Year Higher
Education Institutions

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Table of Contents

	Page
Chapter 1: Introduction	8
Statement of the Problem	8
Purpose Statement	11
Chapter 2: Literature Review	13
Gender Expectations	13
Socioeconomic Status	17
<i>Familia</i>	19
Media	21
Critical Race Theory	23
Barriers to Career and Education	23
Chapter 3: Methodology	25
Participants	26
Setting	27
Instrument	27
Procedure	27
Data Analysis	28
Chapter 4: Results	30
Prior Education in Participants' Family	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Professional Guidance	34
Academic Performance	35
Peer Support	37
Familial Support	38

Being Able to Pay For College 41

Chapter 5: Conclusion..... 45

 Discussion and Conclusions 45

 Implications for Practice and Policy 46

 Future Research 48

Appendix A: NIH Certificate of Completion..... 54

Appendix B: Consent Form 55

Appendix C: Preliminary Questionnaire..... 57

Appendix D: Interview Question Guide 58

Appendix E: Recruitment Flyer 60

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine sociocultural factors that affect transfer Latino males attending four-year institutions and to answer the following questions: What are the common sociocultural factors that Latino males face while transferring from two-year colleges to four-year institutions? Furthermore, what are recommendations provided to higher education institutions, educators, parents, and Latino male students that have potential to increase Latino male attendance at four-year institutions? Five Latino males from Los Angeles, Ventura, and Santa Barbara Counties were interviewed using a qualitative approach. Six themes emerged from the interviews: prior education in participants' family, professional guidance, academic performance, peer support, familial support, and being able to pay for college. Only two out of the four themes – familial support and being able to pay for college was evident in the literature review.

Introduction

Statement of the Problem

Post-secondary education can affect, to some degree, a student's social trajectory. Aside from providing economic upward mobility, it provides "social benefits" for individuals and society at large, including a better way of taking care of ourselves, and consequently creating a better society to live in" (Behrman & Nevzer, 1997, p. 1). Certain minority groups have more limited access to education than others. For example, Latino males complete high school and college and enroll in postsecondary education at lower rates than any other minority population (Sáenz and Ponjuán, 2012). "Latino males are struggling to keep pace with their male and female peers at key transition points along the education pipeline" (p. 2). As a result, there is an educational disparity between Latinos and Latinas.

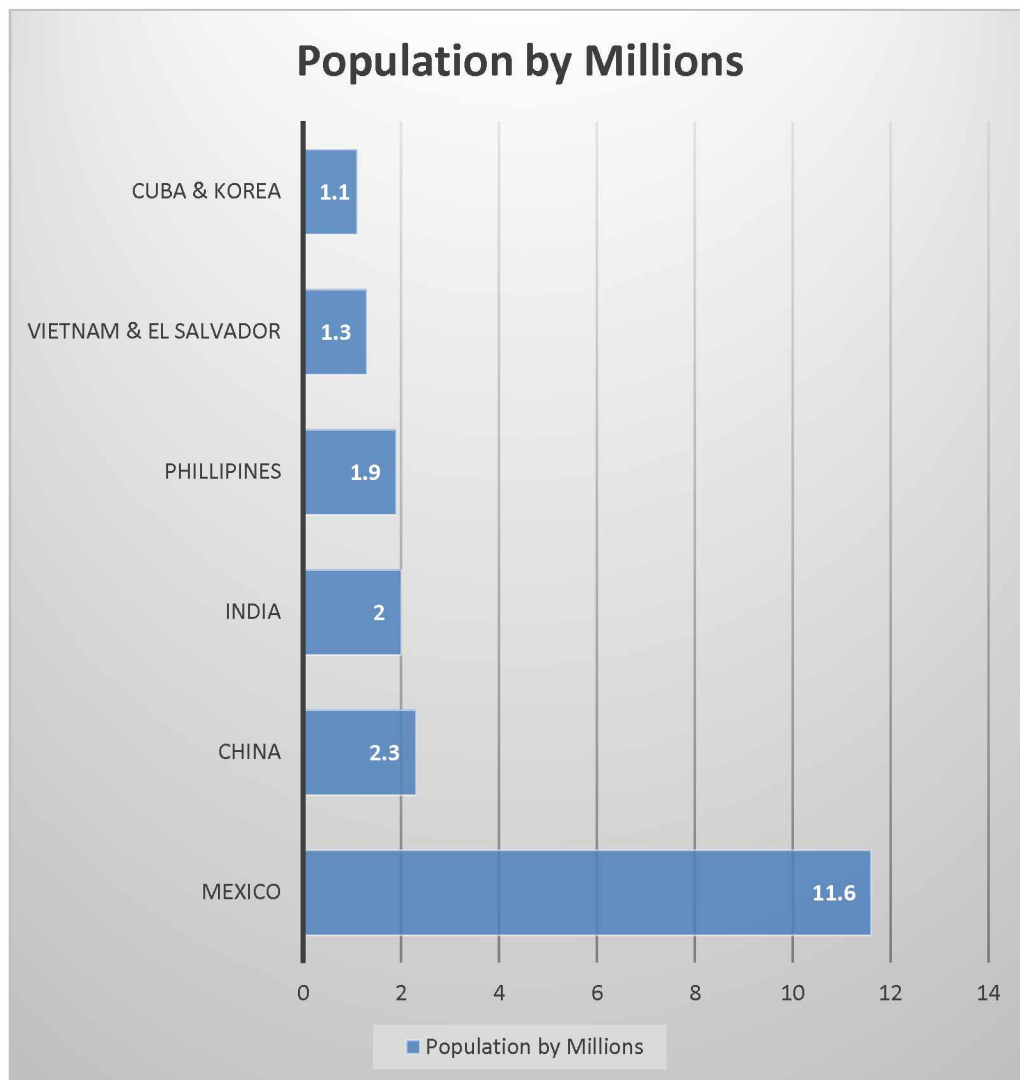
One of the successful ways to move upward on the social mobility ladder is via higher education. Many students from different ethnic groups, including Latinos, African Americans, and Asian Americans, attend college to obtain higher quality occupations. In the 1600s, higher education was only available to elite, White men (Thelin, 2011) who received an education because of their race, gender, and economic class. Throughout the centuries, higher education became more available to women, ethnic and racial groups.

Affirmative action and educational opportunity programs provide assistance to students from historically underserved backgrounds with tools to attend and graduate from college (Allen, Jayakumar, Griffin, Korn, & Hurtado, 2004). These initiatives help Latinos and Latinas achieve the American dream. The American dream, to some Latinos is being able to pursue a career, is a common belief in the Latino community (Cervantes, 2010). Latinos form the largest racial minority group in the United States; however, they are the least educated of all ethnic groups

despite having the fastest growing school-age population (Gandara, 2010). At the beginning of the 21st century, the United States experienced a large immigration increase from different countries (see Figure 1 below) with the largest immigration group from Mexico (Center for American Progress Immigration Team, 2014).

Figure 1

Immigration Population as of 2014



Note: This is the immigration population in 2014 according to the Center for American Progress Immigration Team.

The Latino population is expected to be 128.8 million by 2060, representing 31% of the U.S. population (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2013). Most Latinos come from low socioeconomic status (SES) families and have parents with limited resources to assist their children in school (Sáenz & Ponjuán, 2009). According to Gandará (2010), poverty is placing Latinos behind. Like Gandará according to Sáenz and Ponjuán (2012) agree that poverty heavily affects Latino males who are struggling to keep pace with their Latina peers during major transitional points in the education pipeline (p.2).

According to Covarrubias (2011), people are taught to value and devalue differences “of some people” (p.88). Thus, the devaluation affects people’s perception negatively and positively by creating labels that are internalized by some people. Traditionally, schools have reinforced gender notions such as “act like a boy” and “you have a temper,” which created separations (Covarrubias, 2011, p.88). To better understand these gender notions, The Chicano/a pipeline provides an alternative way to interpret practices and policies within the school system that directly affect students (Covarrubias, 2011). The Chicano/a pipeline was created by researchers Daniel Solórzano, Octavio Villalpando, and Leticia Oseguera in 2005. For example, for every 100 students, 44 of these students “entering the educational pipeline are eventually pushed out before completing a high school diploma” (p.92). For example, fifty-six Chicano students’ graduate high school, twelve of them are not able to enroll in college, twenty-seven enroll in college, five earn an Associate’s Degree at a community college, and ten earn a bachelor’s degree. Only two Chicano students earn a graduate or professional degree and less than one earn a Doctoral Degree (Covarrubias, 2011). The Chicano/a pipeline published a visual image of the disparity in education and the limited opportunities students have to attend college. This pipeline demonstrates a need to start providing services that will help Chicanos and Chicanas students

attend college as early as in elementary school. Covarrubias (2011) adds, "...people of Mexican origin continue to be failed by the American educational institutions at all levels" (p.92).

According to the United States Census (2013), each term Hispanic or Latino "refers to a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race." Latino males are attending four-year institutions to obtain better occupational opportunities, as are other members of minority groups, including African Americans and better individuals of Asian Ancestry. As of 2014, there are approximately 54 million Latinos in the United States, representing 17% of the total population (Stepler and Brown, 2016). Of these 54 million Latinos only 10% have attained a college education (Adam, 2010).

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study is to examine sociocultural factors that affect transfer Latino males attending four-year of higher learning institutions. Sociocultural factors are defined as gender expectations, socioeconomic status, *familia* (family), and media. These sociocultural factors are examined in this study to better understand Latino males' resilience factors. Transfer Latino males are students that have attended a two-year community college before transferring to a four-year college. Previous research has not addressed the sociocultural factors affecting transfer Latino males. These studies have focused on sociocultural factors that affect Latino males in high school, during their college experience at four-year and two-year institutions, but not during the transfer process. This study's goal is to gain understanding of these factors in order to provide recommendations to address this discrepancy and increase Latino male attendance at four-year institutions. Primary, secondary, and postsecondary educators will benefit from this study as well as Latino males, their families, and community members

interested in serving this group. From the perspectives of Latino men, this study will address the following questions:

1. What are the common sociocultural factors that Latino males face while transferring from two-year colleges to four-year academic institutions?
2. What recommendations provided to higher institutions, educators, parents, and Latino male students have the potential to increase Latino male attendance at four-year institutions?

Literature Review

Sociocultural factors limiting Latino males' attendance at four-year institutions has been a topic of research for the past 20 years. Research points to a number of underlying causes, including gender expectations (Sáenz & Ponjuán, 2009; Pollack, 1998; Figueroa, Perez, and Vega, 2016; Lara & Franquiz, 2015; Malagón, 2010; Foiles-Sifuentes, 2013), socioeconomic status (Sáenz & Ponjuán, 2011; Tierney 2009), *familia* (Marin & Marin, 1991; Sáenz & Ponjuan, 2009; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 1995), and media (Sáenz & Ponjuán, 2009; McDade-Montez, Wallander, Elliott, Grunbaum, Tortolero, Cuccaro, and Schuster, 2015; Tanno, 2003; Stevenson and McIntyre, 1995; Taylor and Bang, 1997). These factors are investigated in further detail in this literature review. The research questions are: a) what are the common sociocultural factors that Latino males face while transferring from two-year colleges to four-year institutions? B) what recommendations provided to higher institutions, educators, parents, and Latino male students that have the potential to increase Latino male attendance at four-year institutions? The theoretical framework used for this study is the Critical Race Theory (CRT), which provides validation and a voice to experiences of communities of color (Yosso & Kendall, 2006). As viewed through the authors' theoretical framework, the reader will be able to understand experiences of communities of color as rich and important.

Gender Expectations

Latino males are taught to be tough, courageous, and to be protective of their family (Pollack, 1998; Sáenz & Ponjuán, 2009). They are instilled with the obligation to provide economical support to the household when age appropriate. In one study, the term "boy code" was introduced relating Latino male attributes as being "tough," strong, and independent; this is a key factor that shapes Latino males' identity (Pollack, 1998; Sáenz & Ponjuán, 2009, p.59). Males are pressured to be "tough" and limit their expression of feelings, especially those that

may be traditionally considered feminine. These factors place a burden on Latino males. Latino males hide emotions that lead to feelings of failure, helplessness, and even depression (Sáenz & Ponjuán, 2009). Displaying vulnerability and feminine characteristics such as nurturing, caring, and soft-heartedness. They can be labeled as *maricón*, a derogatory term used to refer to homosexual men. This term is used to degrade and oppress Latino males who are not considered masculine by other members of the Latino communities. According to Figueroa et al. (2016), the perceptions of academic success are actually considered a weakness and can engender the label of *maricón*. Research supports the idea that Latino culture teaches males at a young age that being vulnerable does not enhance one's identity. This contributes to Latino males' machismo entrapment "having to be uncompromisingly competent or seemingly invisible," (p. 68).

Culturally, Latino boys are expected to be fearless and display a sense of *machismo*, contribute to family finances when they are teenagers, and advance their educations when culturally acceptable. Gender differences reveal that Latinas are more apt to ask for assistance while Latino males demonstrate *macho* mentality and are reticent to ask for help when they do not know what to do or when they are afraid (Sáenz & Ponjuán, 2012). *Machismo* "when applied to Latinos" is negatively associated with "male dominance, patriarchy, authoritarianism and spousal abuse" (Mirandé, 1997). Performing well academically is viewed as inferior by other Latino males. Furthermore, Latino males performing well in school are characterized as "acting White" (Sáenz & Ponjuán, 2009, p. 60). Therefore, Latino males desiring to perform above expectations in school are repressed as a result of their cultural background.

Figueroa et al. (2016) addressed the research question: "What are the gender expectations Latinos confront as they pursue high education?" (p.64). The authors collected data for more than two years using a mixed methods research design. Participants expressed their feelings

about college and one saying, “They said that as I go to college, everything was going to be placed on me... All the responsibility was going on me” (p. 66). This participant is struggling with individualism, a trait generally historically and socially reinforced the American culture versus collectivism a trait historically and socially reinforced in, the Latino culture. Main stream media saturates Latinos with masculine images as being more prone to be criminals and involved in gang activities; to break free from these low expectations, they must break free and realize their potential (Figueroa et al., 2006).

One of the participants in Figueroa’s (2016) study described his gang involvement experience and how it reinforced academic oppression, “So you know you have all C’s, everyone’s ‘ah that’s cool,’ if you have all D’s and F’s you were even cooler. So I started changing my straight A’s to straight D’s. So I started getting their [gang] respect” (p. 67). In the middle of his junior year, this participant realized he wanted to improve his academic performance and raise his grades. He did “not want this [lifestyle] anymore” (p.67).

In a related study by Lara and Franquiz (2015), the researchers addressed the stigma associated with being a Latino male teacher and also addressed how Latino male teachers “navigate their many identities in the classrooms” (p. 208). Under the *Proyecto Bilingue* master’s professional degree development program, Latino male teachers were interviewed about their experiences and were given suggestions to increase the Latino male teacher population. The study concluded that the teaching profession has become feminized to the degree that men who want to teach risk societal pressures and begin questioning their masculinity. To compensate for teaching, Latino male teachers often are labeled as “disciplinarians, role models, and father figures” (p.209). Alternatively, a few Latino male teachers in this study Participants of this study expressed their approaches to giving children choices and challenging them about traditional

gender roles. For example, one teacher expressed his approach of providing a series of books that defy the traditional stories that traditionally contain a happy ending. He would read books that were considered nontraditional, such as women as heroines rescuing men - books about feminine boys and masculine girls.

Lara and Franquiz's (2015) study presents an opportunity to investigate how Latino males can challenge society's traditional roles. The study purports that, it is important to provide a variety of books for students to read that do not specifically meet the "happily ever after" criteria to prepare children for the future. Latino male teachers, although scarce, can be one of many groups that informs current research about stereotypical gender roles related to race that do not necessarily have to be embraced.

Malagón (2010) conducted a case study on Chicano Mexicans who were "born on this side of the border" that did not want to lose their "Mexicanness" (Michigan State University, 2000). Chicanos males experiences at continuation schools, "an alternative high school diploma program" for students that are "sixteen years of age or older [who] have not graduated high school" were described in Malagón's study (California Department of Education, 2015). One of the themes that emerged from this study was "disengagement from schooling as a form of resistance" as a result of "neglect, disrespect, substandard schooling conditions, and closed opportunity structures" (p.70). One participant expressed that due to his Chicano identity, he was blamed for being disruptive when the incident was attributed to it was another White classmate (p.70).

Foiles-Sifuentes (2013) conducted an ethnographic study using participants who were considered members of the Latino working class at a Texas charter high school. The researcher attempted to "better understand how social expectation impacts gender performance in urban

youth...” (p.765). The charter high school in the study segregated students based on their academic performance. As a result, students that performed academically well were given permission by other teachers to insult students who were struggling academically. During the study, Foiles-Sifuentes was employed at this charter high school to gain an insider’s insight about the school climate. She witnessed the above mentioned segregation and discrimination. Female Latina students in the study who performed poorly with regard to academics academics wore more make-up and more tightly fitting clothing, while Latino males performing poorly wore more loose clothing and separated themselves from others by raising their head and looking down at a person. Foiles-Sifuentes worked with students that needed assistance during school and began to notice a self-fulfilling prophecy - students that were labeled as inadequate for school did not challenge the label - rather, they embraced the underachiever identity. This research supports the idea of the importance of educators to be aware of their own attitudes and opinions because of the possible effects of these on student attitudes and performance.

Socioeconomic Status

In Latino culture, Latino males are commonly stereotyped as the household main financial provider. This stereotype limits Latino males’ educational attainment, as they are expected to contribute financially at a certain age (Sáenz & Ponjuán, 2012). As bread winners, they are faced with cultural pressures that discourage them from attending four-year institutions (Sáenz & Ponjuán, 2011).

Tierney (2009) focused on the significant financial strain that Latino males must accept when choosing to attend college. Many times Latino males who exhibit the drive to attend a four-year institution lack financial backing to support this goal. If Latino males need to apply for a loan, to finance all or part of their education they would rather choose to work in order to

afford college (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2012).

Past research has shown that Latino males, upon graduating from high school, are expected by their to be gainfully employed. If they resist such pressures, many do not reach graduation at higher education institutions. This pressure places a large psychological and financial strain on males having to work after high school, and seeking a college degree becomes a secondary, distant option.

In terms of other educational options, there is a higher percentage of Latinos attending community college. They attend community college because it provides an opportunity to create a career path that meets their needs, since they “tend to come from lower-income and attend racially segregated grade schools” (Chacon, 2012, p. 209). One may have limited information, services, and resources to apply to college and transfer to a four-year college. There are some California community colleges that offer programs such as the Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS), “a state-funded, services oriented program ... with the intent of ‘extending the opportunities for community college education to all who may profit thereof, regardless of economic, social and educational status’ ” (Ventura College Extended Opportunity Program, n.d.), which has benefitted a large percentage of Latino students (Chacon). These programs are funded by federal grants to help first-generation, low-income college students during their college experience with academics, financial aid, transferring, and other areas.

Unfortunately, not every first-generation student is eligible for this program because for this program of limited program funding for additional students or lack of awareness by the student that navigate the higher education system without this support. Chacon interviewed twelve EOPS students and two EOPS staff members regarding “perceive[d] reasons for budget cuts” (p. 214). It can be concluded that although there are programs assisting students in need

particularly low-income Latinos, budget cuts affect these programs directly. The themes that emerged in this study were diminished access, reduced support, delayed completion, reduction of services, and inequity (p.215).

Familia

Traditionally, Latinos have close familial ties with their immediate and extended families. *Familia* (family) is a mainstay of Latino culture and sacrificing for the better of the familial unit is considered admirable. Sáenz and Ponjuán (2009) identify *familismo* as “strong identification and attachment to immediate and extended family” (p. 62). *Familismo* is characterized by strong feelings of responsibility, solidarity, and loyalty within the Latino family (Marin & Marin, 1991; Sáenz & Ponjuán, 2009; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 1995). Latino families can provide strength, emotional support, gender role modeling, and religious faith formation. It is traditional for Latino males to make sacrifices for their families. At times, family responsibilities create a strong conflict between choosing to attend college and exhibiting loyalty to one’s family by remaining available as bread winners. For affected male family members often becomes a second priority. Additionally, many Latino families lack substantive information about college admission process so they are less likely to be supportive of this pathway (Tierney, 2009).

Tierney (2009) studied ways to assist Latino males in matriculating into college only to discover that familial ties prevent Latino males from pursuing these interests. Tierney used a qualitative narrative research design in which he interviewed three high school Latino male students about college. The students came from low-income families and were the first members of their immediate family to consider registering for college, first-generation backgrounds, neither parent received a four-year degree. They all had demonstrated potential and motivation to

attend college, but were limited in terms of financial resources. As the participants began completing their college application, two participants shared the impact their families played in their decision to attend college. According to Tierney's study, one participant expressed that strong familial ties were an impediment to attending college stating, "We got out a map and it seemed too far away. My father said it was too far. She [mother] just said, no, she got like crying" (p. 81). Tierney's study supports the idea that traditionally, Latino families prefer to keep family members close to home. They do not easily support decisions in which the family is divided geographically. Going to college is more of an option if it is within an hour of their homes (Tierney, 2009). Some Latino parents often tend to be supportive of college matriculation if the institution is nearby, increasing their child's chance of continuing to participate in family events and celebrations.

Other Latino parents do not support higher education because they do not see the immediate results. They question the reasons why one needs to attend college. Latino families, to keep their children close, will encourage hiring their child within a family business immediately after high school. One of the participants in Tierney's (2009) study stated, "My father, he knows I could get a job with him and my uncle, I think that's what he'd like me to do" (p. 82).

Latino families can also be supportive. Ojeda and Castillo (2016) studied the structure of the traditional Mexican family, a subset of the general Latino population. The researchers described the traditional Mexican family as one that enforces gender roles, is family-centered, spiritual in nature, and values respect. When Latino males attend college, family can be a stressor (Ojeda & Castillo). However, they also discovered that parental involvement strongly influenced Latino Mexican males' "college intentions via relationship with parental encouragement" (p. 119).

Parents play a pivotal role in Latino males' general education as a result of culture, family support, and cultural values. Durand and Perez (2013), interviewed twelve Latino parents of preschool and kindergarten children regarding their school involvement, parental roles, and cultural beliefs of education. These parents were mothers and fathers who possessed different levels of education, ranging from having attending high school to completing a graduate degree. The findings showed that eleven out of the twelve participants expressed that education was important. These parents wanted their young children to be successful in school, "but also in life" (p.61). Mexican families have the ability to be supportive and must actively engage in their children's education. These parents were also described as "academic teachers", "guides," and "living models" (p.63). Higher educational attainment led to more participation from parents in the school.

Media

Individuals can be discriminated upon based on their skin tone, eye color, height, weight, accent, sexual orientation, and immigration status. Latino males have been portrayed by the media as individuals prone to being gang members or engaging in criminal activity, not as individuals who can attend college (Sáenz & Ponjuán, 2009). Latino males have suffered from discrimination based on their skin tones, surnames, and accents (Barajas & Ronnkvist, 2007). The media plays a strong role in reinforcing stereotypes, thus leading to discrimination. For example, "...children who watch more television spend less time in other activities that may be associated with positive development." (McDade-Martinez, et., 2015, p. 331). Usually, children that spend more time watching television are children that are Latino, African American, or Asian American. Media targets males and females differently – females "based on their appearance" and "males based on masculinity and attractiveness" (p.331). These groups are

saturated with images that they have to emulate to be socially accepted. Children of Color are exposed more to television so much that it affects their self-esteem. As a result of watching television, “Latino and African American [fifth grade] children reported low levels of self-esteem” (McDade-Martinez et. al, 2015, p. 344).

According to Tanno (2003), “education, media, and technology are interdependent” (p. 39). As stated previously, “low percentages of Latino/as are pursuing higher education and large percentages of Latino/as are dropping high school and college” (p. 39). Latinos, if they feel they are being discriminated against, are less likely not to attend college (Adam, 2010). As a result, it affects the Latino attendance rate.

According to Stevenson and McIntyre (1995), Hispanics (Latinos) are portrayed in limited roles in television. Their study focused on analyzing commercials and see if Hispanics were portrayed at the same rate in certain roles than the other populations. Additionally, Stevenson and McIntyre, were also interested in discovering if Hispanics were portrayed in English commercials that Hispanics watched. Video tapes from ABC, CBS, and NBC television networks were analyzed for their content in Texas, where the Hispanic population was high, as well as in North Carolina, where the Hispanic population was low. Hispanics in San Antonio and North Carolina, “were less likely than Whites to be shown in family situations” (p.68); Hispanics were more likely to appear as blue-collar employees (Stevenson & McIntyre, 1995). Hispanics are underrepresented in certain settings (family environments) in television although they are family oriented and overrepresented in blue-collar jobs.

Another media platform is magazine advertisement. According to Taylor and Bang (1997), media can portray a group either positively or negatively. For example, some ethnic groups have been portrayed in the media as “uneducated...being lazy, and ... unconcerned about

their future” (p.287). For those groups that are substantially exposed to this type of media, they form their own opinion and biases of that certain group. Taylor’s and Bang’s study focused on the type of publications where Latinos were portrayed, as well as settings, and remove types of roles (major, minor, or background). The results indicated that there is a lack of advertising that include Latinos and “a bias on corporate America against the inclusion of the Latinos” (p. 289). The studies support the idea that although the Latino population is growing, Latinos are still underrepresented in commercial television.

Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory (CRT) has been used to better understand Latino males and their struggles. According to Yosso and Kendall (2006), race is a “socially constructed category to differentiate groups based primarily on skin color, phenotype, ethnicity and culture” (p. 5). White privilege is defined as “a system of advantage resulting from a legacy of racism and benefitting individuals and groups based on the notions of whiteness” (p. 5). CRT validates the experiences of people of color and derives meaning from these experiences. Originating in schools of law in the late 1980s with “a group of scholars seeking to examine and change race and racism in United States legal system and society” (p.5), early CRT was used to describe oppression of Blacks among Whites in society (Yosso and Kendall, 2006).

Barriers to Career and Education

If Latino males are not attending college after secondary schooling, what occupies their time after secondary schooling? Latinos in the workforce are often working in “low-skilled jobs” (Sáenz and Ponjuán, 2009) and are “overrepresented in this group” (Low Wage Work, n.d.). Some are in other institutionalized places such as prisons (Sáenz & Ponjuán, 2009). A significantly high number of Latinos go to prison. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics

(2006), 33.8% of the overall population are Hispanics in federal prisons, and 37.9% of the Hispanics incarcerated there are between the ages of 18 and 35, generally considered to be college age. Previous studies have analyzed factors contributing to the decline of Latino males in higher education. For example, in 2014, “Latino males represented 52% of the Latino college-age population, but [only] 43% of Latinos enrolled in college” (Excelencia, 2014). In the past 10 years, undergraduate Latino male college enrollment has increased, but it does not equate the undergraduate Latino female college enrollment rate. The Latino male college enrollment rate is 43% while the Latino female college enrollment rate is 57% (p.1). Latino males are falling behind their Latino female counterparts with regard to enrollment in higher education. The educational gap is larger upon completing the (community) college. “As of 2014, 20% of Latino males had earned an associate degree or higher, compared to 25% Latino females” (p.1). More pronounced since the 1980’s, Latino males are marginalized and are not receiving the adequate help they need to be successful in the academic arena (Sáenz & Ponjuán, 2011).

Methodology

In order to gather meaningful qualitative data, the researcher interviewed five Latino males individually, each interview averaging 35 minutes in duration. Interviews were conducted over a two week period beginning the last week of January, 2016 and concluding the first week of February, 2016. Interviews allowed participants to provide detailed responses by answering open-ended questions, thus giving voice to their experiences without restrictions (Creswell, 2011). The purpose of the interviews was to learn about the sociocultural factors affecting Latino male transfer students considering a transfer to a four-year institution. The data serve as an important tool to help increase understanding of the issues facing Latino males in higher education and, more practically, inform administrative staff at California State University Channel Islands (CSUCI) in creating proactive strategies to enroll and retain these students. Interviews were recorded, transcribed, coded and analyzed using a Critical Race Theory (CRT) lens regarding relationships as experienced by the participants (Delgado & Stefancic, 2006; Yosso & Kendall, 2006).

The researcher recruited Latino males using different forms of advertisement. The first attempt was to e-mail a recruitment flyer to California State University Channel Islands (CSUCI) faculty and staff the researcher knew professionally and personally. Initially, the researcher aimed at selecting a random sample from the respondents and incorporating other students from California Lutheran University (CLU) and CSUCI. The flyer elicited one response from CSUCI and none from CLU. The second and more successful attempt at recruiting participants was when the researcher visited selected Chicano/a Studies courses at CSUCI and informed students about the study. These Chicano/a Studies courses were selected because Latino males were more likely to be enrolled in these courses. In all, there were 14 students interested in the study, but

only five were able to attend one-on-one interviews.

In line with the Institutional Review Board (IRB) protocol, the researcher completed the National Institute Health (NIH) Protecting Human Research course in order to begin the interviews (Appendix A). Each interviewee received a letter of consent form via e-mail prior to the interview and was given a copy to sign the day of the interview (Appendix B). A hard copy was also provided for their records prior to the start of interview. The consent form provided an overview of the research study, their voluntary participation and information about possible risks associated with participating in the study. Additionally, the participants were guaranteed that the personal information they revealed as part of the study would be kept confidential and pseudonyms would be used instead of their names.

Fourteen participants were recruited through the distribution of flyers, class presentations by the researcher, and word of mouth. Of the 14 interested participants, only 7 met the specific criteria needed to be interviewed. The researcher sent an email to the 14 participants with requirements to be met to participate in the study. Each participant met the interview criteria is they identified as Latino and had transferred to CSUCI between the fall of 2013 and the fall of 2015 from a two-year community college. Ideally, the researcher intended to have students array of student selected majors such as social science, science, and humanities.

Participants

Five Latino male transfer students were interviewed about their experiences in coping with sociocultural factors to attend a four-year institution. The pool of participants was geographically diverse, as they resided in Santa Barbara, Los Angeles, and Sacramento counties and were between the ages of ages 23–30.

Setting

All interviews were conducted at the CSUCI Library in a small private classroom. Interviews were conducted on weekday mornings to accommodate students' schedules. The researcher wore casual clothes to allow the participants to feel comfortable. She welcomed each participant with a smile and shook hands when she introduced herself. The researcher sat across the participants to maintain eye contact and to allow participants space to feel comfortable to share their stories. She offered each participant water.

Instrument

The instrument was originally created by the Principal Investigator (PI) based on literature review she researched. The researcher's goal was to be specific and to trigger participant responses. When the Institutional Review Board (IRB) Application was submitted for approval, the PI received a modified research instrument. The School of Education Coordinator and the PI's Advisor met to discuss the instrument and modified the questions to allow participants to freely speak about their experiences. To give participants a voice, the reporting format changed from IRB for approval. Once approval was received, the PI began contacting interested participants.

Procedure

The researcher greeted each interviewee with a smile and gave each interviewee a pen and consent form. The researcher reviewed the consent form and allowed each interviewee a few minutes to read the document before signing. Once the interviewee agreed to the consent form terms and signed it, the researcher handed the interviewee the preliminary questionnaire, which requested basic information such as name, ethnicity, age, and current occupation. The last item, occupation, was optional.

After collecting the consent form and the preliminary questionnaire, the researcher gave each interviewee a copy of the interview guide for reference during the interview and encouraged them to write notes on it if they would like to jot notes. Interviewees were verbally asked for their permission to be audio recorded. All interviewees granted their permission. The interview guides were collected upon the completion of the interview to keep all research material with the researcher. The audio portion of each interview was recorded using an electronic voice recorder. At the conclusion of the interview, each interviewee was thanked, given a \$5 In- N- Out restaurant gift card in appreciation of their participation, and reassured them that their participation was voluntary. They were also asked if they could be contacted after the transcriptions were completed to verify accuracy. Lastly, participants were informed that once the study was concluded and the thesis was approved, they could access it through the university library database system. All participants agreed to use their direct words except for Hector whom declined to let his words be used verbatim.

Data Analysis

Interviews were transcribed verbatim by the researcher and two friends. The two friends signed a confidentiality agreement to remain transcriptions confidential. The researcher reviewed the transcriptions for accuracy. The researcher printed each transcription and verified that they were transcribed accurately by listening to the recordings. Once all transcriptions accurately reflected the audio recordings, the researcher read aloud each interviewees' responses to each question and highlighted key words and phrases. Similar words and phrases were highlighted as being part of a theme. These key words and phrases resulted in the themes. The researcher created a chart with the themes on the first top row and the interviewees on the following rows. This chart allowed her to visually see the impact each theme had on each interviewee and

allowed her to analyze the relationship of each interviewee's experience.

Results

The purpose of this study is to examine sociocultural factors that affect Latino males while transferring from two-year colleges to four-year institutions. The study addresses the following questions: What are the common sociocultural factors that Latino males face while transferring from two-year colleges to four-year institutions? And what are recommendations provided to higher education institutions, educators, parents, and Latino male students that have potential to increase Latino male attendance at four-year institutions? It is important to highlight participant demographics to understand participants or interviewees' experiences. This will substantiate that the Latino male participants in this study are not to be characterized as a homogeneous group.

This study describes the experiences of five Latino males, ages 21–30, that transferred from a two-year community college to a four-year college between fall 2013 and fall 2015. Interviewees attended a variety of community colleges a variety from different California counties such as Los Angeles, Sacramento, and Santa Barbara, but all these students had a common goal - to transfer to a four-year degree granting institution. All agreed that prior education in participants family (theme 1), professional guidance (theme 2), academic performance (theme 3), peer support (theme 4), familial support (theme 5), and college affordability (theme 6) strongly affected their decisions to attend a four-year college.

Four sociocultural factors emerged from the data were reflected in the literature review expressing how strongly affected Latino males' were in their abilities to transfer to a four-year institution. They included a)gender expectations (Sáenz & Ponjuán, 2009; Pollack, 1998; Figueroa, Perez, and Vega, 2016; Lara & Franquiz, 2015; Malagón, 2010; Foiles-Sifuentes, 2013), b)socioeconomic status (Sáenz & Ponjuán, 2011; Tierney 2009), c)*familia* (Marin & Marin, 1991; Sáenz & Ponjuan, 2009; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 1995), and d)media

(Sáenz & Ponjuán, 2009; McDade-Montez, Wallander, Elliott, Grunbaum, Tortolero, Cuccaro, and Schuster, 2015; Tanno, 2003; Stevenson and McIntyre, 1995; Taylor and Bang, 1997).

However, after conducting five interviews in this limited study, only two themes aligned with the research: familial support and being able to pay for college.

According to various researchers, these themes played major roles in Latino males' decisions to attend college and the ability for them to transfer to a four-year college. Family was viewed from two different perspectives. According to the literature review, Latino males can have a range of family support characterization, from robust to tepid. The stories of these five Latino males (all pseudonyms) Alex, Gabriel, Angel, Diego, and Hector highlight common themes, but also unique experiences.

Prior Education in Participant Families

This first theme was created using a portion of Alex's response to one of the eight interview questions. In order to answer the first research question, interviewees were asked to share their personal stories of how they decided to attend a four-year college. The responses by these Latino males describe their unique experiences and desire to attend college as the first person of their family to do so. Interviewees offered a variety of perspectives on these experiences. Being the first in their family to attend college is defined in this study as neither parent having graduated with a four-year degree.

Alex described attending college as a dream. His mother was only able to support him through his "... basic education, [which] was elementary school and middle school." The college process was difficult for Alex to navigate. He stated, "It's gonna sound cliché, but being the first, college student in my family not only [in] like my family, in my group of friends, so I didn't know how to apply." Not only did Alex not know how to apply, but also determine what services

were available, in terms of counseling. He stated that he chose to “wait until the last moment to go and visit the career center” at his community college for transferring assistance. Alex was unaware of these services until it was time to transfer. Alex felt more confused after meeting with counselors about his future. “I felt like I [was] kinda lost. So how’s life in college? I don’t know what’s gonna happen. I need to move to another city? Another county? Like, how’s life over there?” Alex was unaware of all the changes that were involved in transferring to a four-year college and how they would impact his life. At the beginning of his journey to the 4-year university setting, Alex, being a first-generation college student, had many unanswered questions. He wondered about his future school’s culture, geographic location, and if it fit his needs. After receiving help from the career center at his community college, he was motivated to transfer to a four-year college.

Unlike Alex, Hector’s father attended community college and received an Associate of Arts degree. Hector had the moral support of his father and members of his paternal family to attend college. According to Hector, some of his paternal uncles attended four-year institutions. In terms of his maternal family, he was the first to attend college. Hector identifies as a first-generation college student because neither parent attended a four-year college. Hector expressed how proud he felt, being the first to attend college on his mother’s side. During his pursuit of a college education, Hector struggled to receive academic guidance at his community college. He initially attended community college to play football and earn an athletic scholarship as a stepping stone to transfer to a four-year college. However, after attending community college for a year, he learned that he could earn a scholarship not only based on his athletic talent, but through academics as well.

Hector was unsure of the process to transfer from a community college to a four-year

higher education institution. Hector described his journey as random. He either received the help and information that he needed or he did not receive any information. Fortunately, Hector transferred to a four-year college after discovering the process on his own without substantial information from professional guidance.

Angel did not identify himself as a first-generation college student. Rather he mentioned in his interview that he wanted to initially pursue a college education because he yearned to have what his parents did not have. Then an interesting event further defined this vision ...

I remember I was working that summer [after high school graduation] and there was a little kid all covered up. Well, I live in Sacramento, so there it's... really hot ... for a kid to be all covered up...I wondered ... why [exhales], and well I asked the lady...because of, like an accident that the kid had gone through...like his parents...they transferred him from [the] hospital in Central America. Because they didn't have the resources to provide for him...well, that story touched me.

As a result of this experience, Angel decided to pursue a career as a plastic surgeon. Surprisingly, both Angel's parents have a master's degrees so Angel is not the first in his family to attend college. Angel decided to attend community college first and then transfer to a four year college. During Angel's community college experience, he was unaware of the transferring process and the proper courses to take. Angel was not able to receive the help to transfer by the end of his second year in community college, which is what he had planned. He transferred a year later once he self-explored his transferring options and defined the process more accurately.

Diego expressed his main interest to attend college was to increase his options in life. He expressed that he wanted to be able to have practical experience and a degree from a higher educational institution because it gives him validation in a work environment. Diego, like Alex

and Hector, is also the first in his family to attend college. All four so far for now have stated this theme. All four so far now have stated this theme services that allowed him to transfer to a four-year college.

Lastly, Gabriel, the fifth interviewee, decided to pursue a higher education degree because his parents had limited access to education. In the interview Gabriel stated, "I think, in my mind, I told myself, I would do what my parents didn't have the opportunity to do." Gabriel's parents serve as his motivation to attend college. As the first person to attend college in his family, Gabriel, chose to attend a four-year college to improve his way of living for himself and for his family.

Professional Guidance

Professional guidance is important for any college student to receive. Some college students may require additional professional assistance depending on their situation. All participants expressed receiving some type of professional guidance or a lack of professional guidance. Alex received professional assistance during his community college years. One particular professor, inspired him to pursue his dreams and to not limit himself. He states, "She [said] you can go to a private school ... You can get scholarships ... She was looking at my qualities." For Alex, it was motivating to hear a professional express the idea of pursuing beyond his goals. There was another professional, a faculty Dr. Louise (pseudonym) who offered to write a letter of recommendation. Alex expressed his gratitude and was hopeful to be around positive professionals. He had other type of assistance when he transferred to a four-year college. Alex appreciated the monthly emails reminding him to apply for financial aid. "[Melinda has] been on top of sending emails [about] the deadlines ... Don't forget to register." Alex was very grateful to have had the opportunity to conduct research with a faculty partner and motivated him

to consider graduate school. The professional assistance Alex received was mentorship. He expressed the importance mentorship played during his college years.

Another participant that benefitted from professional guidance and emotional support was Hector. His mother was absent most of his career and he yearned to have that motherly figure. Mrs. Alonso (pseudonym) provided Hector with the motherly support and provided information about on campus employment. He worked as a student mentor. As a result of his experience and impacting children's lives, he wanted to pursue a career that involves mentorship.

Diego expressed having a difficult community college experience. He was in search of discovering better ways to study and do well academically. During his self-discovery, he was able to be part of a program at his community college that provided curricular and student support services. Diego benefitted from these services and was able to transfer to a four-year college.

Not all participants' experiences were positive. For example, for Angel, when it was time to transfer, he did not receive the appropriate support and assistance he sought. "It was like a lack of communication with the counselors and them not being able to guide me right away. I ended up losing time." As a result, it took Angel over two years to transfer to a four-year college. Gabriel did not express any comments about professional guidance.

Academic Performance

Many Latino males attend college to obtain a degree that will allow them to have careers related to their major field of study, supporting their families financially, and to advance as individuals on the socioeconomic ladder. All five interviewees expressed some type of influence that academics played in their college experience as a sociocultural factor.

Alex arrived to the United States at the age of 17 and had limited English comprehension

and speaking skills. He entered high school at a more advanced age than his classmates and had to graduate before turning 21 according to his school administrators. Alex had limited support from the faculty and staff at his high school. One of the educators at his school expressed doubts about his ability to complete high school. Alex summarized one educator's words of discouragement to continue his high school education, "You're too old. You're not gonna finish. You're gonna drop. I do not—we don't know we not doing the right decision to accept you here." Instead of discontinuing his education, Alex continued attending school to "prove them wrong." He was determined to succeed "one way or another."

Alex went on to express the role that language learning played in his academic high school experience. He struggled to grasp the English language and this limited his class participation. "Let's say I was in class; I couldn't raise my hand to ask for an answer." Alex did not give up; rather he self-taught himself English. "I remember spending more than, I believe, eight hours per day like trying to grasp the concepts and understanding the language." Alex was dedicated to learn the language. Even though some educators were not supportive, there were some who encouraged Alex to maintain his focus and keep learning. One teacher said to Alex, "[It] doesn't matter how you pronounce [a word] as long as they understand you." Luckily, Alex's determination to master the English language did not prevent him from transferring to a four-year college.

Hector, similar to Alex, struggled to do well academically. However, Hector expressed that at a young age he was not motivated to do well in school. He expressed that as early as third grade, he did not have the motivation to unpack his backpack and begin his homework. When Hector began attending community college, he was not prepared to achieve academically. Hector had low academic self-esteem. He recalled one of his early experiences in community college

when he was assigned to write a paper for his English class. Hector was not aware how to start writing an English paper. At this point, he realized that all his failed efforts to learn to write were directly correlated with his current situation. Hector gained academic confidence by asking for assistance with his papers and improving his writing.

When Diego took the high school English placement exam, he was placed in the most advanced English class. However, Diego struggled in this class because of his high school's lack of preparation. "I didn't know how it was to study to be specific, and I didn't know how to go to school." Diego was unprepared for the college courses' rigorousness. To be able to do well in his classes, he "focused on learning the English language perfectly and being able to write essays." Diego's transition from high school to college was so difficult that he "failed all [his] classes and, [he] was about to drop out" during his first semester in college. He sought help and received academic assistance and information about the transfer process.

For Latino males such as Diego, it is important to have the appropriate preparation at the high school level to transition successfully to college and perform well in academics. Fortunately, he kept attending college and reframed his way of thinking. He enrolled in the beginning Mathematics and English courses to establish a foundation and built his skills from there. Eventually, he began earning "straight A's" and increased his academic confidence. Gabriel and Angel did not make references in their interviews regarding academics. Neither interviewee mentioned academics as a sociocultural impediment to transferring to a four-year college.

Peer Support

Peer support was one an emerging theme that contributed positively to participants' experiences. Alex benefitted from receiving help from his peers when he was in the beginning phases of

learning the English language. Having peers that he could relate to helped Alex feel more comfortable and practice the language. Alex's friends provided emotional and financial support when in most need. "[To be able to pay tuition] I had to come up with all my savings ... I had to borrow ... from my friends ..." Alex' received financial support from his friends to help him afford tuition. Peers played a positive role in Alex's experience.

Angel developed a strong support system. Among the support system were his peers. They provided guidance about course work and career exploration.

'Hey Sheila (pseudonym) ... I'm trying to go to Med school but I don't know where to get some help' ... She guided me right away... Those are the people that help me most. Interestingly, peers and peer mentoring played an important role in these interviewees community college experience and assisted with the transition from community college to a four-year institution.

Angel benefitted from having peer support and guidance. Diego, Hector, and Diego did not make a reference about peer support.

Familial support

Family was one of the most prevalent sociocultural factors stated in the interviews that affected all interviewees. Traditionally, in the Latino community immediate and extended family serves as one family. Alex emigrated from Mexico without any of his family members to Hollywood, California. His family, although living in Mexico, provided a positive moral support. His mother, Alex's main supporter, advised him about his career endeavors by saying, "just follow your heart. Follow your guts. Just follow your dreams." Alex recalled his mother's works of encouragement and she added "[*Alex's eyes began to get watery as he recalled his mother's words*] don't worry. If you fail, I'll pick you up like when you were a baby.' You know like

mothers?” Alex expressed the importance of his mother support.

Alex had to be self-disciplined with his studies. When he needed advice or someone to share his thoughts, however, he sought advice from one of his family members, “Hey, this is going on...they’re my free counseling; but yeah. Like even though they don’t have a high education, they have a life experience, and they can [still] give me an advice and a direction.”

Alex continues to have strong familial support, which is important to have when one is attending college, especially as a first-generation college student. Alex expressed the hardships he has had and the yearning in wanting to have his family close in proximity.

He knows that he can overcome any “adversity,” and strongly believes that anyone can attend college and be successful. Angel, similar to Alex, has his family living far away. Angel attends school at a four-year college in Southern California and his family resides in Northern California. Fortunately, for Angel it is easier to visit his family because they live within the same state. For Alex, as an undocumented immigrant, is prohibited from visiting his family in Mexico, because upon his return, he would be restricted from entering the United States. Angel’s main motivation to attend college is his,

...mom [and] dad. You see, I see them work. They work really hard for me to get an education ... I feel that not only do I owe everything to them, but ... I feel like I can’t let them down.

Angel described his loyalty to his family and the motivation he has to earn a four-year degree. He expressed that his goal is to become a neurosurgeon. In reflecting on his chances to perform well in school, he expressed that he especially needs his family support during difficult times. Angel expressed his yearning to regularly have family support as an alternative support system.

...and people that I'm really good friends with now ... feels like it's a family ... I get that other fifty percent from them, you get me? so that's what gets me going ... I don't have my family here, but in a way I found people who help me like my family ...

Angel has created a support system that serves a similar purpose to a family. This support system provides the guidance to perform well in school.

Other interviewees briefly mentioned family. For example, Gabriel mentioned that his parents were not able to support him financially with the rent. However, his uncle was able to accommodate him and charge a small amount for rent. Gabriel states:

“... my parents aren't helping me. So, I had to find a place to live. I ended up finding a home. I'm staying with my uncle... I still pay rent, but I don't pay as much as living [on campus].”

Interviewees expressed that they received a wide range of family moral support. Hector had consistently received his father's and paternal uncle's support, as they attended his football games and regularly motivated him to complete his college studies. However, Hector preferred to have one specific person to support him: his mother. According to Hector, his mother provided a different kind of support, initially with the basic necessities to survive: food, water, shelter, and clothing. Hector also benefitted from the advice of a compassionate mother - a mother that listens, gives advises, and encourages oneself to do one's best. Hector's voice was broken when he spoke of his mother's disappointment for being unable to visit him during his university years. He mentioned that she might not attend his upcoming graduation. Hector did not have his mother's support but was able to receive a similar type of support by a college staff member. Hector described Luz (pseudonym) as the supportive mother he never had.

Unlike Hector, Diego yearned to live independently and had limited parental support.

During the interview, he stated, “Um, I didn’t receive help from my parents. I moved out as soon as I finished high school.” Diego yearned for independence from his parents.

Being able to pay for college

Being able to pay for college was the most prominently expressed hindrance that all interviewees stated that they had to overcome in order to transfer to a four-year college successfully. While it is true that some of these participants were first-generation status students, it was implied that the majority, if not all, were from low socioeconomic status based on their interview question responses. For example, Alex struggled financially from the moment he immigrated into the United States, having very few dollars in his pocket. He stated, “I came to the United States with only, I believe, \$20 dollars...” Yet, despite the financial strain, he searched for a job and a place of residence to stay. His financial limitation was not going to prevent him from pursuing his dream. To further substantiate his situation, Alex communicated that there was a time during the transition from high school to community college that Alex struggled to pay rent after being laid off of paying a work position. As a result, he lost his home and became homeless.

Being homeless was an additional stressor that hindered Alex as he strived to perform well academically, as well as balance his individual finances and attend to his personal health. In a turn of events, Alex acquired a new job, but then lost his car. Not having a car to travel to and from school did not prevent him from continuing his education. During the interview, he stated, “..I had to walk four hours to Los Palos [pseudonym, community college]... my first class I remember was at 7:15, 7 something. I had to wake up at 3:15, take a shower, get my coffee and walk to be on time. It was scary but I had to do it.” And he added, “...regardless of the adversity, I continued.” Not being able to have the proper transportation to attend college did not impede

his will to attend his classes.

Alex's financial situation affected him throughout community college, but his burden lessened as he was unable to qualify to pay in-state residency for his tuition. He was paying out-of-state tuition until new laws passed that allowed AB540, "authoriz[ing] community college districts to ... charge a [reduced]tuition fee for, nonresident students" (Official California Legislative Information, 2001). When transferring, Alex was not eligible to apply for a California State Grant, so he sought alternative methods to fund his education, such as loans from family and friends and funds earned while working part-time.

I couldn't receive, in my first year, the Cal Grant so I had to come up with all my savings to pay for the first semester and the second semester. I had to borrow from my cousin, from my friends, and work part-time after [while taking] ... 15 units... [I had to] manage the time to finish my homework, go to work, come back from work, [and] continue my homework...more than anything, it was getting used to the system.

Alex discovered that for every problem that he faced, he found a solution. He believed that hard work pays off and regardless of the barrier, it can be surmounted. As previously stated, one of the reasons Hector first attended community college was to perform well enough as a community (two-year) college athlete that he would receive an athletic scholarship to transfer to a four-year college. During the time Hector spent in community college, he played football and improved his academic performance. When it was time to transfer, he received a scholarship based on his academic merit and successfully transferred to a four-year college. To be able to be able to meet his school expenses, Hector worked part-time and applied for a school loan. The school loan was used to fund his housing expense in a dormitory. However, Hector felt it was unfair that he had to pay for housing. He expressed the frustration he felt once he received

continuous reminders about the need to repay the loan he received. According to him, having the constant loan reminders created additional stressors and limited the concentration he needed for his studies.

Diego, similarly, worked upon graduating from high school. “So I started my own business just to get myself through college ...” Diego displayed a sense of determination and entrepreneurial spirit as he started his own business. He, like other Latino male participants interviewed, is determined to be successful by seeking alternatives methods to afford college.

Gabriel’s responses to interview questions highlighted the impact that attending to finances had on his college experience. He mentioned that he attended community college as a first step after high school because it was more economically affordable. Gabriel added, “So my first step I took was going to the community college to get my transfer credits, and it’s just better economically to do that...then, transferred after that.” Gabriel admitted that community college is more “economically friendly.” It was clear that finances played a major part in his decision-making process. Angel did not specifically mention the stress associated to any examples of financial considerations, but made brief references to his parents’ hard work and their encouragement for him to continue attending school.

Four sociocultural factors were mentioned in the literature review gender expectations, socioeconomic status, *familia*, and media as influencing Latino males’ decisions to transfer to a four-year college. Family is very important in the Latino culture. Being loyal to one’s family displays honor and acceptance. *Familia*, as mentioned in the literature review was generally shown in research to be was generally shown in research to be limited for Latino males wishing to attend college that is far from their family (Tierney, 2009). Often family members will accommodate circumstances to keep, Latino males to close to home geographically. Gabriel, one

of the interviewees, received help from his uncle when he was searching for a place to live while attending college. Although he attended college an hour away from his family, he still received family support. Alex also received family support during his college years in the form of personal advice and guidance to keep going.

As mentioned in the previous literature review, research studies showed that family can also provide limited support when their children decide to attend college. In Tierney's study (2009), one of the participant's parents suggested to employ his son at an uncle's business, instead of going away to college. If this participant would have accepted his father's offer, he most likely will not have gone to college. Similarly, Hector did not have his mother's support during his college years. Hector during his elementary years reported a semi-present mother that provided the basic necessities but the support Hector yearned was not available to him. The *familia* findings in this study support the literature review's assertions.

The other sociocultural factor that also aligned with current research is socioeconomic status. All participants expressed the effects this barrier placed on their decisions to attend college and the heavy burden they carry when having to fund their own education. Similar to the literature review, Latino males in this study expressed the effect of their socioeconomic status and not being able to focus on their studies because of financial stressors. Some of this study's Latino males were not able to qualify for financial aid, others had to work part-time to contribute their school expenses, and others acquired loans to fund their educations. In the next chapter, recommendations are suggested for educators, family, and other Latino males who are pursuing a higher education based on the analysis of participant interviews and past research.

Conclusion

Discussion and Conclusions

This research study aimed at answering the research questions: What are the common sociocultural factors Latino males face while transferring from two-year colleges to four-year institutions? And what recommendations provided to four-year institutions, educators, parents, and Latino male students have the potential to increase Latino male attendance at four-year institutions? Five qualitative interviews were conducted to see if there were correlations between the literature review and emerged themes from participant interviews. Of the four themes that emerged from this study, only two themes: a) family and b) prior education in participants family correlated with the literature conducted. Family played an important role in all of the five interviewees' reflections on their college experiences. Some interviewees stated that the importance their families played when continuing with their college education, while other interviewees stated the limited academic support they received from their families. In particular, these interviewees stated having other type of support from their families such as shelter, food, and clothing, yet they expressed the need to have familial academic support. Similarly, the literature review revealed that the Latino family members may not be aware of the importance of other forms (counseling) of academic support. Nonetheless, Latino families that have limited educational attainment may limit their ability to support their children's education.

The second theme, being able to pay for college, was the most prevalent sociocultural factor stated by the study participants to overcome to transfer to a four-year institution, and it remained a factor during their college attendance. Four out of the five interviewees stated that their socioeconomic status was considered in choosing which college they opted to transfer. For example, two interviewees clearly stated that their family did not have the capital to fund their

education, so they sought alternative methods to continue with their academic pursuit's college. One participant was awarded some scholarships after expressing some interest to fund his education. This interviewee was an exception as the others in the study had to apply for and acquire loans and used them to pay for their education. In the literature review, it was stated that most Latino males opt out when securing a loan as an option to fund their education. Another interviewee mentioned he received financial support from his peers. Peers were mentioned specifically in the literature review as a type of support. Discovered that themes may have not been mentioned in the literature review, but they may be correlated with to others themes, such as family as a larger theme and first-generation status and academics as subthemes.

Implications for practice and/or policy

Findings from this study revealed that Latino males who attended college community before transferring to a four-year institution struggled to complete the first two years of their college experience. Four out of five interviewees stated that their community college experience was difficult. One interviewee shared that when he sought help from a community college counselor, he was led to a non-productive path. Another participant expressed his frustration with not being able to transfer because he was not awarded sufficient scholarships to fully fund his education. Four out of five interviewees stated that it was a combination of self-motivation, self-discipline, peers, and peer mentoring that propelled them to complete their community college experience and transfer to a four-year institution. Interviewees were asked what challenges they faced when transferring from a community college to a four-year institution and only two out of five interviewees expressed challenges specifically in this area. One interviewee stated his first-generation status and "breaking the mentality" was a hindrance. Another interviewee shared that housing was a challenge because he emigrated from another county.

Interviewees reported having support from their four-year institution they were currently attending. The support each interviewee received was from staff, faculty, departments, and peers. All five interviewees expressed their gratitude for the support they received, which impacted their college experience positively. Interviewees were also asked about measure that their four-year institution, California State University Channel Islands (CSUCI) could adopt to help their college experience. Answers varied from raising awareness of helpful resources on campus, from creating a fun course to help students with their study and time management skills. Two important messages interviewees had for future college students who are now considering transferring to CSUCI is to increase their involvement in activities offered and to network with other students and faculty. Interviewees reported benefiting from being involved and thus, creating networking relationships that can also benefit them in the future.

Recommendations for community colleges, based on this study, are to more formally advise Latino male community college students about coursework, financial aid, and career goals. Those students that identify as first-generation will have more difficulty regardless due to their circumstances, but through peer support they have a higher likelihood of succeeding. Advice for Latino parents, based on this study, is to ensure they understand that their unconditional support is important to the success of their Latino male children. To help their children succeed, it is important that they do their best to learn about college processes such as the application process, and financial resources to help alleviate the financial strain for their children. Although research shows that Latino parents know the value of a college education, but they see financially supporting the family as more important. Latino males need role models to connect with on a personal level and resources that support their academic pursuits. Although not present in the interviews in this study, past research points to early intervention at the elementary

school level in helping Latino males develop strong study habits and a positive attitude towards education. By creating policies and raising awareness about college at an early stage in these young boys' lives, their parents will likely be more supportive in a path for attending college. These policies and awareness need to also address the negative media portrayals of Latino males.

Future research

This study will contribute to other literature on Latino males in higher education. It specifically focused on the socio-cultural factors that influenced Latino male matriculation into four-year education institutions. Some of the themes aligned with themes from other journal articles. However, there were limitations to this study. One of the limitations to this study was sample size. Only five interviewees were interviewed, which limits the themes and cannot be generalized to a larger population. Another limitation is that this study only focused on Latino males at one institution. Interviewing a larger population including parents and school officials for triangulation may produce stronger data, additional themes, and potentially broader generalizations. Using a validated instrument would allow correlations with data from other studies.

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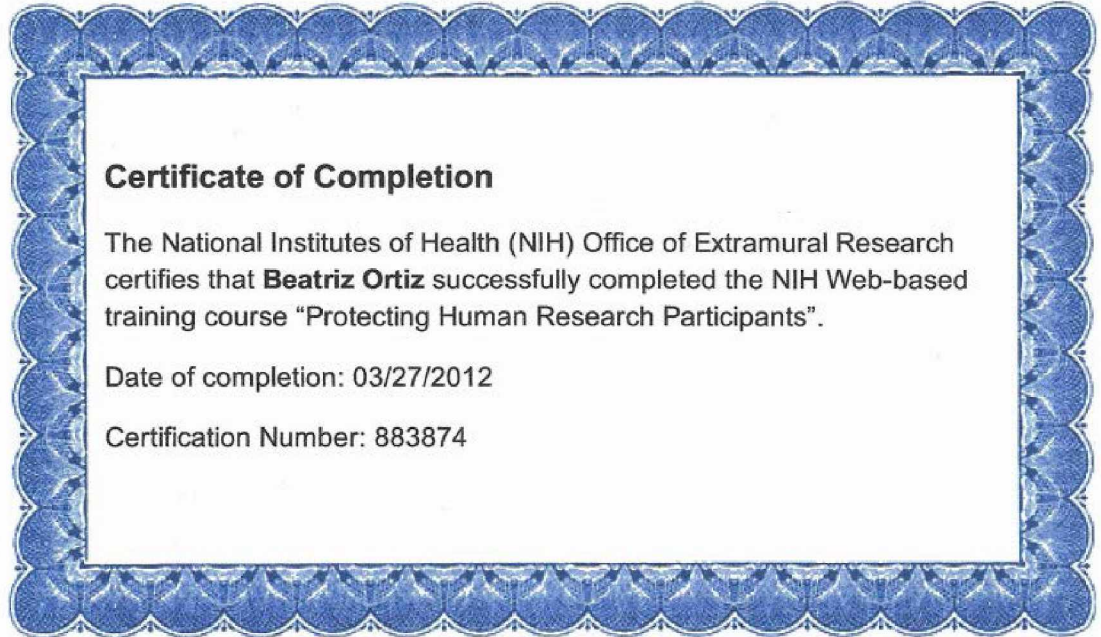
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Protecting Human Subject Research Participants



Appendix B: Consent Form***Participant Consent Form***

Title of Study: Transfer Latino males and their success in higher education.

CSUCI Student Investigators: Beatriz “Betty” Ortiz under the supervision of James Martinez.

Purpose: The purpose of this qualitative study is to provide California State University Channel Islands (CI) information to help Latino males attend four-year institutions. Findings will assist CI increase Latino male attendance in higher education.

Participation: You are free to choose not to participate in this research. If you do so, that decision will not have any consequences, nor will it change or influence in any way in your future relationship with CI. If you decide to participate, you are free to discontinue participation at any time without any adverse consequences. If you decide to participate in the research and subsequently decide that you would like to you to withdraw your information from the project, please contact the investigator listed above before January 15, 2016.

Confidentiality: Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain *confidential*. Actual names of participants will never be associated with interview answers in final analysis papers. Any answers that you provide within the context of the interview will be used for analysis by the project investigator (i.e. researcher/investigator listed above).

If you have any questions about this study, you can call the CSUCI Student Investigator listed above, or the supervisor Professor, James Martinez (james.martinez@csuci.edu). For information about your rights as human subjects, you can contact the Research and Sponsored Programs office at CSU Channel Islands (by telephone at (805)437-8496, or via email at irb@csuci.edu). My signature below indicates that I have been informed of my rights as a human subject, and I

have decided freely and voluntarily to allow to participate in the research.

Printed Name: _____

Signature of Participant: _____

Date: _____

Appendix C: Preliminary Questionnaire

Title of Study: Socio-cultural barriers preventing Latino males attend a four-year institution.

CSUCI Student Investigator: Beatriz “Betty” Ortiz, California State University Channel Islands (CI) under the supervision of Professor James Martinez.

Name: _____

Ethnicity: _____

Age: _____

Current Occupation (Optional): _____

Thank you!

Appendix D: Interview Question Guide

Interview Question Guide

Hello, my name is Beatriz “Betty” Ortiz and I am a graduate student doing research here at California State University Channel Islands (CI). Thank you for taking the time to participate in this interview on assessing transfer Latino males and their success in higher education. The purpose of this qualitative study is to provide CI information regarding successful Latino males in higher education and their path they took. Findings will assist CI with increasing Latino males in higher education attendance.

I would like to hear from you regarding any socio-cultural barriers you faced and overcame as a Latino male. Additionally, I will ask questions regarding your success.

Let's start...

1. Tell me the story about how you decided to attend a four-year college from a community college?
2. What challenges did you face when transferring from a community college to a four-year college and how did you overcome them?

3. What challenges did you face when you first started attending a four-year college?

4. How would you describe your life now as a college student?

5. Now that you are here at CSUCI, what help have you received and by whom?

6. What other things can CI do to help during your college experience?

7. As a recent transfer from community college, what advice do you have for other students who are now considering transferring to CSUCI and the CI community?

8. What advice do you have for other students transferring from the community colleges to four-year colleges?

Is there anything else you would like to share?

Thank you again for your time!

Appendix E: Recruitment Flyer



Want to make a difference?
Are you a Latino male?
Did you transfer to a four-year institution?

**LATINO
MALE
COLLEGE
STUDENTS
NEEDED!**

If you answered yes to **ALL** three questions above, I, **Betty Ortiz**, a current **Master's Degree Candidate** in the **School of Education** at **California State University Channel Islands**, would like to extend an invitation for you to participate in my qualitative research project which focuses on "**Transfer Latino Males and their Success in Higher Education.**" Participants will receive **FREE \$5 SUBWAY GIFT CARD!** If interested, please call me at (805)794-5479 or email me at beatriz.ortiz197@myci.csuci.edu.

Thank you!