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2023

Best practices utilized by school counselors in increasing Latino male college readiness

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Pepperdine University

Graduate School of Education and Psychology

BEST PRACTICES UTILIZED BY SCHOOL COUNSELORS IN INCREASING LATINO

MALE COLLEGE READINESS

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction

of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership, Administration, and Policy

by

Robert Hernandez

September, 2023

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This dissertation, written by

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under the guidance of a Faculty Committee and approved by its members, has been submitted to and accepted by the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, grandparents, and sisters. Thank you for the constant support and encouragement. This work is also dedicated to Paula and Emma, my guiding lights, for your support, sacrifices, and patience. I love you so much. Thank you.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I want to thank my incredible dissertation committee, Dr. Madjidi, Dr. Miramontes, Dr. Brahme, and Dr. Dawson, for their guidance, feedback, and support. I am so grateful for the process you continually refine and establish to lay the groundwork that enabled me to focus so much more on my topic. Thank you especially for your patience and flexibility throughout the pandemic and leadership as we navigated the ever-changing landscape.

I owe a debt of gratitude to my cohort for their ongoing support, especially my EIP crew-Edyn, Bailey, Brittney, Alexis, Jennifer, Roslyn, and Taylor. Thank you for the texts, answering questions, helping to peer review questions, and the coffee and lunches on our weekends. Carla, thank you for being a tremendous support as a peer and professional colleague. It was a pleasure to be your partner on so many assignments. Shout out to the Egypt Crew (Joshua, Brittney, Bailey, and Carla) for a fantastic experience and camaraderie. I'd also like to acknowledge my work cohorts, Shannon and Helen. Thank you for constantly setting the bar and being motivated to see this through!

To my coworkers, especially Raymond, Marci, and Vivian. Thank you for helping to cover events so that I could finish an assignment or my class weekend that took me out of the mix. I am so thankful for your support! I would also like to thank Dr. David Rennie for your insight and recommendations and Fatima Montoya and Dr. Elizabeth Blanco for their support during this last push to complete this dissertation.

Thank you to my incredible sisters–Yvonne, Yvette, and Yanci. Your courage and perseverance are truly admired, and I am so grateful for your support throughout this process. Your humor and conversations got me through a lot of this.

VITA

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Pasadena Unified School District/Director–Planning, Innovation, Accountability, & Special Projects
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Pasadena High School / Principal
July 2016–June 2022, Pasadena, CA

- Supervision of learning community of 1,800 students and 115 certificated and classified staff with a working budget of $4 million
- Supervised and directed academic program that resulted in a 96% or greater graduation rate with 82% or higher of students matriculating into institutes of higher learning
- Facilitated academic learning community engaged in continuous improvement cycle of
- Implemented the Building Assets Reducing Risk (BARR) program to strengthen the transition of incoming ninth graders through structured monitoring of student academic performance and well-being that resulted in a decrease in course failures during the first two years of implementation
- Facilitated and coordinated budgets of $400,000 of Title I and LCAP funds among the School Site Council, English Language Advisory Committee (ELAC), and African American Parent Council (AAPC) to ensure equitable support for academic success and student well-being of all students, with an emphasis on English Learners, Foster Youth, Black, and Latinx students

- Participated in High Tech High CARPE Southern California College Access Network and implemented strategies to increase college-going rates for Black, Latinx, and low socioeconomic students
- Developed and implemented a LACOE Community Schools partnership that provided holistic support to students, including academic and mental health, and referrals to services for families
- Worked collaboratively as a secondary administrative representative on the PUSD bargaining team and successfully negotiated multiple MOUs through the COVID pandemic that resulted in a return to in-person instruction

Sheldon Early College High School / Principal
July 2014 – June 2016, Houston, TX (Sheldon ISD)

- Supervised a small learning community of 380 students and 25 staff members with the mission of preparing students to complete advanced high school and collegiate coursework upon graduation, resulting in students earning associate degrees upon high school graduation of the first graduating class of 2016
- Facilitated Instructional Rounds to develop a shared understanding of practical instruction with staff, made suggestions for improvement and implementation timelines, and monitored improvement through scheduled round visits with all teachers
- Collaborated with AVID Site Team to implement the AVID system school-wide to prepare students for postsecondary success to ensure FAFSA completion and completion of college applications
- Coordinated and developed agendas for the Early College High School Advisory Council between Sheldon ISD administration, students, parents, ECHS staff, and San Jacinto College personnel to celebrate successes and develop solutions to improve the program for students
- Utilized data from student performance in high school and postsecondary courses to drive a school-wide professional development plan concerning increased collaboration among students and enhancing academic writing skills

C.E. King Middle School/ Principal
July 2010 – June 2014, Houston, TX (Sheldon ISD)

- Developed a Professional Learning Community among staff to create and maintain an environment dedicated to the development and improvement of student success that resulted in the campus earning a "Met Standard" accountability rating with distinction designations made for Academic Achievement in Reading/ELA and Mathematics
- Implemented campus protocols to analyze and use student data to improve instruction collaboratively
- Facilitated peer instructional rounds to improve teaching and learning for students

- Recipient of Texas College Readiness grant to implement the AVID system and build college awareness at the middle school level, resulting in the program's growth from 2 sections to 3 sections of students served by the AVID system.

Spring Forest Middle School / Assistant Principal
July 2007–June 2010, Houston, TX (Spring Branch ISD)

- Evaluated and analyzed student data (i.e., grades, benchmark results, previous TAKS results) consistently with the school leadership team and teachers to determine best practices for all students
- Coordinated, developed, and evaluated master schedule with goals of maximizing successful learning opportunities for students in academic courses, extracurricular activities & teacher assignments
- Developed, maintained, and evaluated an effective campus discipline management plan by the Spring Branch ISD Code of Conduct
- Coordinated mentor program for new teachers while developing scheduled observations in addition to conducting training for mentor teachers
- Recruited participants and volunteers and coordinated student mentor program with Shell and Exxon employees

Alief ISD/ Secondary ESL Instructional Specialist
July 2006–June 2007, Houston, TX (Alief ISD)

- Coached middle and high school classroom teachers in the use of effective research-based instructional strategies and methodologies
- Provided assistance and resources for campus personnel to meet the varied learning needs of students identified as English Language Learners (ELLs)
- Assisted/mentored new teachers with the planning and development of curriculum and instruction geared at helping students succeed
- Assisted teachers in the development of effective lesson plan
- Assisted teachers in appropriately diagnosing student needs
- Met with campus and district personnel to analyze data and monitor program effectiveness
- Developed and presented professional development sessions at the campus and district level in Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) and Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) trainer

Budewig Intermediate School/ Bilingual Teacher
June 2004–July 2006, Houston, TX (Alief ISD)

- Taught 5th and 6th Grade Math and Science with New Arrival students and emerging English Language Learners

- Alief ISD Trainer for Science in the Spanish Bilingual Classroom for all fifth-grade bilingual science teachers
- Served on the district Bilingual & ESL Leadership Team
- Co-Presenter Spring 2004-Summer 2005, Integrated Instruction: Connecting Literacy & Content, Grades 3-6

Owens Intermediate School/ Bilingual Teacher
August 2001–June 2004, Houston, TX (Alief ISD)

- 5th Grade Bilingual English Language Arts and Social Studies Teacher
- Implemented various instructional strategies for students
- Served on the Campus Improvement Team

ABSTRACT

This study sought to identify best practices incorporated by secondary school counselors in California high schools that promote, support, and increase college-going identity and foster a supportive college-going environment for Latino male students. The researcher used a phenomenological qualitative study to capture the best practices and strategies academic counselors utilize to overcome the challenges of increasing Latino male academic achievement and college readiness. The findings of this study suggest that practices such as building supportive and caring environments, developing a college-going culture, increasing college readiness opportunities for Latino males, and targeted support increase college readiness among Latino males. Recommendations from participants also indicate a desire to develop support systems for students and increased professional development for school counselors.

Keywords: secondary school counselors, academic counselors, college readiness, Latino male students, best practices

Chapter 1: Introduction

A college degree in the U.S. is critical to unlocking the doors to opportunity, prosperity, stability, and security. College graduates in the U.S. have access to higher-paying jobs and, thus, earn higher wages over their lifetime (Gregory & Huang, 2013; Kuh et al., 2007; Rodriguez et al., 2018). Access to higher education has social and economic implications, providing a path to reduced inequities while bolstering the U.S.'s international competitiveness (Bettinger & Evans, 2019). The promise of upward mobility through hard work has resonated from the time of the Declaration of Independence to the ideals of the "American dream" (N. E. Hill & Torres, 2010). However, the notion that hard work is a guarantee to accessing homeownership, quality education, affordable healthcare, and employment with living wages is a simplified equation that lacks the complexities and historical barriers that have prevented populations from access. Data suggests that those furthest from opportunity include marginalized people, primarily African Americans and Latinos (Knight-Emanuel et al., 2019; Saenz, Drake et al., 2018). These marginalized populations have experienced a history of institutional racism and have been subjected to legislation and policies that intentionally deny these U.S. citizens socioeconomic upward mobility (Knight-Emanuel et al., 2019; Rodriguez et al., 2018).

Background

Latinos in the U.S. are diverse individuals of different ethnicities, nationalities, generational statuses, histories, and educational experiences (Arredondo et al., 2014; Pino et al., 2012). Unfortunately, the remnants of segregation and racism toward Latino Americans have had lasting impacts over the last century (Orfield et al., 2016). Despite their aspirations for an improved future for their children, Latinos in the U.S. have been relegated as second-class citizens, denied access to many opportunities, most notably education (Noboa-Rios, 2019;

Noguera et al., 2012; Portes et al., 2014). Latinos now constitute the largest minority population in the U.S., accounting for 18% of the total population (Gándara, 2015; Reed, 2018; Krogstad, 2020; U.S. Census Bureau, 2022). The Latino public school population increased from 23% to 28% between the Fall of 2010 and the Fall of 2021 and now constitutes the most significant minority student population in public schools (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2023). As the population has increased, so has the desire to continue one's education. For instance, 67% of Latino high school graduates continue their education in higher education institutions (HEIs) such as community colleges and four-year universities (G. Martinez & Chavira, 2019). While this increase among Latinos pursuing higher education is promising, Latino students trail behind other student groups when it comes to college completion and degree attainment (Becerra, 2012; Duncheon, 2018; Gándara, 2010; Manzano-Sanchez et al., 2019; G. Martinez & Chavira, 2019; Reed, 2018).

According to the U.S. Census (2022), California has the second-highest percentage of Latinos aged 5 to 18, bested by New Mexico. Achievement rates among California Latinos reflect nationwide patterns, with 82% of Latino students graduating high school in 2020, an increase from 68% in 2010 (California Department of Education, 2020). While college-going rates among Latinas remained steady between 2015 and 2020, male Latino college-going rates declined from 54% to 48% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022). This discrepancy in education among Latino males has led to what Paolini (2015) describes as a situation in a "crisis stage" (p. 84). In understanding the current crisis facing Latino males, it is necessary to understand the historical, cultural, and systemic forces that have restricted advancement among Latinos, resulting in cycles of struggle and limited opportunities to access higher education.

Projections show that by 2060, Latinos will comprise a third of the U.S. population (NCES, 2023). Thus, college degree attainment among Latinos is necessary for the health of the U.S. economy and competition in the global market and will help reverse current trends for the Latino population (Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009). A critical issue arising from these statistics is the disproportionate rate at which Latino males are matriculating and graduating from college (Clark et al., 2013; Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009). While overall graduation rates and college enrollment among Latinos have increased, Latina enrollment and college degree attainment have outpaced their male Latino peers (Anthony et al., 2021; Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009). Between 2010 and 2020, college enrollment among Latinas increased from 32% to 46%, while male Latino enrollment rose from 28% to 30% during this same time (NCES, 2022). Additionally, Latinas are likely to have higher years of schooling, enroll in academic preparation programs in secondary schools, and have higher rates of matriculation and degree attainment in higher education (Becerra, 2012; Saenz, Drake, et al., 2018). The outlook is less promising for Latino males, as they are increasingly less likely to graduate from high school, enroll in postsecondary institutions, and earn college degrees (Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009; Saenz, Garcia-Louis, et al., 2018; Yavuz, 2016). Scholars warn that these continued trends could have dire effects on local, state, and national economies and social implications on Latino communities (Halx & Ortiz, 2011; Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009).

A History of Segregation, Exclusion, and Second-Class Status

Latinos have been relegated to second-class citizens despite living in present-day U.S. lands before European explorers' arrival in the 15th and 16th centuries (MacDonald & Rivera, 2015; Noboa-Ríos, 2019). The U.S. annexed over half of northern Mexico through the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo at the end of the Mexican-American War. It gained sovereignty over Guam,

Puerto Rico, the Philippines, and Hawaii in the late 19th century (Spring, 2007). As a result of colonization, many U.S. Latinos were foreigners in their land, victims of U.S. imperialism, and became the primary labor force in the agricultural fields of the Southwest (García & Yosso, 2013; Noboa-Ríos, 2019). Unfortunately for Latinos, no clear transition or support was provided to help those who became U.S. citizens overnight, especially concerning education (MacDonald et al., 2007; Noboa-Ríos, 2019). State and local entities would fill the void of federal legislation regarding Latinos, often enacting discriminatory practices and segregating Latinos in public spaces and public entities, including schools (Carter, 1970; Powers, 2014). From early court decisions designating Mexican-Americans as "nonwhites" or as foreign-born Indians to legislation establishing English as the only instructional language used in school, Latinos were marginalized and stripped of their culture (MacDonald & Rivera, 2015; Spring, 2007).

Similar to the treatment of African Americans and Native Americans during this time, Latino Americans sought to challenge existing laws that prevented equal and fair treatment (MacDonald et al., 2007; Spring, 2007). During the late 19th century into the 20th century, separate schools for Mexican children in the Southwest U.S. were established via de facto segregation or separation enforced without formal legal authorization (Powers, 2014). Latino separation was justified because children needed to be "Americanized" before engaging with white students (Carter, 1970, p. 67). The creation of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) in 1929 and the Mexican-American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF) sought action and were successful in courts in challenging segregationist policies and advocating on behalf of Latino parents and school children (MacDonald et al., 2007; Noboa-Ríos, 2019; Powers, 2014). In *Mendez v. Westminster School District of Orange County* (1946), a U.S. District Court claimed that Mexican-Americans were not Indians, as was held in

California law, and ruled that segregating Mexican-American children in schools was illegal. Following this case, the Texas Attorney General ruled in *Delgado v. Bastrop ISD* (1948) that segregating Mexican-American children was unlawful. These relevant cases helped to provide the foundation for future federal cases that contested segregationist policies (Powers, 2014).

Protective measures at the federal level followed in the *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) case, which required the desegregation of schools. The passage of Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act prohibited discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, and national origin. It expanded opportunity to populations such as Latinos and Blacks, who had previously been marginalized and had limited access to jobs and education. However, resistance to desegregation mandates appeared in the form of local and state governments creating separate school districts, increasing private school options, and restricting funding to public schools (Houck & Murray, 2019). Challenges to this response toward desegregation resulted in the Supreme Court case *Milliken v. Bradley* (1974), in which the Court ruled a desegregation plan crossing school district borders in Detroit unconstitutional. As a result, suburban school districts were protected from any desegregation efforts outside of their district boundaries (Orfield et al., 2016). Although the progress of the mid-20th century to create more inclusive and diverse schools, Latino and African American students attend highly segregated schools (Orfield et al., 2016; Radd et al., 2021).

Barriers, Aspirations, and Promising Practices

While educational aspirations are high among Latino students and families, there are significant barriers and challenges that Latino students face in their educational experience. These barriers include historical, sociocultural, familial, and institutional barriers. According to Becerra (2012), the U.S. educational system is designed and closely aligned with the norms of the majority culture. This has led to many educators adopting a cultural deficit lens when

examining the relationship between Latinos and education (Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009). Latino

students have expressed a need for teacher and administrative support in pursuing their education

(Huerta et al., 2018; Manzano-Sanchez, 2019). For many students, family commitments often

limit or derail college dreams, as many students must contribute financially. The concepts of

machismo and *familismo* instill a responsibility toward supporting one's family and prioritizing

family needs over the individual (L. M. Gonzalez et al., 2013; Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009). Raffaelli

and Ontai (2004) found that Latino families reinforced gender norms through socialization

practices, with males exercising more freedom than their Latina peers. Families often exert

pressure to keep students closer to home when selecting colleges. Latinas receive more insistence

on proximity to home than Latino males despite demonstrating a stronger work ethic (M. A.

Martinez, 2013a; Pino et al., 2012). Despite the obstacles encountered in their educational

experience, Latino students and their families strongly desire to succeed in school and attend

college (Rodriguez et al., 2018; Sanchez et al., 2012). Families serve as a valuable resource for

students in navigating the college pathway through the involvement of home pedagogies.

However, many schools lack bilingual personnel and cultural awareness to support families in

navigating the college journey (Knight-Manuel et al., 2019; Padilla & Hipolito-Delgado, 2016).

Despite these challenges, Saenz and Ponjuan (2011) identify promising pre-college and

college-level programs to remove barriers while providing mentorship and a support system for

Latino males. Additionally, various models designed to increase college-going identities and

college-going rates among Latinos have demonstrated degrees of success (Anderson & Larson,

2009; Bettinger & Evans, 2019). Programs inclusive of parents' participation that provided

information and guidance on college positively impacted students' beliefs about going to college

(G. Martinez & Chavira, 2019). In their study of the Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for

Undergraduate Programs, or GEAR UP, Castillo et al. (2010) found similar results, especially

when Latino male parents were involved. Programs providing mentoring support, academic

advisement, and access to social capital saw increased confidence among Latino males

(Bettinger & Evans, 2019; Rodriguez et al., 2018; Sanchez, 2012). While access to college-going

information and support is becoming readily available outside of traditional school settings,

interactions with school counselors remain strong predictors of students applying to and

attending college (Robinson & Roksa, 2016).

School Counselors as Capital for Latino Students

While many Latino families share the aspirations of their sons to attend college and earn

a degree, many families often lack the necessary capital to realize their dreams and are dependent

upon schools to supplement their actions with information and guidance for their children

(Huerta, 2015; G. Martinez & Chavira, 2019). School counselors are significant in supporting

and guiding Latino students to prepare for college and career readiness (Holland, 2015; Padilla &

Hipolito-Delgado, 2016). Counselors impart knowledge, provide college and career guidance to

students, and fill the void needed by students that parents are unable to provide (Tello & Lonn,

2017). Unfortunately, many Latino students are often in understaffed schools and serve many

low socioeconomic families (Gándara, 2010).

As part of their framework, the American School Counselor Association (ASCA, 2019)

espouses a belief among counselors that all students can learn and succeed, that all students are

afforded access to a high-quality education, and that students are prepared for postsecondary

opportunities after graduation. This includes providing service, information, knowledge, and

support for students to experience success. For these aspirations to be actualized, counselors

must possess theoretical knowledge of career development and understand the impact that a

student's culture, socioeconomic status, and background have on academic performance (ACSA, 2019). Counselors must be collaborative with teachers, students, families, and caregivers to ensure accessibility to opportunities and equitable services for all. While a national organization advocates for school counselors, each state has organizations and credential requirements for school counselors (Rayle & Adams, 2007). The California Association of School Counselors (CASC, 2019) developed guidelines and suggested best counseling practices, further emphasizing their role as advocates in ensuring equitable access for all students to rigorous courses and coursework.

Secondary school counselors face several barriers that have resulted in inadequate service to students and families (Stone-Johnson, 2015). For Latino students and families, a disconnect between school systems and the lack of value assigned to cultural systems at home leads to frustration and mistrust (Tuttle & Haskins, 2017). Given the responsibilities of secondary school counselors, the need for improved pre-service training and ongoing professional learning, especially in multicultural competencies and management of tasks, has been something to be desired (Knight-Manuel et al., 2019; McKillip et al., 2012; Rayle & Adams, 2007).

Another challenge is the overwhelming caseloads of students that counselors are responsible for, significantly higher than the ASCA-recommended student-to-school counselor ratio of 250:1 (ACSA, 2019). In the 2019-2020 school year, the national average was 424 students per counselor, with California exceeding the recommendation with a ratio of 601 students per school counselor (NCES, 2020). This put California 47th in terms of school counseling services, an improvement from 2009 when the ratio was 945 students to one school counselor, putting California last in terms of public-school counseling services (CASC, 2019). The increase in benefits was partly due to Assembly Bill 1802, passed in 2006, which provided

additional funding for school counseling. Counselors are frequently tasked with non-school counseling-related duties such as student supervision, testing, and scheduling that detract from serving students (CASC, 2019; Rayle & Adams, 2007). Even in adequately staffed schools, access to school counselors can be a barrier for many Latino students who aspire to continue their education. Latino students who perceive counselors as inaccessible will not advocate for services (Paolini, 2015; Vela et al., 2019). This is critical because access to counseling services and support positively impacts Latino students' college-going self-efficacy (Vela et al., 2019).

Statement of the Problem

While there has been significant progress toward matriculation and attaining higher education degrees among Latinos in the U.S., Latino males are disproportionately less likely to graduate from high school, enroll in postsecondary institutions, and earn college degrees than their female and non-Latino peers (Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009; Saenz, Drake, et al., 2018). According to the U.S. Census Bureau information (2023), 33.4% of Latino males aged 25 and older earned a high school diploma, and 13.3% earned bachelor's degrees. While this statistic is surprising, it also brings to light that accurate figures are often challenging for the Latino community due to immigration status. Locating accurate statistical information can be tricky (Saenz & Ponjuan, 2011).

This is problematic due to the economic and social implications, as a college education is often a significant factor in achieving economic prosperity and upward mobility (Becerra, 2012; Rodriguez et al., 2018). As Noguera et al. (2012) eloquently demonstrate, the plight of the undocumented, Latino male worker who often is found awaiting work is demonstrative of the Latino male in the U.S. This segment of the population is often overlooked. Still, closer inspection shows how essential they are to the micro- and macro-economies of the U.S.. Saenz

and Ponjuan (2009) identify Latino males as an "underutilized talent pool" (p. 57) with significant potential to enhance the international status and competitiveness of the U.S. on the global stage.

Another concern is the social impact that a less educated Latino male population poses to our society. Limited numbers of Latino males who possess secondary and postsecondary diplomas equates to smaller numbers of role models upon which future generations can rely as a source of social capital in their educational journey (Gándara, 2010; Gregory & Haung, 2013; Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009). Research has shown that access to successful mentors and adults with shared experiences and backgrounds positively influences the likelihood that a student will develop the confidence and desire to attain a college degree (Bettinger & Evans, 2019; Howard et al., 2019). Unfortunately, for many men of color, predominantly Latino and Black youth, societal views and scholarly literature often depict this population as deficient or apathetic (Vela-Gude, 2009). Unfortunately, such a perspective does not equally place responsibility on the behaviors of adult educators that breed mistrust and demonstrate a lack of *cariño,* or care, of the student (Valenzuela, 1999).

Educational institutions have the potential to correct generational cycles of mistrust and low achievement among Latino males by recognizing and building upon the capital and assets these youth possess and bring to schools (Tello et al., 2017). However, Latino males encounter a school system that devalues their language, history, and humanity (Valenzuela, 1999). In addition, many Latino male students attend schools that lack the adequate support and resources to help guide them toward a college pathway (Boykin & Noguera, 2011; Noboa-Ríos, 2019). This results from poorly funded schools with limited human capital, such as nurses, social workers, and school counselors providing the necessary capital (Ravitch, 2000). According to the

Civil Rights Project at the University of California, Los Angeles, Latino students in California attend some of the most segregated, poverty-stricken schools in the U.S. (Orfield & Jarvie, 2020).

School counselors are best positioned to provide academic advisement, college and career guidance, and social and emotional support for students as they navigate the late adolescent state into adulthood (McKillip et al., 2012). Unfortunately, research finds that Latino students and families desire increased effort, communication, availability, and treatment from school counselors (Smith-Adcock, 2006; Vela-Gude et al., 2009). Counselors are challenged with increased administrative responsibilities and significant caseloads that leave individual and small-group guidance desired (McKillip et al., 2012; Rayle & Adams, 2007). While suggestions toward practice have emerged to assist counselors in addressing these concerns, there exists a need for further research on the types of college-going interventions, information, and resources that are most beneficial to Latino males and their families and impact on outcomes (Castillo et al., 2010; McKillip et al., 2012; Vela et al., 2016). There is also a need for scholarly literature that examines which strategies and actions related to college preparation are beneficial at specific grade levels (Castillo et al., 2010; Tuttle & Haskins, 2017). Therefore, a need exists to understand the challenges that high school counselors and advisors face that impact the trajectory of Latino male students' applying to and enrolling in a four-year university after high school graduation.

Rodriguez et al. (2018) and Saenz and Ponjuan (2009) assert that research focused on Latino males and educational attainment needs a formal agenda and deserves attention and awareness from practitioners, researchers, and policymakers. Given the increased research on African-American males, Huerta et al. (2018) and Noguera et al. (2012) point to a glaring void of

scholarly work on Latino males. There is a lack of awareness of the specific problems that Latino males face (Clark et al., 2013) and a misunderstanding of this student group and their aspirations (Noguera & Huerta, 2012), which result in lower academic achievement and career prospects as these young men transition into adulthood (Saenz & Ponjuan, 2011). Therefore, a need exists to understand the degree of awareness secondary school counselors have of Latino male barriers that negatively impact academic achievement, and thus college prospects, and how they support and help students overcome these barriers. What is also pertinent are the barriers that school counselors face regarding keeping Latino males and how they remove these barriers to provide guidance. Thus, it is essential to understand how school counselors foster trust and rapport with Latino male students while supporting their college aspirations. This study also sought how school counselors monitored student success and measured college readiness. School counselors may also need to identify recommendations for improving systems to support better academic outcomes for Latino male students, resulting in increased graduation and college matriculation rates. Therefore, secondary school counselors who work with Latino male students were this study's focus.

Purpose Statement

This qualitative study sought to identify best practices school counselors incorporated to overcome Latino male students' challenges that limit their ability to apply and enroll in college. This study aimed to understand better the barriers that secondary counselors confront that prevent dedicated time and effort in supporting Latino males. Such barriers limiting interactions with Latino male students may include insufficient time to meet with students, competing responsibilities, or effort levels to seek students out specifically. While programs have successfully been proven to engage and prepare Latino male students, a need exists to understand

what role academic counselors play in providing support specifically to Latino male students (S.M. Sanchez, 2012).

Research Questions

The following research questions (RQ) were addressed in this study.

- RQ1: What are challenges encountered by academic counselors when striving to increase Latino male college readiness?

- RQ2: What strategies and best practices do academic counselors utilize to increase Latino male college readiness?

- RQ3: How do academic counselors define, track, and measure success related to Latino male college readiness?

- RQ4: Based upon their experiences, what recommendations do academic counselors have for other academic counselors in increasing Latino male college readiness?

Theoretical Frameworks

Existing literature highlights, to an overwhelming degree, the shortcomings and lack of achievement among Latino male students. Howard et al. (2019) and Huerta et al. (2018) presented counternarratives that give insight into these young men's aspirations, strengths, and assets. Carrillo (2013) likens these young men to clever dancers who bargain more than marking correct exam answers. Thus, they can maneuver around various situations and settings, philosophies, and characteristics. The researcher utilized Yosso's (2005) Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) theoretical framework for the present study. This framework builds upon the idea of Communities of Color as hubs of empowerment put forward by critical race theory (Yosso, 2005). According to Yosso (2005), community members possess six forms of capital: (a) aspirational, (b) navigational, (c) social, (d) linguistic, (e) familial, and (f) resistant capital.

The researcher utilized the Appreciative Inquiry (AI) framework (Watkins & Cooperrider, 2000) to guide this study. AI challenges individuals to emphasize the positive and use this as a foundation to imagine an improved future. In AI, there is an obligation to constant learning, growth, and procreative change. This framework complements the literature, which points out the need to examine the strengths and assets of Latino males (Howard et al., 2019) and the research methods conducted in this study.

Yosso's (2005) CCW framework and the AI framework (Watkins & Cooperrider, 2000) complemented this study as both frameworks examine the strengths of individuals and their communities or organizations. Both frameworks are rooted in nontraditional approaches. AI does not operate according to a problem-solving approach (Watkins & Cooperrider, 2000). CCW seeks to interpret common misperceptions or misplaced blame on communities of color as deficient (Yosso, 2005).

Significance of the Study

High school academic counselors contribute toward fostering school connectedness and influencing postsecondary options for students, especially for economically disadvantaged students and students of color (Brake, 2020; Corsello et al., 2015; Ellerbrock & Keifer, 2014; Roybal et al., 2014). Counselors influence students' choice of coursework and prepare students to be "a-g ready" in California. Additionally, counselors provide knowledge of designing, applying, and choosing postsecondary institutions of higher education. This can affect a student's ability to complete a college degree and select a career that could have a generational impact and greater earning potential for the student's future (Rodriguez et al., 2018).

This research could benefit the various educational partners that influence Latino male students along their pathway in determining postsecondary educational options. First, there exists

an opportunity for secondary counselors to identify practices that engage and support Latino male students' college-going rates. Second, this study could contribute to developing a school program to build financial awareness and literacy for families of Latino male students in their home language. Further research can also inform specific attributes of Latino male students and how secondary schools can better support this student group.

Assumptions of the Study

The fundamental assumptions of this study were that

- participants in this study were open and honest in their responses to the interview questions provided,

- participants provided substantive responses based on experiences as secondary school counselors,

- consistent with current research, the participating schools had a college preparation program tailored to Latino males' needs and

- limited research existed on the impact that school counselors had and the best practices they incorporated to enhance college-going identities among Latino male students and, thus, supported these young men in applying and matriculating to higher education institutions.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of this study were that

- the participants were limited to school counselors and did not involve other adult educators such as teachers or administrators. This may contribute to, and impact college-going identity and rates of Latino male students;

- the researcher limited the study only to California schools;

- some individuals who wished to participate may not be able to contribute, given the limited window in which interviews will be conducted and

- the experience counselors have had with predominantly Mexican-American students and their families. Thus, the results may only apply to some Latino communities in the U.S., including but not limited to Mexican-Americans, Puerto Ricans, Guatemalans, Salvadoreans, Cubans, Dominicans, and other Latino populations.

Definition of Terms

The following definition of terms listed below was found throughout this study.

- *A-G readiness* is defined as the college preparation courses that high school students complete in California to be eligible for entry into the University of California (UC) and California State University (CSU) schools (Perez et al., 2021).

- *An at-risk student* is a term used to describe a student likely to be academically unsuccessful based on the failure to demonstrate adequate literary and numeracy skills, socioeconomic status, involvement in criminal activity, language status, and housing status (Kaufman et al., 1988).

- *College and career readiness* is the academic level a student attains when they can qualify and complete credit-bearing college courses toward a baccalaureate degree or career-oriented certificate without needing remedial work and studies (Conley, 2010).

- *College-going culture* is part of a school climate. It fosters college readiness by providing students with academic counseling, opportunities for rigorous courses to be academically ready, and providing information to enhance college knowledge (Knight & Duncheon, 2020).

- *Culturally relevant pedagogy* is an approach utilized by educators that gives equal importance to student learning, cultural competence, and sociopolitical or critical consciousness (Ladson-Billings, 2021).

- *Culturally responsive teaching* is the process by which educators utilize knowledge of a student's learning and make meaning according to their cultural background to scaffold and build upon the student's knowledge, all based on a safe, supportive relationship (Hammond, 2015).

- *Culturally sustaining counseling* is an approach that requires counselors to acknowledge the power structures of the mainstream culture in education to actively embrace the diversity of school communities and promote mutual learning of the vast population (Grothaus et al., 2020).

- *Deculturalization* is the "process of destroying a person's culture and replacing it with a new culture" (Spring, 2007, p. 7), often perceived as superior.

- *Deficit ideology* is the perspective that vindicates inequalities and puts the responsibility on persons or communities negatively impacted by inequalities rather than acknowledging the sociopolitical context and identifying and correcting systemic factors that contribute to inequity and inequality (Gorski, 2016; Hinnant-Crawford, 2020; Radd et al., 2021).

- *English learner* is defined as an individual enrolled in an elementary or secondary school whose native language is a language other than English and whose difficulties in speaking, reading, writing, and understanding English pose a challenge to the student meeting state academic standards, achieve in classrooms where the primary

language of instruction is English, or limit participation in society (U.S. Department of Education, 2016).

- *The school counselor* is an educator trained in providing comprehensive services to all students in academic and career preparation, social and emotional learning, and coordinating support structures to ensure student success (CASC, 2019).

Chapter Summary

A college education is often a significant factor in achieving economic prosperity and upward mobility (Becerra, 2012; Rodriguez et al., 2018). Many higher-paying jobs require increasing education. With an increasing population, Saenz and Ponjuan (2009) emphasized this underutilized talent pool. Concerning social impact, fewer role models and a lack of equitable access to attaining postsecondary degrees have implications for future generations (Gándara, 2010; Gregory & Huang, 2013; Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009). The high school counselor's role is critical to preparing students as they pursue postsecondary education and career pathways. They must empower students, especially those populations that have been marginalized, and advocate for equitable services for students. One such identified population is the Latino male student group. Despite being part of the largest student group in public schools, the increase in college matriculation and success is inconsistent with their growth and representation. While school counselors must provide knowledge and guidance to students, counselors must also be aware of Latino male students' cultural wealth and assets. Thus, it is necessary to examine the challenges counselors face with preparing and supporting Latino male students and the barriers within the school system that prevent these students from pursuing and completing their higher education.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Education is often seen as the pathway to a desired future and socioeconomic upward mobility (Farmer-Hinton, 2008; N. E. Hill & Torres, 2010). There have also been promising trends of Latino increased enrollment in higher education over the last two decades (Saenz et al., 2015), with programs geared toward college access programs providing support and guidance for underrepresented and disadvantaged students (Bettinger & Evans, 2019). However, Latino students are most likely to attend highly segregated, under-resourced schools (Fuller et al., 2022; Gándara, 2010). Underfunded schools are less likely to provide experiences or the necessary courses to ensure students are competitive (Yosso, 2005). As a result, students often feel disconnected from schools, especially Latino males (Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009). Unfortunately, much literature surrounding Latino and Black young men amplifies barriers and failures (Watson et al., 2016). The lack of support experienced by Latino males in high school results in limited career plans (Saenz, Garcia-Louis, et al., 2018).

Over the last 40 years, there has been an economic shift from manufacturing toward skilled services such as healthcare, information technologies, and education (Carvenale et al., 2018). Access to good jobs, or those with a median $65,000 salary, now requires the completion of bachelor's degrees and postsecondary credentials. Unfortunately for many minorities, including Latinos, the promises of access to competitive educational opportunities remain largely unfulfilled (MacDonald & Rivera, 2015). Sociocultural factors and school policies and practices have served as systemic barriers to Latino males being less likely to pursue their education after high school graduation (Perez & Taylor, 2015; Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009). These barriers will

likely deny the upward socioeconomic mobility many individuals and their families seek (Clark et al., 2013).

Given the evolving economies of the U.S. over the last 2 decades, public support for education has shifted to meet the economic demands of the workforce (Aguinaldo et al., 2021). In his description of Latinos and education in the U.S., Noboa-Ríos (2019) described three transformations the U.S. educational system underwent: public elementary and secondary education in the 19th century and a competitive higher education system in the 20th century. Despite this progress, Latinos, Black Americans, Native Americans, and Asian Americans had limited educational opportunities (Spring, 2007). For these classes of people who aspired to further their education, many often established private or parochial schools outside of public education systems (MacDonald & Rivera, 2015). With the Supreme Court legalizing segregation with the *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) decision, an education system of exclusion would persist well into the next century that further marginalized nonwhite populations while also seeking to replace these peoples' cultures with Anglo, Protestant beliefs (Spring, 2007). It would not be until the mid-20th century, with the GI Bill providing a postsecondary opportunity to Latino and Black World War II veterans and the Civil Rights Movement, that a fourth transformation, which legally asserted equality for every child, would come to fruition (Noboa-Ríos, 2019). The formation of the LULAC and the MALDEF would also emerge during this time in efforts to support and advocate for the rights of Latino citizens (Noboa-Ríos, 2019).

Progress toward an equal educational system was eradicated through resistant efforts that sought to slow the momentum of desegregation (Baker, 2018; Houck & Murray, 2019). Such measures included the creation of separate school districts, enrollment in private schools, and legal decisions that created inequitable funding among public schools along income, ethnic, and

racial lines (Baker, 2018). Today, Latino students attend some of the most segregated, underfunded, and under-resourced schools with high concentrations of poverty that do not adequately prepare students for higher education (Duncheon, 2018; Gándara, 2010; Huerta, 2015; Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009). Given that many Latino students and their families lack the social capital associated with upward mobility, school personnel such as school counselors can provide students and families with knowledge and support to maximize postsecondary options for students (Smith-Adcock et al., 2006). However, language barriers and perceived perceptions of Latinos have led to disengagement, frustration, and a lack of trust among Latino students, their families, and school personnel, namely school counselors (Vela-Gude et al., 2009).

This phenomenological qualitative study focuses on secondary school counselors' strategies and actions to prepare, support, and increase college-going rates among Latino male students. This study will explore the cultural, social, and institutional barriers Latino male students and school counselors face and how they overcome these challenges. This chapter examined research conducted and current literature on Latino males and the internal and external factors influencing the path toward college matriculation after high school graduation.

Organization of This Study's Literature Review

This chapter examined the increasing Latino population in the U.S. and the U.S. public school system (NCES, 2023; U.S. Census Bureau, 2022). This includes a historical perspective of the Latino student experience in public schools, the policies and practices that have shaped this experience, and the current state of achievement among Latino students in U.S. public schools compared to their peers. The following section will explore the challenges and barriers that inhibit college readiness among Latino males, such as a lack of support (Howard et al., 2019; Huerta et al., 2018; Knight-Manuel et al., 2019), negative perceptions among educational

professionals toward Latino male students and their families (Hinnant-Crawford, 2020;

Valenzuela, 1999), and a lack of culturally relevant and culturally aware practices (Grothhaus et

al., 2020; Ladson-Billings, 2021). The following section reviewed the literature on Latino male

student assets and aspirations utilizing Yosso's (2005) CCW framework. The penultimate section

of this literature review examines current literature that describes the elements of successful

college readiness and the successful practices that increase college readiness among Latino

males. Finally, the last section explored the school counselor's role as a social capital and change

agent for college-going Latino males. This study aimed to understand school counselors'

challenges in supporting and preparing Latino male students to pursue higher education and the

best practices they draw upon to build college readiness among Latino male students.

Community Cultural Wealth and Latino Males

The CCW theoretical framework Yosso (2005) presented expanded upon critical race

theory and empowerment in Communities of Color. Yosso's (2005) framework challenges the

deficit viewpoint attributed to educational gaps between whites and students of color (Saenz et

al., 2020). The CCW consists of six forms of capital that Communities of Color possess:

aspirational, navigational, social, linguistic, familial, and resistant capital (Yosso, 2005). For this

study, emphasis will be placed on aspirational, social, navigational, and familial capital.

Aspirational capital is best described as optimism and resiliency when facing real and perceived

barriers (Yosso, 2005). *Social capital* refers to the network and support system of persons and

resources available (Saenz, Drake et al., 2018; Yosso, 2005). *Navigational capital* refers to one's

capacity to negotiate the various public institutions one interacts with outside one's home

environment (Yosso, 2005). This includes schools and government institutions. Familial capital

is the cultural knowledge cultivated from family and community. Examples of domestic capital

include families, which emphasize interdependence between individuals, families, and communities and less importance on personal needs or desires (Tello & Lonn, 2017).

While much of the research surrounding Latino young men emphasizes perceived deficiencies or shortcomings, studies by Harper (2015) and Howard et al. (2019) provide an alternative that focuses on these young men of color's agency. The frameworks of CCW and AI complement each other as they seek to focus on the positive (Watkins & Coopenrrider, 2000) and examine the forces that empower and support members of their communities (Yosso, 2005). CCW seeks to challenge existing literature that has relied on a narrative that something is wrong with communities of color and needs correcting (Saenz, García-Louis et al., 2018). This study utilizes the CCW framework to understand how counselors identify, value, and enhance capital possessed by Latino male students that enables them to prepare for and be successful in higher education institutions.

Manifest Destiny, Imperialism, and an Invisible People

While the growth of the U.S. through the latter part of the 19th century and early part of the 20th century established the U.S. as a global power, this expansion would bring about issues of citizenship and classification of Mexican-Americans, Puerto Ricans, and other populations in conquered territories that would remain unresolved and render people invisible to equal rights in the U.S. (MacDonald & Rivera, 2015; Spring, 2007). Spurred by the concept of *Manifest Destiny*, a belief that God ordained the expansion of the U.S. from the Atlantic to the Pacific coasts, the U.S. expanded its territories. It asserted sovereignty over lands formerly held by Mexico by the mid-19th century (MacDonald & Rivera, 2015). The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo signed between the U.S. and Mexico at the end of the Mexican-American War, resulted in the annexation of present-day California, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, and much of the Midwest

U.S. (Gómez, 2022). For many people in these territories, the transition to U.S. rule was chaos, uncertainty, and trauma, and they were often relegated to foreigners in their native lands (Noboa-Ríos, 2019). While citizenship was not an option for Puerto Ricans, Mexicans had the option of claiming U.S. citizenship per the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. Moreover, while the treaty afforded citizenship, land ownerships, and, to a degree, "whiteness" to Mexicans residing in these territories, these rights granted to Mexican-Americans would gradually be eroded through policies of de facto segregation and relegate Latinos in the U.S. as an invisible, non-White population throughout the latter 19th century and through the first part of the 20th century (Carter, 1970).

In 1896, the *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision by the U.S. Supreme Court established the doctrine of "separate but equal" and formalized a system that segregated Blacks and Whites (Gómez, 2022). At the turn of the 20th century, Latinos in the U.S. comprised roughly 2% of the population, with most U.S. Latino citizens residing in Puerto Rico (Ayala & Bernabe, 2009). With no formal means of advocacy, Latino citizens in the U.S. remained relatively silent, further marginalizing this population. Latinos, like African Americans and Native Americans, were subject to segregationist policies that limited equal and accessible educational opportunities (Castellanos & Jones, 2003). Without a formal voice to advocate for rights, Latinos would be subject to practices that segregated not only children to different schools but also scientific arguments that rendered Latinos inferior to whites (MacDonald & Rivera, 2015).

Following Plessy*,* schooling had become legally segregated, with a system that distinguished White and Black students in many parts of the Southwest U.S. (Carter, 1970). For Latinos, especially Mexican-Americans in states such as Texas and California, separate schools were established outside of formal legal frameworks, thus adding complexity to any action aimed

at dismantling these schools (MacDonald & Rivera, 2015). Many communities justified the segregation of Latinos from Whites, as they were often compared to dogs and looked upon with disdain by Whites (Spring, 2007). Schools that served Latinos were established to Americanize them and provide vocational or manual labor training (G. G. Gonzalez, 1990). Spring (2007) coined the term *deculturization*, which is "the educational process of destroying a person's culture and replacing it with a new culture" (p. 7). For Mexican-Americans and Puerto Ricans, deculturization presented itself in the form of laws that criminalized the use of the Spanish language and established the English language as the medium for school instruction (Spring, 2007). In addition to eradicating Spanish-speaking children, the school curriculum emphasized U.S. customs, holidays, and exercises that sought allegiance (Spring, 2007). For Latino children, schools were more institutions to Americanize subjugated people rather than educate them (Noboa-Ríos, 2019).

In the fields of Texas and California, Mexican Americans became a source of cheap labor, and school attendance was often not enforced among these students and their families (Spring, 2007). Not only did farmers rely upon child labor, but Mexican families depended on the child's financial contribution to the family (Noboa-Ríos, 2019). Given the prioritization of field labor, pathways to high school and college were practically nonexistent for Latino students. High school enrollment and graduation rates were poor across states such as California, New Mexico, and Arizona (Carter, 1970). Postsecondary educational access, much less graduation, was a rarity among Latino Americans (MacDonald & García, 2003).

Moreover, while the passage of the Morrill Act of 1890 spurred the growth of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), with 67 HBCUs receiving federal funding, no such institute of higher education exclusively for Latinos existed (Noboa-Rios,

2019). As Noboa-Rios (2019) explains, a significant distinction among Latinos was the absence of federal legislation or formal structure to help recent Mexican and Puerto Rican populations transition into U.S. citizens. While such programs aimed at land redistribution and the underfunded Freedman's Bureau attempted to assist African Americans during Reconstruction, Noboa-Ríos (2019) notes that no such course of reparations existed for *Mejicanos*, who were denied any federal assistance during this time because of being identified as White. The prioritization of labor and limited opportunities for higher education foreshadowed the depressed state of Latinos and education into the 20th century (MacDonald & Rivera, 2015).

The only recourse for many families was for their children to attend Catholic or private schools to further their education (San Miguel, 2013). For Latino families, Noboa-Ríos (2019) described the Catholic Church as a "safety blanket" (p. 146) and, like the role of the AME church in the Black American community, sought to limit the effect of segregation on school children. The pathway to access high school and other higher education means would continue to be "blocked" for Latinos well into the 20th century (MacDonald & Garcia, 2003, p. 16).

Advocacy for Equity and Recognition

Challenges to segregation would occur throughout the 20th century in various court cases that sought to improve educational access and establish Mexican-Americans and other U.S. Latinos as a separate population group (Gómez, 2020; Spring, 2007). In the post-*Plessy* era, schools for Mexican-American students outnumbered Black schools in Texas and California through de facto segregation and customary practices (MacDonald & Rivera, 2015). Organizations such as the LULAC and the MALDEF were formed to advocate for the rights of Latin Americans. They challenged the educational status quo in the federal courts (San Miguel, 2013). Given the inequities faced by Latino students, *Mendez et al. v. Westminster School*

District of Orange County (1946) and *Delgado v. Bastrop ISD* (1948) helped to end the

segregation of Mexican-Americans in California and Texas, respectively (Spring, 2007). The

decision in Cisneros v. Corpus Christi Independent School District (1971) also established

Mexican-Americans as an identifiable group. These court cases and *Brown v. Board of*

Education (1954) helped usher in an era of desegregation and efforts to enhance educational

opportunities for U.S. Latinos (Blanton, 2016).

While the *Brown V. Board of Education* (1954) is widely recognized as the landmark

U.S. Supreme Court decision to end desegregation, cases addressing the injustices of segregation

concerning Latinos and African Americans provided the foundation for the *Brown* decision

(MacDonald & Rivera, 2015; Powers, 2014). In *Adolfo Romo v. William E. Laird et al.* (1925), a

court sided with an Arizona Mexican-American family who argued that their student's placement

in the Tempe Normal Training School violated the student's rights to an equivalent educational

opportunity; however, the ruling was limited in scope to the named local entity (Muñoz, 2001).

In *Mendez v. Westminster School District of Orange County* (1946), a class action suit was filed

by families in Ontario, California, who were denied transfers of Mexican-American students out

of segregated schools (Santiago, 2020). Despite the school board's argument that the segregation

was based on educational needs, a U.S. district court ruled in favor of the parents, citing that the

classification was incorrect and determining that no valid educational justification was found

(MacDonald & Rivera, 2015). Additionally, the judge also argued that the separation of children

based on language fostered "inferiority where none exists" and that the inclusion among students

further contributed to "the perpetuation of American institutions and ideals" (*Mendez et al. v.*

Westminster School District, 1946).

Encouraged and enabled by the *Mendez* decision, the LULAC supported parents in Texas as they sought legal recourse in challenging the segregation of children of Mexican descent (MacDonald & Rivera, 2015; Spring, 2007). In *Delgado v. Bastrop ISD* (1948), courts ruled that segregation was illegal and required the district to desegregate schools. Although the *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) decision overturned the "separate but equal" clause of *Plessy*, MacDonald, and Rivera (2015) state that the cases leading up to the *Brown* decision helped to establish a foundation to end segregation based on race and language. Despite the progress toward a more equitable school system, opponents of desegregation would develop strategies, while not formal, to ensure segregation would persist (DeBoer, 2020).

Resistance Toward Desegregation

Legally mandated desegregation was and has been limited or delayed through what Houck and Murray (2019) described as a "taxonomy of white resistance" (p. 389). Such strategies have thwarted progress toward more inclusive schools, including creating all-white or majority-white independent or private schools, district separation, or closing public school systems (Houck & Murray, 2019; Spring, 2007). In a drastic response to the *Brown* decision, the schools of Prince Edward County in Virginia closed public schools from 1959-1964 (Kozol, 2005). Opposition to desegregation has led to school systems that have become mainly segregated along racial and economic lines (Kozol, 2005; Gándara, 2010). The U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Milliken v. Bradley* (1974) was critical as it was the first case since *Brown* ruled against a desegregation action (Khalifa et al., 2016). In a 5-4 decision, the Supreme Court reversed a lower court's approval of a multi-district desegregation plan involving city and suburban schools in the greater Detroit area, ruling the decision was unconstitutional and asserting local control of school operations (Khalifa et al., 2016). This court decision slowed

desegregation and exacerbated white flight from urban schools to suburban districts (Milner et al., 2016).

Another action contributing to educational inequities has been legislation and policies regarding how public schools are financed (Baker, 2018). The policy has been designed to uphold de facto segregation since a significant portion of school funding is generated from local and state revenues such as property taxes. It has been supported through court decisions (Houck & Murray, 2019). School districts that have seceded from larger school systems have contributed to disparities as most higher-income families and highly valued properties leave areas of concentrated poverty, resulting in less funding for those remaining schools (Baker, 2018). Given that most of these less affluent communities are predominantly Latino and Black, Boykin & Noguera (2011) found that these schools had significantly fewer resources than more affluent and, often, White schools. Fewer resources negatively impact school achievement, which is often equated to one's zip code (Noboa-Ríos, 2019).

Legal decisions have contributed to school funding inequities, allowing states to determine how schools are financed (Baker, 2018; Boykin & Noguera, 2011). In *San Antonio Independent School District v. Rodriguez* (1973), the Supreme Court found that funding formulas determined by the state did not violate the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment while also asserting that education was not a Constitutional fundamental right (Dayton & Dupre, 2006). Before the *Rodriguez* case, the *Serrano v. Priest* (1971) case challenged the inequities of property taxes as the primary source of revenue for school districts (San Miguel, 2013). In the *Serrano* case, the Supreme Court of California found that the state's formula for school finance was discriminatory toward poorer districts and set off a wave of litigation across most U.S. states and school finance (Dayton & Dupre, 2006). Funding to California public schools faced

significant setbacks with the passage of Proposition 13 and Proposition 4, also known as the

Gann limit, which further limited both property taxes and government spending increases,

respectively, increasing public school reliance on state funding (Aguinaldo et al., 2021).

Inadequate funding to schools primarily attended by Latinos results in increased class sizes due

to a lack of teachers, quality materials, and specialized support to benefit students and families

(Ogletree & Robinson, 2015). The unfortunate byproduct of such resistance is an unequal

educational opportunity for students exacerbated by funding policies (Baker, 2018; Houck &

Murray, 2019; Spring, 2007). These actions have contributed to a lack of funding and resources

that directly impacted the quality of education many Latinos receive in U.S. public schools

(Gándara, 2010).

Disparity Between Population Growth and Achievement

The Latino population in the U.S. has grown significantly over the last twenty years and

is now the second-largest ethnic or racial group in the U.S. (U.S. Census, 2022). Latinos now

constitute California's most significant demographic and minority population in many states

(U.S. Census, 2021). While immigration has influenced this growth, there is an increasing

number of U.S. born Latinos. This trend follows suit in U.S. public schools, with Latino students

now constituting the largest minority population (NCES, 2020). Despite the population growth,

there exists a discrepancy between the rate at which Latinos have grown and the attainment of

education in the U.S. (Gandara, 2010). MacDonald et al. (2007) noted that this population

growth is inconsistent with achievement rates.

According to Gándara (2010), Latinos are among the least educated students and are

academically underprepared compared to their peer groups. Latino students, especially English

Learners, have lower grades in school, lower standardized test scores, low rates of high school

completion, and trail other student populations in college-degree attainment (Becerra, 2012; Cerna et al., 2009; Gándara, 2010; Huerta, 2015; N. E. Hill & Torres, 2010). The trends for Latino males show less promise. According to the NCES (2022), the dropout rate among Latino males was 8.9% when compared to 5.9% of Latinas in 2020. Latino male attendance at four-year universities has also declined, decreasing from 57% in 1975 to 39% in 2006 (Wyan, 2008). These numbers are critical given the vital role that education has in economic mobility, social mobility, and increased career opportunities among communities of color that have traditionally been historically marginalized (Arbona & Nora, 2007; Becerra, 2012; Cerna et al., 2009; Duncheon, 2018; Hines et al., 2019; Huerta, 2015; N. E. Hill & Torres, 2010).

This lack of educational attainment and incredibly advanced degrees limits Latino males to unskilled, low-paying jobs (Reed, 2018; Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009). In 2021, unemployment rates among males with less than high school completion stood at 11% compared to 4% for males with a bachelor's degree or higher (NCES, 2022). Furthermore, while Latino males' unemployment rate is lower than non-Hispanic males, most occupations are low-wage (Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009). Given that trends indicate a more significant percentage of the Latino male labor pool, the capacity and competitiveness of the U.S. economy will become increasingly dependent upon this group (Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009; Yamamura et al., 2010). Despite these alarming trends for Latino male educational attainment, the research literature surrounding this topic is significantly limited (Saenz & Ponjuan, 2011; Rodriguez et al., 2018).

Gender and a Growing Achievement Gap

Data from industrialized nations show that female students outperform their male peers in school (Legewie & DiPrete, 2012). Furthermore, while encouraging data over the last couple of decades portrays an increase in the number of Latinos graduating from high school, enrolling in

institutions of higher education, and earning college degrees, Latino male representation has continually declined in comparison to their female counterparts (Cammarota, 2004; Fry & Taylor, 2013; Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009). While Latino males are more likely to attend college than in prior decades, most participate in two-year institutions and fail to acquire degrees within ten years of high school graduation, with consequences limiting career options (Strayhorn, 2010).

Pedersen (2019) notes that a lack of equitable access to education for females and social movements have contributed toward more gender equity in education. Hurtado et al. (2012) posit that while the feminist revolution of the latter 20th century primarily addressed White women, Latinas benefitted from the movement's achievements. Gender socialization, or how individuals are treated and expected to behave (Raffaelli & Ontai, 2004), and educational factors have also contributed to the growing divide between male and female students and academic achievement (Pederson, 2019).

Raffaelli and Ontai (2004) examined gender socialization and Latina/o families. They reported that participants stated that female family members typically were subject to limitations such as curfews, obtaining a driver's license, or pursuing extracurricular activities. While Raffaelli and Ontai (2004) reported that the socialization of children was the responsibility of the same-sex parent, other scholars have identified how cross-gender socialization contributes to success—in their qualitative study of undergraduate Latinas, Díaz de Sabatés and Taylor (2021) shared that their fathers countered traditional gender roles and supported their aspirations.

The hidden curriculum of schools in the form of school policies and adult expectations often results in misperceptions of male students in U.S. schools (Reichert, 2016). School systems have also contributed to differences in academic achievement among male and female Latino students (Pedersen, 2019; Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009). Saenz and Ponjuan (2009, 2011) point to the

structure of schooling and the inequitable practices of misidentification and overrepresentation of Latino males as contributing factors to the growing achievement gap. As a result, young men of color are scrutinized in societal and institutional settings such as school (Hurtado et al., 2012).

Discriminatory practices such as labeling and disciplinary actions also contribute to the low achievement rate among Latino male students (Boykin & Noguera, 2011; Howard et al., 2019). In schools, the notion of intelligence is rooted in White, middle-class behaviors, often contributing to false perceptions and a misunderstanding of Latino male dispositions (Carrillo, 2013; Hurtado et al., 2012). Saenz and Ponjuan (2009) found that Latino male students are significantly more likely to be identified as "learning disabled" (p. 60) and labeled with social and emotional disorders than their female peers. Thus, Latino males are more likely to be placed on nontraditional education pathways, including special education and English as a second language (ESL) classes (Boykin & Noguera, 2011; Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009). While these courses are intended to provide additional support for these students, Boykin and Noguera (2011) describe them as "dumping grounds" (p. 187), as these students are not monitored with the attention needed to ensure they receive high-quality instruction and are making academic progress. Unfortunately, the at-risk label attached to these students further marginalizes them and contributes to disengagement in school. Clark et al. (2013) contend that Latino males' overrepresentation in special education, remedial courses, and other vocational programs contributes to fewer Latino males pursuing higher education.

Punishment and disciplinary school policies are additional barriers to low academic achievement rates among Latino male students (Knight & Duncheon, 2020). Like their Black peers, Latino males are more likely to be punished in schools and referred to juvenile justice agencies (Boykin & Noguera, 2011; Saenz & Pojuan, 2011). Disciplinary practices such as

suspensions are applied disproportionately toward students of color, even in low-level offenses (Brown & DiTillo, 2013; Gregory et al., 2014). Welton and Martinez (2014) found that a student's desire for self-preservation in situations is often perceived as defiance. School discipline practices have become criminalized and overwhelmingly impact young African-American and Latino men, linking the educational and prison pipeline (Hurtado et al., 2012). Figueroa and Garcia (2006) found that young Latino males were more likely to be harassed and surveilled in public than their White peers. Despite attending some of the most selective universities in the U.S., Hurtado et al. (2012) described the negative interactions and harassment Latino males were subjected to by police officers.

Given these factors, academic trends show academic gaps among male and female students (Pederson, 2019; Reardon et al., 2019). From third grade to eighth grade, Reardon et al. (2019) reported a "substantial gap" (p. 2499) in ELA, and female students showed more growth in math through this same grade span. Saenz et al. (2017) find that while Latino students earning college degrees have increased, females outpace males in degree attainment. The following section expanded upon Latino males' challenges in school settings contributing to underachievement.

Challenges for Latino Males in Education

Latino male students, especially those from low-socioeconomic households, battle daily obstacles that derail a student's ability to remain on track academically, contributing to Latinos' underrepresentation in higher education institutions (Perez-Felkner, 2015). Discriminatory practices such as the elimination of the use of Spanish as an instructional language, segregated schools, and limited opportunity for secondary and post-secondary education have curbed social mobility for generations of Latino males in the U.S. (Becerra, 2012; Clark et al., 2013;

Duncheon, 2018; Turcios-Cotto & Milan, 2013). Latino male students face significant barriers threatening their self-efficacy, engagement, and desire to persist (Manzano-Sanchez et al., 2018). In his work with Latino and African American youth, Carey (2018) found that barriers resulted in anxiety and doubt about how they would overcome obstacles to college, especially those over which they had no control.

According to Oakes et al. (2004), the barriers encountered by Latino students in education include attending inadequate, unsafe schools; teacher expectations of Latino students; access, or lack thereof, to a rigorous academic curriculum; high-quality teachers; educational and social support; opportunities to fostering a multicultural college-going identity; and a need for increased partnerships between families, communities, and schools. Other studies have also explored these barriers and their influence on Latino student achievement (Hines et al., 2019; Huerta, 2015; Huerta et al., 2018; Pérez & Taylor, 2016). This section explored how school factors such as adult educator expectations and beliefs, school culture, inaccessibility to the rigorous academic curriculum, and a lack of educational and social support hinder Latino male college readiness and success. The relationship between schools and families and family responsibilities and their impacts on Latino male college readiness was discussed, as these pose barriers to success.

Attending Inadequate and Unsafe Schools

Latino students in the U.S. often attend underfunded schools (Saenz, Drake, et al., 2018) with under-resourced and less qualified personnel staff (Gándara, 2010; Welton & Martinez, 2014). In examining resource disparities in public schools, Weathers and Sosina (2022) and Houck and Murray (2019) find that Black and Latinx schools generate less local and state revenue than districts serving predominantly White students. Schools with large enrollment

numbers of minority students also have high numbers of pupils per teacher (Adams & Mrug, 2019). In California, Latino and African American students are likely to attend more segregated schools with high concentrations of poverty (Gao, 2016). Limited resources can harm student resiliency despite their motivation to succeed (Anderson & Larson, 2009). A lack of translators and bilingual staff for Latino families contributes to limited interactions with school personnel (N. E. Hill & Torres, 2010). Schools often resort to having students serve as language brokers; however, such exchanges have led to students perceiving discrimination by school personnel (Benner & Graham, 2011).

School safety promotes academic achievement and indirectly impacts college readiness (Knight & Duncheon, 2020). Given the increasing number of Latino students in public schools, limited studies examine Latino students and school discipline policies (Brown & DiTillo,2013). Toldson (2019) found that students reported the presence of gangs in their schools. While the existence of School Resource Officers (SROs) has been debated, Crichlow-Ball et al. (2022) found that 72% of students surveyed felt safer with SROs on campus and were likely to report violent threats. Adams and Mrug (2019) also found that lower student-to-teacher ratios resulted in better perceived safety on high school campuses.

Adult Educator Expectations

One of the barriers to Latino male success lies in the beliefs and behaviors of adult educators toward students of color, who are often viewed as deficient in their capacity and desire to learn and succeed (Gorksi, 2016; Howard et al., 2019; Martinez et al., 2019; Yosso, 2005). In their work on culturally responsive counseling, Arredondo et al. (2014) describe misperceptions of Latinos as not prioritizing education, limited intellect, and parents who are not involved in school matters. Educators attribute the low achievement among Latino males to a lack of

resiliency or a failure of families to prioritize education (Anderson & Larson, 2009). This simple logic often disregards the structural inequities and racism (Pérez & Taylor, 2015) contributing to this phenomenon. Valenzuela (1999), Barnes and Slate (2013), and Saenz and Ponjuan (2009) have written on the problems of school academic structures as they relate to students of color. Educators engage in deficit ideology by placing the responsibility of achievement solely on the actions of students and parents while disregarding the structural forces that contribute to the problem (Hinnant-Crawford, 2020).

Deficit ideology is the worldview that rationalizes outcome disparities by attributing these results to deficiencies among the individuals and communities experiencing poverty (Gorski, 2016). This perspective also minimizes or ignores the structural or systemic conditions that may contribute to these outcomes (Radd et al., 2021; Yosso, 2005). Simply defined, Gorski (2016) has described deficit ideology as a "blame the victim mentality" (p. 154). This ideology is present in schools when discussing achievement gaps among student populations. Boykin and Noguera (2011) have focused on the structural ideology, emphasizing "opportunity gaps" (p. 186) that low-income students often experience in schools whose practices punish and exacerbate the inequities present. Deficit ideology is embodied through the behaviors and beliefs of educators and in the structural policies and procedures that further marginalize students and their families in schools, negatively affecting opportunities for socioeconomic mobility (Radd et al., 2021).

For Latino males, deficit ideology appears in the form of educators' low expectations regarding their academic capabilities (McKillip et al., 2012; Welton & Martinez, 2014). Valenzuela (1999), Perez-Felkner (2015), and Martinez et al. (2004) state that low expectations often result in a lack of perceived care and support from adult educators and students. Low

expectations by adult educators result in Latino males possessing a low academic self-concept, feelings of inferiority, and feelings of not belonging (L. M. Gonzalez et al., 2013; Huerta et al., 2018; Manzano-Sanchez et al., 2019; Welton & Martinez, 2014). Even among Latino males who have successfully enrolled in and demonstrated success in higher education, adult educators at the secondary and postsecondary levels still apply stereotypical views when engaging with these young men. Among teachers who were seen as supportive, Perez-Felkner (2015) found that these same adult educators asked students who matriculated to college if they intended to return to college after their first year, exposing the actual beliefs that teachers may have had about students not being successful. College administrators stated that Latino males in their institutions were motivated not to become "drug dealers" like their home peers (Clark et al., 2013, p. 462). They noted that it was difficult for Latino males to succeed when they did not have role models to look toward (Clark et al., 2013). Despite demonstrated success contrary to statistics and stereotypes, Latino males still encounter adult educators who lack confidence in their capacity to overcome barriers and succeed academically. Such attitudes lead to a culture insensitive to the needs and aspirations of these young men, often resulting in unsupportive environments (Valenzuela, 1999).

Lack of Culturally Responsive Academic and Social Support

School cultures disregarding students' cultural backgrounds contribute to low college readiness among students of color (Knight-Manuel et al., 2019). Academic, emotional, and social supports must be addressed in addition to language level and nativity status unique to Latino males that must be considered. A lack of support addressing the needs of Latino male students has contributed to a lack of trust between students and school personnel, as schools often need to acknowledge and value the assets and cultural capital Latino males possess (Huerta et al., 2018).

Valenzuela (1999) coined *subtractive schooling* to describe how schools deprive Latino youth of the resources that enable them to realize academic success and open a pathway for success. Further research on U.S. youth of color identifies the demonstrated pattern of deculturalization in schools in which the cultural wealth that students of color embrace is devalued or eradicated in favor of mainstream artistic norms and values (Boykin & Noguera, 2011; Howard et al., 2019; Spring, 2007). Schools often correlate intelligence with White middle-class behaviors (Carrillo, 2013). Students were aware of these practices and perceived that these adult educators deemed sure students were college-bound and only invested in high-achieving students (Huerta et al., 2018). These actions have resulted in a lack of trust between students and adult educators (Huerta et al., 2018). Those most vulnerable receive minor support, resulting in inequitable services and further marginalizing Latino male students (Huerta, 2015; Martinez et al., 2019).

Students have also acknowledged that low expectations make teachers not care about students (Valenzuela, 1999). In their qualitative work with Latino and Black males, Howard et al. (2019) found that the talents possessed by these male students were overlooked and devalued in traditional school settings. Teachers expect students to care about academics before investing in the student, while students desire teachers to demonstrate care before engaging in academics. This conflicting reciprocity of respect between teachers and students prevents students from accessing staff resources (Martinez et al., 2004). The relationships between teachers and students are vital to the success of young males of color (Pedersen, 2019), as these relationships also foster a sense of belonging (Halx & Ortiz, 2011).

Generational Status

While European immigrant groups have demonstrated socioeconomic upward mobility with subsequent generations establishing themselves in the U.S., for Latinos, the trend is

reversed (Valenzuela, 1999). Studies show that generational status impacts student achievement, with first-generation and second-generation students outperforming their U.S.-born peers. Some researchers have explained this trend with first-generation students possessing more robust work ethics and more achievement-oriented than their more nativist peers. Valenzuela (1999) cautions that such a simple explanation must address this phenomenon's nuance. Unfortunately, this misperception breeds trust and a need for more understanding among foreign-born and U.S.-born Latinos. For U.S.-born Latinos, this perceived apathy is misunderstood. Students internalize the lack of respectful and caring interactions between students and adult educators as a lack of care. Latino students often engage in *selective acculturation*, adopting U.S. values in school but maintaining their native value system at home (L. M. Gonzalez et al., 2013). Unfortunately, students and families experience discrimination because of limited English proficiency or incongruent expectations between the school and home.

Opportunities to Foster Multicultural College-Going Identity

Schools foster students' multicultural college-going identity by promoting an environment that values and respects Latino students' backgrounds while helping students develop academic identities and confidence necessary to tackle the rigors of college academic courses without compromising their identity and relationship with their community (Knight & Marciano, 2013). Liou and Rojas's (2016) theory of transformative expectations, culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 2021), and the explicit instruction of self-monitoring strategies among Latino males (Covarrubias & Stone, 2015) are such practices that empower Latino students to develop the self-assurance needed to experience academic success while also feeling validated and respected as individuals. Liou and Rojas (2016) and Ladson-Billings (2021) stated that teachers must integrate relevant curriculum that reflects students' cultural

backgrounds. Instruction must also provide opportunities for students to interact, interrogate, and critique the environment and problems encountered in their lived experiences to enhance their sociopolitical consciousness.

Although the potential of such practices to enable Latino students to successfully reconcile the capital of school and home, strategies that address and challenge prevailing perceptions about Latino student achievement must be expanded in scope and implementation (Liou & Rios, 2016). Preconceived notions among educators' beliefs about Latino students and the importance of education result in lowered expectations, exacerbating equity in college preparatory instruction (Liou & Rios, 2016). In an examination of self-efficacy and academic performance, Manzano-Sanchez et al. (2018) recorded that Latino students, especially first-generation college students, found lower expectations in high school gave them a false sense of confidence in their ability to tackle collegiate coursework. On the contrary, Torres (2017) found that some Latino students used these misperceptions to challenge and counter inaccurate beliefs.

Access to a Rigorous Academic Curriculum

Many Latino male students often attend schools with limited resources and inadequate support to prepare them to be competitive after high school (Knight-Manuel et al., 2019). An absence of trust, confidence, and support for Latino male students results in what Welton and Martinez (2014) describe as "college readiness debt" (p. 208). Strayhorn (2010) states that academic preparation is the most significant predictor of collegiate academic success. Despite graduating high school, Latino males often find themselves academically unprepared for the rigors of college (Anderson & Larson, 2009; Knight-Manuel et al., 2019; Welton & Martinez, 2014). One reason is that often Latino students are tracked into less challenging coursework based upon lower expectations by adult educators (McKillip et al., 2012; Noguera et al., 2011;

Welton & Martinez, 2014). These actions tell students they are not college material (Vela et al., 2016). The lack of high expectations leads to feelings of isolation and alienation and negatively impacts a student's academic self-concept while reinforcing messages of inferiority among Latinos (Manzano-Sanchez et al., 2019; Welton & Martinez, 2014). Thus, students are not treated equally, and the services provided are usually selective based upon (L. D. Hill, 2012; Holland, 2015). Given the significant barriers and historical oppression that Latino males have encountered in U.S. public schools, there is literature that supports best practices that show promise of reversing this negative trend.

Family Engagement

Research has shown that increased family engagement has significant benefits and results in higher rates of academic achievement (Williams, 2019). However, for many Latino families, involvement is impeded by language barriers, limited bilingual personnel available, and discriminatory attitudes or perceptions that school personnel demonstrate do not foster respectful, welcoming environments (Clark et al., 2013; Martinez et al., 2004). The values of home and school often need to be matched, leading to frustration among families and students (Duncheon, 2018; N. E. Hill & Torres, 2010).

Language barriers are challenging for Latino families, and schools often need more bilingual personnel to translate and interpret important information (Sibley & Brabeck, 2017). Language barriers that limit potential partnerships between the school and parents adversely affect students' socioemotional well-being and academic performance (Dearing et al., 2016). Dearing et al. (2016) found that schools with family-school solid collaborative models helped to minimize the risks associated with immigrant Latino students when students and families were connected to supportive services.

Rather than emphasizing Latino cultural orientation toward responsibility, resilience, and understanding the home pedagogies, schools expect family participation to mirror the dominant culture's norms, resulting in a lack of respect for Latino parents' actions (N. E. Hill & Torres, 2010). This is further exacerbated by families' perceptions of not being welcomed in schools and a lack of bilingual staff to assist them (Martinez et al., 2004). Latino males are most likely to be less academically motivated and engaged in school when they experience discriminatory practices (Alfaro et al., 2009). Schools must approach these unions from a strengths-oriented viewpoint to challenge these attitudes toward Latino students and families (Sibley & Brabeck, 2017).

Family Responsibilities

Familism is the role and importance that one's immediate and extended family has in the Latino/Hispanic community (Fry, 2003; Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009). Familsmo also describes the interdependence and priority of family relationships and whose needs may supersede those of work or school (Tello & Lonn, 2017). This concept can be a stressor and potentially deter Latino males from continuing their education. Domestic responsibilities, the potential loss of their familial support network, and the changes that college may create impact a student's decision to attend college and where to attend (Carey, 2016, 2018; Martinez et al., 2010; Perez-Felkner, 2015). However, Saenz, García-Louis et al.'s (2018) examination of familial capital found this to be a source of inspiration and motivation, adding a critical analysis of the concept of familismo.

Latino males often work to help support their families, and the necessity of employment has contributed to students not pursuing higher education (Becerra, 2012; Cerna et al., 2009; Manzano-Sanchez et al., 2019). For students who have simultaneously pursued their education while working, the challenge lies in balancing the commitment to support their family and to

continue their education (Manzano-Sanchez et al., 2019; Perez-Felkner, 2015). The concept of familismo reinforces cultural gender roles as Latino males are primary wage earners in their families and will often find a quick route to employment versus a stable, long-term career after high school graduation (Rodriguez et al., 2018; S. M. Sanchez et al., 2012). Clark et al. (2013) contributed to this dilemma of families desiring sons to advance their education but also had expectations that they contribute financially, especially for low socioeconomic households.

The added domestic responsibilities, such as caring for younger siblings, working, and completing financial aid paperwork that many Latino youth face, should be more present in the lives of peers from higher-income households, leading to stress and health problems (Perez-Felkner, 2015). While families may make short-term sacrifices to support their college journey, Latino males face the reality of student loan debt, the necessity of landing a high-paying job, and any potential contributions to their family upon graduation (Carey, 2018).

Latino males are empowered as families provide aspirational, familial, and social capital to advance their education. Latino males often show affection for family members and see them as "part of themselves" (Carey, 2018, p. 262). However, the expectations and support provided by family can also limit the choices of attending college. Carey (2018) stated in his research that Latino males expressed anxiety about their family members' expectations of attending college when unsure. For some, the choice of where to attend was influenced by proximity to family. Latino males often prioritize this support network when selecting a school, as some students will readily choose an institution closer to access support when necessary (Carey, 2018; M. A. Martinez, 2013a). For others considering attending a college far from home, the guilt and pressure of leaving home were rationalized to improve their lives and as an opportunity for social mobility (M. A. Martinez, 2013a; Perez-Felkner, 2015).

Finally, Latino males also wrestle with the reality that they may change while attending and graduating from college. In his research on Latino and Black males and the familial dilemmas they face in college, Carey (2018) found that these young men identified relatives who had become distant, literally and figuratively, while they attended college. The fear expressed by the students was that they did not "like losing people that are close to you" (Carey, 2018, p. 262). Parents also expressed hesitation as they felt they were losing a child by attending college far from home (M. A. Martinez, 2013b). Latino males face the dilemma of improving their situation and that of their family while not losing the connection with family in their quest to attend and graduate from college.

Latino Male Assets and Aspirations

Latino males in the U.S. face negative stereotypes associated with their academic capacity, intellectual competency, and behavior in school systems that result in inequitable opportunities and college preparation (Duncheon, 2018; Howard et al., 2019; Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009). Unfortunately, these stereotypes have persisted because of embedded cultures in schools that have established white, middle-class values as the norm upon which other cultures are measured (Yosso, 2005). Contrary to these narratives, many Latino males aspire to excel in school and view academic success as a personal source of pride (Castillo et al., 2010). Torres (2017) also challenged this existing narrative, with young Puerto Rican males reporting high regard for education. Thus, it is necessary to identify the types of capital Latino males possess and how to leverage them so that educators can better prepare them for college.

Aspirational Capital

Yosso (2005) describes aspirational capital as "the ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future, even in the face of real and perceived barriers" (p. 77). Latino students gain

aspirational capital from familial encouragement, community members' belief in their ability, and personal responsibility. Despite Latino students' historically low academic outcomes and the limited knowledge some possess in navigating the U.S. school system, Latino families nurture a culture of optimism for their children's future (Gandara, 2010; Yosso, 2005). Latino males receive consistent messages about the importance of education and belief in their ability to succeed from parents and family members (Harper, 2015; Huerta et al., 2018; Saenz et al., 2017; Saenz et al., 2020). Families perceive academic achievement as a source of pride and a way for each generation to build upon and improve their socioeconomic status (Perez & Taylor, 2015; Saenz et al., 2020; Yamamura et al., 2010). Parents' encouragement is vital to Latino males' use of aspirational capital. Saenz et al. (2017) found that Latino males enrolled in college utilized the aspirational capital provided by fathers to remain focused on degree attainment. In their work on the influence of female family members on Latino male academic success, Saenz et al. (2020) found that mothers aspired to have "bragging rights" based on their scholar's achievements (p. 182).

Aspirational capital is also gained from community members and school personnel. Yamamura et al. (2010) found that many community members, school board officials, and superintendents echoed aspirational support for students. In addition, community members saw themselves as personally responsible for students' success. Current literature found that teachers' aspirational capital varied in terms of responsibility. While Yamamura et al. (2010) recognized that some teachers' aspirational capital placed a higher value on the collective responsibility rather than their professional responsibility as educators, Perez and Taylor (2015) found that students recollected the aspirational capital they received from teachers who supported them and provided guidance to ensure they would attend and graduate college. Personal responsibility is a

source of aspirational money for Latino males. Students often understand and accept that they have the most responsibility toward their academic success and must dedicate themselves to this pursuit (Castillo et al., 2010). L. M. Gonzalez et al. (2013) suggest that adult educators, i.e., counselors and teachers, help students identify potential barriers that may impede aspirations, given that student participants rated themselves as resilient and able to overcome the obstacles. Manzano-Sanchez et al. (2018) found that students who had high levels of self-efficacy were "creative" in overcoming obstacles (p. 199). Covarrubias and Stone (2015) found that Latino males who employed self-monitoring strategies and could adjust to a given situation positively related to academic achievement. Duncheon (2018) found that Latino students in college tapped into their aspirational capital during crises or challenges to adjust, remain optimistic, and persevere.

Navigational Capital

Navigational capital is those competencies that enable individuals to successfully maneuver non-familial social institutions, including educational systems (Saenz et al., 2018; Yosso, 2005). Academic invulnerability, or one's ability to persist in discriminatory conditions and educational risk, is an example of navigational capital (Yosso, 2005). Arellano and Padilla (1996) found that successful Latino male college students utilizing resources and relationships were able to overcome barriers. Carrillo's (2013) description of a Latino male's ability to navigate dissimilarities of home and school is similar to the "code-switching" N. E. Hill and Torres (2010) described in young men's ability to alternate behaviors accordingly between home and school.

Familial Capital

Familial capital is the cultural knowledge that emphasizes a commitment to one's family, community, and culture (Duncheon, 2018; Yosso, 2005). Familial capital emphasizes the connections and support between communal and familial ties. *Familismo* prioritizes community and interdependence over isolation (Tello & Lonn, 2017; Yosso, 2005). Latino males often develop familial capital through support and identify their family as a source of inspiration and a driver to achieve (Carey, 2016; Perez &Taylor, 2015; Saenz et al., 2020). Latino males' families hold education in high esteem, and this is reinforced through messages of encouragement, support, and empowerment (Carey, 2016; Huerta et al., 2018; Saenz et al., 2020). Latino males often receive *consejos,* or words of advice, from their community and *famila* (Castillo et al., 2010; Welton & Martinez, 2014). Saenz et al. (2017) found that fathers frequently spoke to their sons about delaying gratification and prioritizing education over immediate work. Family members often use their experiences as cautionary tales, encouraging Latino males to make choices that will improve their lives (Castillo et al., 2010; Rodriguez et al., 2018; Saenz et al., 2017). Latino males aspiring to attend college often received material support from their community through employment, housing, transportation, and care packages (Saenz et al., 2020; Santiago, 2020). This support helps these young men overcome barriers such as employment and student loans that often delay college degree completion. Support has been manifested in the way of flexible work schedules for students working for relatives and housing arrangements that ease the fiscal burden that often overwhelms Latino males (Huerta et al., 2018). In addition, students often receive familial capital as family members provide information and guidance related to college (Carey, 2018; Perez-Felkner, 2015).

Latinos have found inspiration from the sacrifices made by parents and utilize this driver

to seek upward mobility through education (Huerta et al., 2019; Manzano-Sanchez et al., 2019).

Latino males have developed intrinsic traits such as persistence and resiliency by observing the

hardships and barriers previous generations have faced (Carey, 2016; Perez & Taylor, 2015;

Saenz et al., 2017, 2020). In their interviews with Latino and Black males, Howard et al. (2019)

found the immigrant narrative to be unique to Latino males when describing their desire to

succeed. Many Latino males see themselves as representatives of their families and aspire to

achieve (Howard et al., 2019; Huerta et al., 2018). They view their *familia's* support as

foundational and essential to their success in school (Perez & Taylor, 2015; Saenz et al., 2020;

Yamamura et al., 2012).

Social Capital

Yosso (2005) identifies *social capital* as "networks of people and community resources"

(p. 79). Social capital is essential to helping Latino students navigate dominant cultural

institutions (Duncheon, 2018). Latino males often obtain social capital through mentors, peers,

and the community. Latino males who benefit from mentorship are more likely to complete high

school and continue their education (Cerna et al., 2009; Hines, 2019). Pino et al. (2012) found

that mentors positively impact Latino male students' retention and graduation rates in college.

Latino male students who have benefitted from the guidance are also more likely to mentor and

serve as role models to younger Latino students (Huerta et al., 2018).

Another cultural influence on Latino males is that of peer groups. Current research finds

that many adolescents rely upon their peer groups, and this reliance can positively influence or

derail academic pursuits (Clark et al., 2013). Perna and Titus (2005) found that peer connections

significantly influence academic success. In their quantitative examination of educational and

environmental factors among Hispanic college degree attainment, Arbona and Nora (2007) found that students who identified with friends with college aspirations strongly predicted college matriculation for Latino students. For college-going youth, Castillo et al. (2010) and Manzano-Sanchez et al. (2019) found that students who aspired to earn a college degree often sought out peers who shared the same goals, emphasized the importance of grades, and discouraged risky behaviors. Perez-Felker (2015) found that students with shared experiences of challenges with family and finances as they prepared for college supported one another.

On the other hand, students labeled as "at-risk" identified peers as a negative influence and often found themselves in troublesome situations (Castillo et al., 2010). Covarrubias and Stone (2015) identified peer influence as contributing to Latino male school resistance or not prioritizing academic success. Peer rejection of academic success also hurt Latino males' help-seeking behaviors (Saenz, Drake, et al., 2018). Valenzuela (1999) found similar influences among peer groups in her ethnographic study of Latino high school students, and her research found that students further separated themselves into peer groups according to immigrant status (i.e., U.S.-born or immigrant) and language (i.e., those who spoke Spanish versus those who did not).

Mentorship is another form of social capital that Latino males can access to support their pursuit of higher education. Mentoring has the potential to counter narratives about young Latino males by creating spaces that enable these young men to develop trusting, supportive relationships with adults, near-peers, and peers (Sanchez et al., 2018). While mentoring typically involves individual partnerships, group mentoring can also build bonds among more prominent groups, although coordination and dynamics can be challenging (W. Y. Chan et al., 2020).

Mentorship can occur in cross-age mentoring, natural mentoring relationships, community-based mentoring, school-based mentoring, and near-peer mentoring models. Latino males participating in mentorships are likelier to complete high school and continue their education (Cerna et al., 2009; Hines, 2019). Cross-age mentoring occurs between individuals within two years and is typical among middle school-high school partnerships (Karcher, 2009). School-based and community-based mentoring both consist of one-on-one partnerships. Hall (2006) notes that both models pair participants with similar cultural backgrounds and experiences, with school-based mentoring focused on increasing school-related capabilities. Natural mentoring relationships typically involve extended and immediate relatives and are generally external to the school environment (Sanchez et al., 2008). Near-peer mentoring was the model most associated with high school student preparation for college. Near-peer mentoring relies less on a hierarchal model (i.e., student-teacher), with a more experienced learner guiding a more junior learner (C. K. Chan & Luo, 2022).

Latino males benefit from mentoring in developing intrapersonal and interpersonal skills and college-going competencies (Saenz et al., 2015). In their examination of a state-wide college guidance program utilizing a near-peer model mentoring program, Bettinger and Evans (2019) found that Latino enrollment in two-year institutions increased. Near-peer mentoring also benefits students by allowing them to interact with role models, increasing social capital as students are more likely to seek guidance and ask questions, and providing much-needed consistency and predictability of a trusted adult (Qua et al., 2020). Finally, both participants can develop mutually beneficial relationships that cultivate trust and allow them to be warm demanders to reach their potential (Watson et al., 2016). Bettinger and Evans (2019) reported

that students had a better rapport with mentors due to the proximity in age and who had similar high school experiences.

Mentoring is especially critical during the transitional period between high school and college and the first two years of college. College preparation programs such as the Puente Project and Upward Bound provide mentorship during the first years of college, linking Latino males with faculty and opportunities that enable them to build social and navigational capital as they plan their careers (Sanchez et al., 2008). Pino et al. (2012) found that mentors positively impact Latino male students' retention and graduation rates in college. Latino male students who have benefitted from the guidance are also more likely to mentor and serve as role models to younger Latino students (Huerta et al., 2018).

Navigational Capital

Saenz, García-Louis et al. (2018) describe navigational capital as the skills that enable individuals to successfully move through institutions outside the home and family, including governmental entities and schools. Yosso (2005) states that navigational capital is instrumental in developing networks that provide access to employment opportunities.

Latino Male Assets and Aspirations

For many Latino males, the familial aspiration that they pursue higher education is a driving force for them to be successful academically. They are supported and equipped with familial and aspirational capital and possess social capital from extended family, community, mentors, and peers. However, this capital aligns differently with the values and beliefs of many schools in the U.S. that serve these students. The idea is that Latino males are often not enough to counter the challenges and barriers they face in advancing their education after high school.

The following section explored the school counselor's role, the challenges they encounter in their roles, and how they support Latino college readiness and success.

Successful Practices that Build Latino Male College-Going Identity

Given the developing body of research on Latino male college access and degree attainment, emerging studies have identified promising practices to support and help these young men realize their educational aspirations. McKillip et al. (2012) developed a college-going culture framework that includes shared responsibility among adult educators in providing resources and information to students and families, developing partnerships with families and colleges, and providing a curriculum that prepares students for the rigors of higher education, among other factors. Roderick et al. (2009) and Conley (2010) developed comprehensive models of college readiness that emphasize the individual capacities needed for college and career success. These included a grasp of cognitive strategies such as problem-solving, core content knowledge and preparation, behavior skills such as self-monitoring, and the contextual knowledge of the college and awareness of the application and transition process between high school and college.

While these frameworks guide institutional and individual practices, scholars have identified specific practices that assist Latino males in building the skills and knowledge needed in higher education. These practices include engaging families and providing information and support in the college process; giving accurate data on the costs associated with higher education and financial literacy programs; linking students with academic and social support; and providing access to a college and career-ready curriculum (Saenz & Ponjuan, 2011). Secondary schools would benefit Latino males by collaborating with IHEs from high school to college (Clark et al., 2013; Knight et al., 2019; Saenz & Ponjuan, 2011). This section will examine

existing literature and how schools prepare, inform, and encourage Latino male students toward educational success.

Family Engagement and Support

Navigating the college pathway can be an overwhelming, challenging process. Many Latino parents are often unfamiliar with how to proceed, especially if they were not educated in the U.S. (Bettinger & Evans, 2019; B. Sanchez et al., 2008). Latino families, especially those identified as low-income, rely on and benefit from increased counseling support (L. D. Hill, 2012; Paolini, 2015). Results from implementing a parent-adolescent college knowledge program demonstrated that perceived parent involvement positively influenced students' academic goals (G. Martinez & Chavira, 2019). Programs such as TRIO, which includes Talent Search, Student Supports Service, and Upward Bound, have a family component that supports families in understanding the complexities of applying for and transitioning to college (B. Sanchez et al., 2008).

Providing Transparency and Financial Literacy

Latino males often identify the cost of attending college as the most significant barrier to continuing their education (Anderson & Larson, 2009; Carey, 2018; Huerta et al., 2018; Perez-Felkner, 2015). Many Latino families are averse to borrowing money to finance an education, and this reluctance is primarily influenced by cultural stigmas around borrowing, short-term gains versus long-term investments, and a lack of knowledge (Salinas & Hidrowoh, 2018). College preparation programs often require parent support while engaging families in workshops to enhance college knowledge and provide information on navigating the college roadmap (Rodriguez et al., 2018). S. M. Sanchez et al. (2012) described a high school-college partnership

that educated families on financial aid, tuition costs, and the application process, empowering families to support their student's college aspirations better.

Academic and Social Supports

Given the unproportionable rate at which Latino males graduate high school and enroll in college, secondary schools must develop culturally relevant, rigorous college-going cultures that foster college readiness (Knight et al., 2013). Harper (2015) acknowledges that existing literature reinforces negative stereotypes examined successful schools that served predominantly students of color and sought to investigate successful institutions. Male students of color supported with positive messages reported a healthy identity and articulated aspirations of continuing their education after high school graduation (Harper, 2015). Students also report feeling valued and are more open to academic demands when trust is established with adult educators (Anderson & Larsen, 2009; Watson et al., 2016). Students are more receptive to feedback regarding decision-making and the implication of actions when care and trust are established (Castillo et al., 2010; Huerta et al., 2018). L. M. Gonzalez et al. (2013) students reported positive feelings when school personnel validated their cultural background. These findings reiterated that Latino students are not opposed to education but are not fond of "schooling" and the lack of care demonstrated by the adult educators they interact with (Valenzuela, 1999). The involvement of school personnel in collaborative efforts to promote college and structures that support and provide the curriculum to prepare students is necessary for developing a supportive college-going culture for Latino students (Anderson & Larsen, 2009; Howard, 2014; McKillip et al., 2012). L. M. Gonzalez et al. (2013) found that school personnel who culturally validated students influenced college-going self-efficacy among Mexican-American youth and increased confidence among these students.

Access to College Preparatory Curriculum

Schools must provide access to rigorous courses and curricula to better prepare students for the rigorous demands of college (Clark et al., 2013; Conley, 2010; McKillip et al., 2012; Roderick et al., 2007; Saenz & Ponjuan, 2011). Arbona and Nora (2007) found that among the predictors of Hispanic students attending a four-year university, the completion of a rigorous academic curriculum was the most predictive variable, with students 46% more likely to enroll in college. School personnel are pivotal in informing students of required college admission courses. Teachers support college-going efforts by telling students about advanced classes that can help students become competitive in college (Welton & Martinez, 2014). Martinez et al. (2019) described how non-core academic teachers, i.e., art teachers and elective teachers, integrated college-going themes into student projects, demonstrating a collective effort to support a college-going culture. Counselors are pivotal in helping students, whether through advising on courses or providing information (Holland, 2015).

Unfortunately, B. Sanchez et al. (2008) found that students had interactions with school counselors that hindered their educational desires to take courses that would better prepare them for college. Students who were in "regular" track courses, as opposed to honor or Advanced Placement (AP) courses, reported that teachers had low expectations, did not invest in their education, and ultimately left students unprepared (Martinez et al., 2019).

Support During Transition to College

While students aspire to attend college, navigating and understanding how to apply, enroll, and transition into college can lead to frustration and disappointment, especially for first-generation students. In exploring college-going cultures, Castillo et al. (2010) reported that Latino students know the importance of education and its increased opportunities. While students

acknowledge their responsibility to be successful, they state that schools are responsible for developing and sustaining a college-going environment. This includes providing resources and information to educate students and families better. In their study of college-going messaging, Martinez et al. (2019) described posters indicating admission test scores for colleges, posters, flyers, and assemblies where information and availability of resources on campus concerning college were shared with students.

College-Readiness & College-Preparation Programs

Latino male students have benefitted from college-preparatory and college-readiness programs. These programs aim to provide the necessary support for students to develop skills and habits and enable them to compete for acceptance and matriculation to postsecondary institutions after graduation. These programs offer Latino males the help and guidance to give them life-enhancing opportunities and the capital necessary to advance. In their qualitative study of Latino males and college preparation programs, S. M. Sanchez (2012) recorded one participant who stated, "If I didn't have that program, I would be lost… that program helped me out a lot" (p. 32). For others, involvement in these programs during high school and their initial years of undergraduate education provided mentorship, academic tutoring, and academic counseling that aided in the transition from high school to college (S. M. Sanchez et al., 2008).

School Counselors as Agents for Change and Latino Male College-Going Identity

School counselors are trained, credentialed educators who provide support in academic preparation college and career readiness advisement and are the first line in school-based mental health, prepared to address social and emotional learning (CASC, 2019). Counselors play a critical role in the persistence and enrollment of Latino students (Tello & Lonn, 2017). Families who are recent immigrants or come from lower-income households often lack the social capital

needed to navigate the U.S. school system and rely on school counselors to provide the outreach and resources necessary for their children to succeed (McKillip et al., 2012; Welton & Martinez, 2014). While various college-going culture models and frameworks encourage the collaboration of adult educators in fostering such an environment through the K-12 system, it should be noted that secondary school counselors often shoulder the task of guiding students and families in navigating the college roadmap (Rayle & Adams, 2007). The following section will review counselors' challenges when supporting Latino male students.

Preparation, or preservice, programs emphasize individual counseling, with less consideration toward a collaborative and consultative approach (Rayle & Adams, 2007). This is critical as there is often a need for more cultural awareness as counselors interact with students and families, especially for students who demonstrate limited English proficiency and come from low-income backgrounds (Paolini, 2015; Tuttle & Haskins, 2017). In his examination of secondary school counselors and their work with Latino students, Holland (2015) noted that while counselors acknowledged the role of race and class on student academic outcomes, they could not articulate how they adjusted their strategies to assist these students.

Another challenge counselors encounter is a misunderstanding or precise definition of their role and responsibilities on high school campuses. The ASCA Framework (2019) identifies three areas of direct student services that counselors should prioritize: instruction, appraisal and achievement, and counseling. Unfortunately, a misunderstanding among school personnel contributes to counselors assuming responsibility for actions that do not support prioritized areas. According to McKillip et al. (2012), interviews with teachers and administrators indicated that there needed to be a more precise understanding of the counselors' roles. The role of counselors has also been described as ambiguous, with some perceiving the role to be a mix of academic

counseling, social and emotional counseling, and administrative tasks (Stone-Johnson, 2015).

Tuttle and Haskins (2017) found that parents often had difficulty homing in on the school

counselor role, especially for parents educated outside of the U.S., where the position may not

have existed. This uncertainty has resulted in school counselors taking on additional duties

outside the proposed guidance of the ACSA (2019; Rayle & Adams, 2007).

The common practice of unrelated counseling tasks is what the ACSA advocates against

in their guidelines (ACSA, 2019). Counselors often are tasked with developing master schedules,

a significant investment of time and energy (Martinez & Welton, 2014). In addition, many

counselors are often identified as testing coordinators for various standardized tests (Stone-

Johnson, 2015). School counselors often support administrators in classroom discipline,

supporting students in social work, and providing mental health services (McKillip et al., 2012;

Martinez & Welton, 2014). Stone-Johnson (2015) found that some counselors described their

role as a "dumping ground" (p. 37) for a variety of tasks outside of providing academic

counseling. On the contrary, when asked about these tasks, school administrators deemed them

necessary (Rayle & Adams, 2009).

Another barrier school counselors encounter is the large number of student cases they are

responsible for. The ASCA suggests a student-to-counselor ratio of 250:1 as the optimum

number in which students and families receive adequate services (ACSA, 2023). During the

2019-2020 school year, the ASCA found that four of 54 states, territories, and educational

entities in the U.S. met this benchmark. Arizona had the highest ratio, with each school

counselor serving an average of 848 students (NCES, 2023). With such a large number, it is

difficult for school counselors to adequately provide the necessary support for the diverse student

body represented in public schools (Martinez & Welton, 2014; McKillip et al., 2012; Stone-

Johnson, 2015). Tuttle and Haskins (2017) best described counselors as being "swamped" (p. 105) by the large number of students they serve. This is especially critical for families and students without any other means of obtaining essential knowledge and guidance on attending college (Holland, 2015; Huerta et al., 2018). For these families, counselors are their only social capital, thus highlighting the importance of the accessibility of counselors (Martinez & Welton, 2014; McKillip et al., 2012; Paolini, 2015; Vela et al., 2016). Latino students who had access to increased and individualized counseling support were more likely to apply to and attend four-year institutions of higher education (Bryan et al., 2011; Castillo et al., 2010; L. M. Gonzalez et al., 2013; McKillip et al., 2012; Paolini, 2015).

With a significant caseload, access to counselors has been a challenge for Latino students and their families. Families and student state counselors are often unavailable and perceive unequal support in their aspirations to attend college (L. D. Hill, 2012; Smith-Adcock, 2006). Vela et al. (2016) reported that many students of color, including Latino students, only sought assistance from counselors if they perceived them to be busy. Latino students found that they should have been considered by counselors who were busy with other tasks, such as scheduling (Martinez & Welton, 2015). As a result, Latino students often turn to family members for information about college, which could be inaccurate or outdated (Paolini, 2015). For many Latino families, the school counselor provides the necessary social capital to compensate for their students' limited knowledge and experience in navigating the college roadmap (Bryan et al., 2011).

Given the considerable caseloads and limited time, counselors have been described as gatekeepers, using a cost-benefit approach to providing recommendations for students based on little information about a student (Holland, 2015). Such an approach is detrimental to the

aspirations of students (Huerta et al., 2018; Martinez & Welton, 2014; McKillip et al., 2012).

Additionally, students who have experienced barriers resulting in average or below-average

academic results find counselors insensitive when assessing students with whom they lack a

personal relationship (Vela et al., 2016). Counselors' expectations have led to students being

tracked into less rigorous courses despite their influence on their plans and aspirations (Bryan et

al., 2011; Holland, 2015). Holland (2015) found that while counselors reported an extensive

offering of workshops and information on going to college, there was no system for actively

reaching out to students, essentially alienating first-generation, low-income Latino students.

Successful School Counseling Practices for Latino Students

Schools must prioritize Latino families and communities (Smith-Adcock et al., 2006).

Arredondo et al. (2014) argued that it is imperative for counseling to be more "Latina/o

centered" (p. 207), given the growing Latino population and the potential counselors hold in

guiding social and educational policy. School counselors are influential among Black and Latino

students' aspirations to attend college (Bryan et al., 2022). School counselors empower and

support Latino students and their families by establishing rapport, building relationships that

promote connectedness, and being culturally responsive to their needs (Ochoa, 2009; Padilla &

Hipolito-Delgado, 2016).

Building Trust and Positive Relationships

Brokering trust with Latino students and families is critical, given that Latinos have yet to

view schools as trusting institutions (Ochoa, 2009; Padilla & Hipolito-Delgado, 2016). In their

work with a culture that emphasizes relationships, research has found that counselors must

establish trust by developing positive relationships and having personal regard for families

(Holland, 2015; Tello & Lonn, 2017). *Personalismo* is the concept of building rapport and

establishing relational trust with students and families as a priority over transactions with Latino students and families (Tello & Lonn, 2017). In their study on empowerment strategies utilized by high school counselors, Padilla and Hipolito-Delgado (2016) reported that most participants felt that building rapport and establishing relationships was the most critical factor in empowering Latina/o students.

Trusting relationships exist when parties feel valued and respected. Tuttle and Haskins (2017) reported that Latino families and students felt valued and developed a sense of worth when establishing positive counselor relationships. Foxx et al. (2020) also suggest that counselors serve as facilitators by amplifying the voices and experiences of students to learn and understand students' backgrounds and cultures. In improving services, honest conversations must take place that value student voice (van Mastright et al., 2021). Contrary to negative perceptions of males and school, most young male students sought out individuals who developed personal connections with them and had confidence in them, according to Reichert (2016).

Supportive and Inclusive Environments

Toomey and Storlie (2016) find that school counselors are pivotal to decision-making as it pertains to designing and executing programs to create an inclusive, safe environment for students. Zalaquett (2004) found that counselors who celebrated students' culture, language, and experiences had more success with Latino students and families. To effectively serve students of color, they must be able to navigate the various cultures of their student body (Holland, 2015). Latina/o students were most positively impacted when counselors actively supported students in the college application process (McKillip et al., 2012).

Culturally Responsive and Culturally Sustaining Counseling

Schools have traditionally marginalized and segregated communities of color (Grothaus et al., 2020). Educators have incorporated culturally relevant and responsive practices to counter the deficit-oriented narratives about students of color (Aguayo et al., 2023). Grothaus et al. (2020) state that culturally sustaining counseling acknowledges existing power structures and their impact on students of color while advocating for adopting practices that will proactively benefit marginalized students. School counselors who are culturally responsive and utilize culturally sustaining counseling apply a worldview that values, recognizes, and builds upon the cultural strengths that students and families of color possess (Pérez-Gualdrón et al., 2016).

Counselors are culturally responsive when holding high expectations for Latino students (Foxx et al., 2020). Encouraging and enrolling students in rigorous college preparatory classes demonstrates high expectations for students (Welton & Martinez, 2014). Student retention is often a challenge once students matriculate into an institution of higher education. Murphy and Murphy (2018) report that Latina/o students who were put into cohorts, or familias, with high expectations around time and effort saw retention rates double in a 9-year window.

Ladson-Billings (1994) describes active teaching methods as engaging with students where they are and building support to help students construct knowledge. Counselors make students agency through lessons incorporating cultural, linguistic, and community resources and experiences (Holland, 2015). In their work on counseling groups for Black and Latino youth, Peréz-Gualdrón et al. (2016) participants developed trust and were open to sharing experiences and participating in developing norms.

Counselors are better able to provide resources and support while simultaneously working to end discriminatory practices or policies if they are sensitive to the culture and needs

of Latino students and their families (Arredondo et al., 2014). School counselors working with

Latino students know the barriers they encounter in the school system (Ochoa, 2006; Smith-

Adcock et al., 2006) and help students become college-ready by coordinating services and

support (Tuttle & Haskins, 2017). Counselors are also instrumental in assisting students to

develop the school-based capital necessary for postsecondary success (Vela et al., 2016). When

working with Latino students, it is critical that counselors start early, meet with students as early

as middle school, and have frequent interactions with students (Robinson & Roksa, 2016).

Counselors are in a unique position to leverage the support of community organizations that can

support students (Smith-Adcock et al., 2006). Building sociocultural awareness is another

strategy culturally responsive counselors utilize to empower Latina/o students. Counselors get

students to think critically about their world, understand inequities, and develop a greater sense

of their culture (Padilla & Hipolito-Delgado, 2016).

Helping Students Develop Capital

Counselors help students develop the navigational, social, and aspirational capital

necessary for college preparation. Outside of the family, schools are the most influential form of

social capital (Bryan et al., 2011). When preparing Latino students for college, counselors

expand the social capital of students by bringing in alums who are currently in college or

graduated (Padilla & Hipolito-Delgado, 2016). Additionally, counselors foster positive peer

influence through extracurricular clubs focused on academics (Becerra, 2012).

Counselors also provide navigational capital for the college-going process by sharing

information, teaching skills, and working with families to understand better how to support their

students (Holland, 2015). Counselors support skill development such as self-monitoring

strategies to overcome peer influence of school resistance (Covarrubias & Stone, 2015).

For some students, counselors provide aspirational capital and seek encouragement and reinforcement of their aspirations of attending college (Holland, 2015). Counselors also offer aspirational capital indirectly by advocating for curriculum and supporting initiatives that empower and build the confidence of Latino students (Tello & Lonn, 2017). Counselors also nurture aspirational capital when they develop action plans with students that promote the student's educational goals (Pérez & Taylor, 2015).

Chapter Summary

Disparities between the growth of Latinos in the U.S. and upward mobility through the attainment of college degrees persist today. Latinos are unlike other immigrant groups in that they have made socioeconomic gains in subsequent generations in the U.S. Despite the promising statistics surrounding increased educational achievement, Latino males still trail peer groups proportionally in attaining college degrees. This lack of educational attainment has significant implications for U.S. economic competitiveness, but more importantly, the social fabric of the U.S. and the Latino community. This literature review examines the historical, social, and educational factors that have plagued Latino males in U.S. schools. The current body of research surrounding Latino male academic achievement leaves much to be desired (Noguera et al., 2012; Saenz & Ponjuan, 2011). While substantial literature addresses Latino males' need for more educational attainment and the contributing factors, there must be more in highlighting Latino males' ambitions, strengths, and assets. Also present are limitations to the degree of influence and best practices that school counselors apply to encourage and guide Latino males and their families in applying for and enrolling in higher education. Therefore, a need exists to identify and call attention to practices that school counselors utilize to encourage and support Latino males in their educational journey toward a college degree. This study seeks to identify

best practices incorporated by secondary school counselors in California high schools that promote, support, and increase college-going identity and foster a supportive college-going environment for Latino male students.

Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology

Introduction

For this study, the researcher elected to utilize a phenomenological qualitative study approach to capture best practices used by school counselors. This chapter opened with a restatement of the research questions followed by a brief exploration of the nature of the study. The next part of this chapter described the methodology used in this study. This included an explanation of the appropriateness and the strengths and weaknesses of utilizing a phenomenological approach. This chapter examined participation selection, steps taken by the researcher to ensure the protection of human subjects, and how data was collected.

Re-Statement of Research Questions

This chapter described the research methods that were applied to achieve the objectives of this study, which was to answer the following four research questions. The following research questions (RQ) were addressed in this study.

- RQ1: What are challenges encountered by academic counselors when striving to increase Latino male college readiness?

- RQ2: What strategies and best practices do academic counselors utilize to increase Latino male college readiness?

- RQ: How do academic counselors define, track, and measure success related to Latino male college readiness?

- RQ4: Based upon their experiences, what recommendations do academic counselors have for other academic counselors in increasing Latino male college readiness?

Nature of the Study

Qualitative research puts the researcher in the world, observing phenomena in their natural setting, recording observations through various methods, and, ultimately, creating meaning through interpretation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Shah and Corley (2006) find that qualitative research allows the researcher to develop a more holistic understanding and provide a thorough representation of phenomena experienced by the participants. Thus, qualitative research can potentially "transform the world" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 3).

Assumptions of Qualitative Research

Given that qualitative research has been grounded in empirical traditions and emerged out of social sciences during the early 20th century (Smeyers, 2008), the legitimacy of this approach has required persuasion by some scholars (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Harper and Kuh (2007) attribute this avoidance of qualitative methods to the loftier perception that quantitative research carries, their given preference and ease toward quantitative analysis, and their lack of understanding. Given that qualitative research provides some flexibility in the process (Creswell & Creswell, 2018), some scholars have described qualitative research as needing more structure (Shah & Corley, 2006). However, Shah and Conley (2006) and Maxwell (2013) emphasize that quality qualitative design is structured and that researchers are detailed in data collection and analysis descriptions.

Strengths of Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is an approach that emphasizes collaboration with participants to empower and to better capture the stories and experiences they have that strengthen existing theories or create new ones (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Smeyers (2006) states that qualitative research contributes and improves upon existing bodies of knowledge, and Shah and Conley

(2006) add that such insight is not possible through other research methods. Despite qualitative research's benefits to existing knowledge, this approach's value must be understood or underestimated (Harper & Kuh, 2007).

Weaknesses of Qualitative Research

Given these strengths and assumptions of qualitative research, not all are rigorous (Shah & Conley, 2006). As qualitative research has become used more frequently, not all practitioners understand the approach and have a weak sense of its foundation (Ponterotto, 2005). While some have acknowledged the quality of qualitative research methods, the quality of the results obtained about the amount of work conducted has been called into question (Smeyers, 2008). Another concern of qualitative research has been the reliability of self-reported data, given that participants may lack knowledge of a given phenomenon (Harper & Kuh, 2007). Given these limitations, the recognition and importance of qualitative research have increased in scholarly work (Duffy & Chenail, 2009; Harper & Kuh, 2007; Smeyers, 2008). Creswell and Poth (2018) claim that while qualitative researchers have various options, their work has examined five approaches: narrative research, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and case study. For this study, qualitative phenomenology was selected as the most appropriate choice.

Methodology

This study employed a phenomenological qualitative approach. Creswell and Poth (2018) state that a phenomenological study "describes the common meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or phenomenon" (p. 75). This approach aims to create a universal interpretation, or meaning, from the experiences that individuals have with the identified phenomenon. Thus, the work of the phenomenological researcher is to understand the everyday world of participants and uncover the essence of the phenomenon they collectively

experience (Eddles-Hirsch, 2015). This focus on the experience of a participant is what distinguishes phenomenology (Polkinghorne, 1989).

Structured Process of Phenomenology

Creswell et al. (2007) state that phenomenology serves to provide the "universal essence" of a person's experience with a phenomenon (p. 252). Creswell and Poth (2018) identify two types of phenomenological research methods: transcendental phenomenology and hermeneutic phenomenology. Whereas transcendental phenomenology takes a descriptive approach to understanding the phenomenon, or noema, hermeneutic phenomenology is concerned more with the interpretations developed by the researcher (Eddles-Hirsch, 2015). Given that this study sought a greater understanding of best practices employed by counselors in increasing Latino male college readiness, this study utilized a transcendental phenomenological approach.

Appropriateness of Phenomenology Methodology

Transcendental, or psychological, phenomenology prioritizes the researcher's description of the participant's experiences and less on the researcher's interpretation (Creswell et al., 2007). A transcendental phenomenological approach was most appropriate for this study as it seeks to understand and describe the relationship between the participant and how they make sense of their experience (Eddles-Hirsch, 2015). In this approach, the researcher brackets or suspends their experiences to understand participants' experiences better, thus allowing for new perspectives and ideas to surface (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Strengths of Phenomenology Methodology

According to Moustakas (1994), transcendental phenomenology is a more structured approach than hermeneutical phenomenology. Another strength of transcendental phenomenology is its ability to balance subjectivity with rigorous data analysis through a

structured approach (Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004). Transcendental phenomenology also emphasizes a more thorough description of how a participant experiences phenomena, not the researcher's voice.

Weakness of Phenomenology Methodology

Phenomenological methodology in research is not without reservation. First, the researcher must understand and identify the study's assumptions (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Additionally, researchers may need help finding and selecting participants who have experienced the phenomenon being studied. While disclosure of potential bias is stated and research methods are reviewed to remove any potential bias from experience, Moustakas (1994) claims such perfection is unrealistic.

Research Design

In selecting participants or subjects, Polkinghorne (1989) stated they must have experience with the phenomenon of the research and be capable of describing their experiences during the data collection process. To better understand the challenges and best practices school counselors utilize to increase Latino male college readiness and success, it is critical to identify the best participants who would best offer insight into this phenomenon. Thus, developing robust criteria in determining the analysis unity, population, and sample would enable the researcher to elicit and collect reliable data to understand better the phenomenon of school counselors increasing Latino male college readiness.

Unit of Analysis

The analysis unit of this study was a high school counselor employed at a California school serving students in grades 9-12. The unit of analysis was a school counselor with at least

five years of experience and must have worked directly with Latino students in creating

graduation plans, selecting courses, and assisting students and families with the college process.

Population

The population for this study was all secondary school counselors in southern California

that serve students in grades 9-12.

Sample Size

Given the specific focus of this research study, school counselors were defined as those

who served students in grades 9-12 and provided academic and college advising for students and

families. Creswell and Poth (2018) cite studies with sample size numbers varying from three to

10 participants and over 325 participants. While Polkinghorne (1989) also found a wide variety

of subjects, the number of participants depends on the extent of the study and if variety is

needed. Moustakas (1994) also emphasizes the need for sufficient participants to provide

different experiences. Given the personal nature and depth of the data collection process,

phenomenological samples have small numbers (Eddles-Hirsh, 2015). For this study, 15-20

participants were selected to be interviewed and provide insight on the strategies and best

practices academic counselors utilize to overcome the challenges associated with preparing,

encouraging, and ensuring Latino males apply and enroll in college.

Purposive Sampling

Non-probability sampling is often utilized in qualitative research studies (Pajo, 2017).

For this research study, purposive sampling was utilized. Purposive or judgmental sampling

intentionally selects a focused group of participants. Purposive sampling allows the participants

to "purposefully inform understanding of research problem and larger phenomenon" (Creswell &

Poth, 2018, p. 326). This approach was most appropriate as the researcher sought a specific

group of participants, in this case school counselors, to gain data about their lived experiences that would contribute to the purpose of the study.

Participant Selection

It was necessary to determine participants through inclusion and exclusion criteria to select participants who have had a lived experience with the phenomenon being studied. Based upon these criteria, a sample frame, or master list, would be developed for school counselors.

Sampling Frame. A sampling frame is also a master list of participants (Creswell, 2007). For this study, the researcher generated a master list utilizing a private master list from the High Tech High (HTH) CARPE network, as the researcher is a member and participant of the organization. The CARPE network is a group of high schools in Southern California aimed at increasing college application, acceptance, and enrollment of Black, Latinx, and Indigenous students. Participants could be obtained through the HTH CARPE webpage to determine which schools are part of the collaborative. Potential participants could then be identified through accessing public school webpages with the email addresses of counselors. After receiving permission from the Director of the CARPE network and obtaining the master list of participants whose job roles are school counselors, the researcher would filter potential participants using the criteria for inclusion.

Criteria for Inclusion. The participants for this research study will have met the following characteristics

- a high school counselor employed in California serving students in grades 9-12.
- has 5 or more years of experience as a high school counselor serving students in grades 9-12.
- work at a southern California high school serving Latino/a students.

- the school must serve a Latino student population of 50% or more significant, which was determined utilizing data from the California Department of Education DataQuest system (https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/) and the Riverside County Office of Education Assessment, Accountability, & Continuous Improvement (AACI) Database (California Outlier Schools by Student Group and Indicator | Tableau Public)

Criteria For Exclusion. The following were the criteria of exclusion

- participants who declined or refused to have their interview recorded,

- participants unable to participate in interviews between February 2023 and March 2023,

- participants who refused to sign the informed consent form,

- participants must have worked at their respective schools for at least five years.

Criteria For Maximum Variation. Upon application of the criteria for inclusion and exclusion, maximum variation is used to augment the diversity of the sample size. The criteria for maximum variation were as follows

- variation of years of experience as a school counselor,

- variation on the location of school in California. e.g. rural, urban

- variation in gender,

- variation in ethnic and racial diversity.

Protection of Human Subjects

Pepperdine University requires that all research involving human participants adhere to ethical, federal, and professional standards. All researchers must apply to the IRB that articulates the steps the researcher will take to protect and maintain confidentiality, identify potential

conflicts, and provide informed consent. The researcher obtained the CITI certification in human subjects (see Appendix A) and submitted an application to IRB for review and approval before recruiting. Once IRB approval was obtained (see Appendix B), potential participants were contacted using the IRB-approved recruiting script (see Appendix C). The participants received an informed consent form (see Appendix D).

Security of Data

There are minimal risks associated with this study. As such, the researcher intends to mitigate any potential risks. So that the process is safe and confidentiality maintained, the virtual sessions will be conducted using password-protected sessions. In addition, any documents associated with data collection were protected in an online cloud database protected by two-factor authentication.

Data Collection

Upon obtaining IRB approval, the researcher contacted prospective participants who met the inclusion criteria by email utilizing the IRB-approved recruiting script. If the participant agreed, a follow-up email was sent providing additional information regarding the nature of the study and a copy of the informed consent form. The informed consent form was sent via DocuSign, a service allowing the participant to e-sign the form. Participants would also be provided a link to schedule Zoom (https://zoom.us) audio appointments via Calendly (https://www.calendly.com), an online calendar service allowing them to select or modify their interview appointments. The meetings would be scheduled in 60-minute increments to allow for sufficient time to conduct the interview.

Upon signing the informed consent form and confirming an appointment time, a link was provided to each participant and the researcher. The interview session was recorded via the

researcher's Pepperdine Zoom and was a criterion for inclusion to be a part of the interview. Participants had the option of having their cameras on during the interview, but the audio recording feature of Zoom was utilized to record the interview. While this consent was part of the study, if a participant elected not to be recorded, the participant would be thanked for their time and would be dismissed from the study. The researcher would then select another eligible participant from the master list to interview. Interviews were recorded and transcribed using the researcher's Pepperdine Zoom account.

Creswell and Poth (2018) stress the ethical consideration to privacy when conducting research. Guest et al. (2013) recommend utilizing a source ID instead of real names and developing data labels and file names consistent with the source ID. To ensure the safety of participants, each one was deidentified and assigned a source ID, i.e., SC 1, SC 2, etc. Additionally, all recordings and data files were stored on a cloud database requiring two-factor authentication and could only be accessed on a password-protected device. The recordings would be deleted within a year of the study's conclusion.

Interview Techniques

For this phenomenological transcendental study, a semi-structured interview format will be used. Semi-structured interviews are between unstructured and full interviews (Pajo, 2017). While full interviews are rigid and require the researcher to develop all questions before the interview and adhere to the same process and order of questions, unstructured interviews may have questions developed ahead of time and are more open to the potential of exploring additional topics or going in a different direction. Given the flexible nature of qualitative interviews (Creswell & Creswell, 2018), follow-up questions were allowed as part of the semi-structured interview to allow for various responses (Guest et al., 2013).

Given the stressors, anxiety, and fatigue the process can present (Rubin & Rubin, 2005), the researcher provided sufficient time between interviews and avoided back-to-back appointments. The researcher asked 11 questions to each participant, with follow-up questions prepared in advance. The interview opened with an introduction, a review of the nature of the study, recording procedures of the interview, and an opportunity for the participant to ask any questions. The researcher asked each participant to share their experience and trajectory as educators to build rapport. Throughout the interview, the researcher must demonstrate empathy (Rubin & Rubin, 2005) and listen attentively (Brinkmann et al., 2018). The researcher demonstrated this by showing interest in what the participant shared, rephrasing, and asking follow-up questions to gain a deeper understanding of the participant's experience. For the participants involved, the end of interviews often can be filled with anxiety, pleasure, or emptiness. Upon the conclusion of the interview, the researcher would restate some of the highlights from the interview and allow an opportunity for the participant to verify or add information. The researcher also allowed each participant to ask any questions about the study. Once this was completed, the researcher thanked each participant and followed up with a note of gratitude sent via email.

Interview Protocol

The researcher utilized a semi-structured interview method best to capture the insights and experiences of the participants. To establish rapport and trust with the participant, the researcher utilized the interview protocol described below followed by the interview questions and the research questions they correspond to. The protocol was as follows

1. Welcome
2. Icebreaker and questions to build rapport.

3. Review informed consent and recording of interview.

4. Ask interview questions

    o IQ1: What challenges do you believe academic counselors encounter that inhibit Latino male students' college readiness and prevent them from being successful?

    o IQ2: What challenges do you believe Latino male students encounter that inhibit their college readiness and prevent them from being successful?

    o IQ3: How do you establish trust and foster positive relationships with Latino male students?

    o IQ4: How do you educate and inform Latino males and their families on the college-going process?

    o IQ5: How do you provide access to college-preparatory classes for Latino male students?

    o IQ6: How do you define college readiness?

    o IQ7: How do you monitor Latino male students' progress toward being college ready?

    o IQ8: What metrics do you use to determine if Latino males are college ready?

    o IQ9: If you were a school leader, what steps would you take to increase college readiness among Latino male students?

    o IQ 10: What guidance would you provide to other counselors facing challenges with increasing Latino male college readiness?

    o IQ11: Is there anything else you would like to add?

Relationship Between Research and Interview Questions

This study had four research questions utilizing an open-ended frame to allow for more

insight by participants. A total of 11 open-ended interview questions that expanded upon the research questions were based on the findings in the literature review regarding best practices employed by school counselors in increasing college readiness among Latino male students.

Validity of the Study

According to Creswell and Poth (2018), qualitative research validity seeks to establish the study's accuracy. Patten and Newhart (2017) suggest that validity measures the accuracy of the questions with the research topic. For this study, a three-step process will be used to establish the validity and reliability of the interview process.

Prima-facie and Content Validity

Prima-facie, or face validity, examines if a question appears valid on the surface (Patten & Newhart, 2017). The interview questions were developed and sought to address the findings and topics uncovered throughout the literature review. The questions developed aligned with identifying and addressing barriers Latino males face with college readiness, establishing trusting relationships with Latino males and their families, and metrics to identify success and suggestions for other colleagues (see Table 1). Content validity assesses whether questions or other measurement tools address the content of the research. This study was subject to content validity through peer reviews.

Table 1

Prima-Facie Research Questions and Interview Questions

Research Questions	Corresponding Interview Questions
RQ1: What are challenges encountered by academic counselors when striving to increase Latino male college readiness and success?	IQ1: What challenges do you believe academic counselors encounter that inhibit Latino male students' college readiness and prevent them from being successful?
	IQ2: What challenges do you believe Latino male students encounter that inhibit their

Research Questions	Corresponding Interview Questions
	college readiness and prevent them from being successful?
RQ 2: What strategies and best practices do academic counselors utilize to increase Latino male college readiness and success?	IQ3: How do you establish trust and foster positive relationships with Latino male students? IQ4: How do you educate and inform Latino males and their families on the college-going process? IQ5: How do you provide access to college-preparatory classes for Latino male students?
RQ3: How do academic counselors define, track, and measure success as it relates to Latino male college readiness?	IQ7: How do you define college readiness? IQ8: How do you monitor Latino male students' progress toward being college ready? IQ9: What metrics do you use to determine if Latino males are college ready?
RQ4: What recommendations would academic counselors make for increasing Latino male college readiness?	IQ10: If you were a school leader, what steps would you take to increase college readiness among Latino male students? IQ11: What guidance would you provide to other counselors who are facing challenges with increasing Latino male college readiness? IQ12: Is there anything else you would like to add?

Peer-Review Validity

Peer review is an additional layer of validity in which the researcher seeks people familiar with the process to serve as an external check (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Peer review validity involved three researchers enrolled in the Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership and Policy (ELAP) program at Pepperdine University. These colleagues have completed rigorous courses in qualitative and quantitative research methods and are thus familiar with the process.

Peer reviewers were sought for participation through an email. Upon agreement, an email was sent describing the process (See Appendix E). Reviewers were asked to review the research questions and each corresponding interview question and determine if the interview question addressed the research question. If the reviewer agreed, they would mark "Keep as stated." If the question was irrelevant, they were asked to mark "Delete it." Finally, if modifications were necessary, space was provided to suggest changes or to suggest additional questions. Upon receiving each form, the researcher incorporated the suggestions and made revisions, which are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2

RQs and Corresponding IQs (Revised)

Research Questions	Corresponding Interview Questions
RQ1: What are challenges encountered by academic counselors when striving to increase Latino male college readiness	IQ1: What obstacles do you believe academic counselors experience that inhibit Latino male students' college readiness and prevent them from success in high school and beyond? IQ2: What obstacles do you believe Latino male students experience that inhibit their college readiness and prevent them from achieving success in high school and beyond?
RQ 2: What strategies and best practices do academic counselors utilize to increase Latino male college readiness	IQ3: How do you establish and foster positive relationships with Latino male students? IQ4: How do you educate and inform Latino males and their families on the college-going process, including, but not limited to academic requirements, financial literacy, and help-seeking behaviors? IQ5: How do you educate and inform Latino males and their families on the college-going process?

Research Questions	Corresponding Interview Questions
RQ3: How do academic counselors define, track, and measure success as it relates to Latino male college readiness?	IQ6: How do you provide access to college-preparatory classes for Latino male students? IQ7: What strategies do you employ to encourage students to enroll in appropriately challenging, 'a-g' college preparatory coursework? IQ8: How do you monitor Latino male students' progress toward being college ready? IQ9: What metrics do you use to determine if Latino males are college ready?
RQ4: What recommendations would academic counselors make for increasing Latino male college readiness?	IQ10: If you were a school leader, what steps would you take to increase college readiness among Latino male students? IQ11: What guidance would you provide to other counselors who are facing challenges with increasing Latino male college readiness? IQ12: Is there anything else you would like to add?

Note. The table identifies four research questions and corresponding interview questions with revisions based on feedback from peer-reviewers. Subsequent changes were made to the order and phrasing of questions within the interview protocol.

Expert Review Validity

The last step in determining the validity of the research questions was to conduct an expert review process. In addition to the peer review process, this layer added further clarity to ensure the alignment of the interview questions and research questions. The expert reviewers were the dissertation committee discussing any proposed revisions with the researcher. Upon gaining additional feedback and insight, the researcher made final changes to the questions and are reflected in Table 3.

Table 3

Expert Review Validity of RQs And Corresponding IQs

Research Questions	Corresponding Interview Questions
RQ1: What are challenges encountered by academic counselors when striving to increase Latino male college readiness and success?	IQ1: Think back at your career to a case that stands out where the Latino male student you were counseling was least ready for college? Tell me about that experience. a. What challenges was that students facing? b. As his counselor, what challenges were you facing? IQ2: Generally speaking, what obstacles do you believe academic counselors experience that inhibit Latino male students' college readiness and prevent them from success in high school and beyond? IQ3: Generally speaking, what obstacles do you believe Latino male students experience that inhibit their college readiness and prevent them from achieving success in high school and beyond?
RQ 2: What strategies and best practices do academic counselors utilize to increase Latino male college readiness and success?	IQ4: What strategies or best practice did you use, or believed should have been used, to overcome these challenges? IQ5: Generally speaking, what obstacles do you believe Latino male students experience that inhibit their college readiness and prevent them from success in high school and beyond? IQ6: What strategies or best practice did you use, or believed should have been used, to overcome these challenges?

RQ3: How do academic counselors define, track, and measure success as it relates to Latino male college readiness?	IQ7: When counseling Latino males for college readiness, how do you:
	    a. Define your own success?
	    b. Measure your success?

Research Questions	Corresponding Interview Questions
	c. Track your success?
RQ4: What recommendations would academic counselors make for increasing Latino male college readiness?	IQ8: If you could go back in time, what is the one thing you would change to make you more successful as a counselor? IQ9: What guidance would you provide to other counselors who are facing challenges with increasing Latino male college readiness? IQ10: Is there anything else you would like to add?

Note. The table identifies four research questions and corresponding interview questions with revisions based on feedback from the expert reviewers (committee). Subsequent changes were made to the order and phrasing of questions within the interview protocol.

Reliability of the Study

Reliability is important in ensuring stable and consistent results from an instrument (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Pattern & Newhart, 2017). To test the reliability of the study, the interview questions were tested with experts who met the criteria for the study and agreed to participate in the pilot. Feedback provided furthered ensure the reliability of the interview questions.

Statement of Personal Bias

Conducting good qualitative research requires that the researcher clarify and present any potential biases (Creswell & Poth, 2018). It is necessary for the researcher to state biases and ensure they are not expressed or shared during the interview process. To remedy this potential, the researcher utilized bracketing and epoche.

Bracketing and Epoche

In qualitative research, the researcher will disclose personal experiences with the phenomenon and "brackets" themselves out of the study by acknowledging this by further describing experiences and acknowledging the challenges of removing oneself entirely from the

research (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The researcher created codes for bracketing to be used during

interviews to reflect and eradicate bias. This allows for epoche, which occurs when the

researcher sets aside previous beliefs and preconceived ideas that they possess to have a clear

perspective in understanding the participant's experiences and explore new understandings or

ideas (Moustakas, 1994). The researcher's personal biases were as follows

- The researcher is a third-generation Latino male and a first-generation college
  graduate.

- The researcher has been involved in the field of education over the last twenty years,
  with fourteen years serving as an administrator.

- The researcher has worked closely with school counselors regarding the college
  readiness of students.

- The researcher has participated and presented in professional learning settings on the
  topic of college readiness, especially for underrepresented students.

Data Analysis and Coding

Analyzing data in qualitative research ensures the accuracy of the information presented

in the research study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Analysis occurs simultaneously while

interviewing to ensure data is relevant and reflects upon identified needs (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

In analyzing the data, the researcher organizes collected data, codes the data, extracts themes

from the transcripts, and interprets the meaning of themes and descriptions (Creswell & Poth,

2018).

Data organization is critical to ensure that the process of the retrieval of information is

simple and avoid "data messes" (Guest et al., 2013, p. 276). The researcher organized data by

utilizing source IDs to label data files, i.e., audio recordings, transcriptions, and notes, and

organized the database to ensure information could be obtained easily. The researcher utilized a professional software tool to transcribe interviews. Coding and organizing themes were the next step in the analysis process. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), coding is the process of breaking down data into phrases and themes. The researcher thoroughly read through the initial data, and named and defined codes. The researcher also made annotations to help guide the coding process. A list of categories was created, and regulations were assigned to these groups. Given the information obtained from the coding process, the data was interpreted with the researcher connecting categories and themes and determining conclusions based upon this analysis. During this process, the researcher linked data to the greater literature view, questioned current thinking, or provided insight (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The researcher also was vigilant in identifying any unforeseen findings as well.

Interrater Reliability and Validity

Establishing external validity or ensuring that the results of a study can be applied to new settings is critical in qualitative studies (Patten & Newhart, 2017). In establishing interrater reliability, the researcher followed a four-step process.

- Baseline Themes: The researcher conducted interviews with three participants. The initial data was organized and prepared for analysis and coded to determine themes and if they are interrelated.

- Interrater Review Consensus: The researcher recruited two peers to assist with determining and reaching a consensus on determining themes. The de-identified transcripts and codebook were shared. Validation of coding required consensus by all three reviewers. If no consensus was reached, an expert from the dissertation committee was asked to provide guidance.

- Baseline Themes: The remaining interviews were conducted, transcribed, and coded. Any revisions to the codebook were permissible if additional data emerged.

- Interrater Review Consensus: The deidentified results were shared with the two co-reviewers in step 2. Similar to step 2, if consensus was not reached, a dissertation committee member was asked to provide guidance.

Data Presentation

This final phase allows the researcher to package findings through a variety of forms (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The researcher organized and presented data utilizing a table indicating the codes identified and significant quotes mentioned during participant interviews. Additionally, the researcher presented findings through text, utilizing participant quotes to guide discussion of the data collected.

Chapter Summary

This chapter revisited the research questions introduced in Chapter 1 and introduced interview questions related to each research question that seeks to collect data based upon the findings of the literature review presented in Chapter 2. This chapter provided the rationale in determining that the method that most appropriately fits this study would be a transcendental phenomenological approach. Additionally, Chapter 3 presented the selection of participants and how confidentiality and safety of participants were addressed. Finally, this chapter also discussed how data would be collected, analyzed, and tested for validity and reliability.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Results

Introduction and Restatement of the Research Questions

Counselors are critical in their influence on Latino male college readiness. The researcher asked these four questions to accomplish the aim of this study

- RQ1: What are challenges encountered by academic counselors when striving to increase Latino male college readiness and success?

- RQ2: What strategies and best practices do academic counselors utilize to increase Latino male college readiness and success?

- RQ3: How do academic counselors define, track, and measure success related to Latino male college readiness?

- RQ4: What recommendations would academic counselors make for increasing Latino male college readiness?

Introduction of Interview Questions

The interview protocol consisted of 10 questions with two questions divided into multiple parts. The researcher developed the questions using interrater reliability and validity to elicit themes based on the research questions. The following questions were asked to participants

- IQ1: Think back at your career to a case that stands out where the Latino male student you were counseling was least ready for college. Tell me about that experience.

  - What challenges was the student facing?

  - As his counselor, what challenges were you facing?

- IQ2: What strategies or best practices do you use, or believe should be used, to overcome these challenges?

- IQ3: Generally speaking, what obstacles do you believe academic counselors experience that inhibit Latino male students' college readiness and prevents them from success in high school and beyond?

- IQ4: What strategies or best practices do you use, or believe should be used, to overcome these challenges?

- IQ5: Generally speaking, what obstacles do you believe Latino male students experience that inhibit their college readiness and prevents them from success in high school and beyond?

- IQ6: What strategies or best practices do you use, or believe should be used, to overcome these challenges?

- IQ7: When counseling Latino males for college readiness, how do you:
  - Define your own success?
  - Measure your own success?
  - Track your own success?

- IQ8: If you could go back in time, what is the one thing you would change to make you a more successful counselor?

- IQ9: What guidance would you provide to other counselors who are facing challenges with increasing Latino male college readiness?

- IQ10: Is there anything else you would like to add?

The 12 participants met the criteria for inclusion and were asked 10 open-ended questions. Each participant was asked to reflect upon their experience as school counselors working with Latino male students. The responses collected provided significant material in better understanding the role counselors have with supporting Latino male college readiness. This chapter will provide

Participants

This study sought to identify best practices utilized by high school counselors that impact Latino male college readiness and success after high school. 134 participants were recruited and 12 high school counselors were selected to participate in this study based upon their experiences working with Latino male students during their high school years. All participants served as school counselors in their respective public schools with at least 5 years of experience. While they shared these experiences and served in the same role, the participants varied in background, ethnicity, populations served, school sizes, and their own personal lived experiences. To maintain confidentiality, all participants were informed of the measures taken to ensure anonymity to establish a more comfortable environment that permitted honest reflection and responses. While the study initially sought to interview between 15-20 participants, saturation was achieved at 12 participants.

Data Collection

The data collection phase was initiated when IRB approval was obtained on February 21, 2023. Email communication utilizing the Pepperdine IRB-approved recruitment script was sent to potential participants at the end of February 2023. A master list of prospective participants was developed based on southern California high schools participating in the High Tech High CARPE College Access network. The recruitment email sent included the study's nature and the inclusion criteria.

Once participants expressed interest, an informed consent letter and calendar link were sent to determine optimal interview times. Interviews were conducted utilizing the researcher's Pepperdine Zoom account; only audio material was recorded for transcription. Interviews were conducted between March 6, 2023, and concluded on April 7, 2023. While an hour was

scheduled for each interview, recorded conversation time ranged from 33 minutes to 128

minutes. Table 4 shows the dates the participants were interviewed.

Table 4

Dates of the Participant Interviews

Participant	Interview Date
SC01	March 6, 2023
SC02	March 6, 2023
SC03	March 10, 2023
SC04	March 14, 2023
SC05	March 16, 2023
SC06	March 18, 2023
SC07	March 18, 2023
SC08	March 18, 2023
SC09	March 21, 2023
SC10	March 30, 2023
SC11	April 4, 2023
SC12	April 7, 2023

Data Analysis

Analyzing data in qualitative research ensures the accuracy of the information presented

in the research study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Prior to analyzing data, the researcher noted their

personal biases and experiences in education and working with counselors to increase objectivity

during the analysis phase. After each interview, the researcher listened to the audio recording of

the interview and reviewed the transcript generated by Otter AI, making corrections to the

transcript and highlighting important phrases and keywords emerging from responses. Upon completing this process, the researcher generated a Google Sheet and organized the keywords and phrases into codes and buckets.

Inter-Rater Review Process

The researcher utilized an interrater review process to ensure the accuracy and reliability with the collected data. Interviews with three participants were conducted with the initial data coded into buckets based upon key ideas and phrases and organized into a codebook. The researcher sought the assistance of three Pepperdine colleagues with experience in qualitative research to review the initial three interviews. The de-identified transcripts and working codebook were shared independently for each peer to review. Suggestions were provided by each peer with the researcher agreeing to the suggestions given.

Data Display

Data collected during the interviews was organized according to the four research questions and accompanying interview questions. Bar graphs were developed for each interview question and reflect the frequency of themes for each question. Following each graph was an examination of each theme, including quotes from participants that were collected during each interview. These quotes appeared verbatim to ensure accuracy and provided insight into each question. To ensure confidentiality, each participant was identified as School Counselor or SC, with a number assigned to each participant. For this study, SC01 through SC12 was used to represent the 12 school counselor participants.

Research Question 1

RQ1 asked, "What challenges are encountered by academic counselors when striving to increase Latino male college readiness?" To best answer RQ1, participants were asked three

questions, with the first question divided into two parts. The three interview questions were:

- IQ1: Think back at your career to a case that stands out where the Latino male student you were counseling was least ready for college. Tell me about that experience

  o What challenges was the student facing?

  o As his counselor, what challenges were you facing?

- IQ3: Generally speaking, what obstacles do you believe academic counselors experience that inhibit Latino male students' college readiness and prevents them from success in high school and beyond?

- IQ5: Generally speaking, what obstacles do you believe Latino male students experience that inhibit their college readiness and prevents them from success in high school and beyond?

Interview Question 1. The first question required school counselors to reflect on a specific student they worked with. IQ1 asked, **"**Think back at your career to a case that stands out where the Latino male student you were counseling was least ready for college. Tell me about that experience. What challenges was the student facing? As his counselor, what challenges were you facing?" Based on participants' responses, the following themes emerged in order of frequency: (a) family responsibility and personal challenges, (b) navigational capital, (c) sociocultural influences, (d) inadequate time, (e) student-counselor ratios, (f) developing trusting relationships, (g) building capacity among families. Figure 1 depicts the frequency bar chart, which displays the themes and multiple responses per participant.

Figure 1

IQ1 Frequency Bar Chart

Interview Question 1- Coding Results
$N = 12$, multiple responses per participant
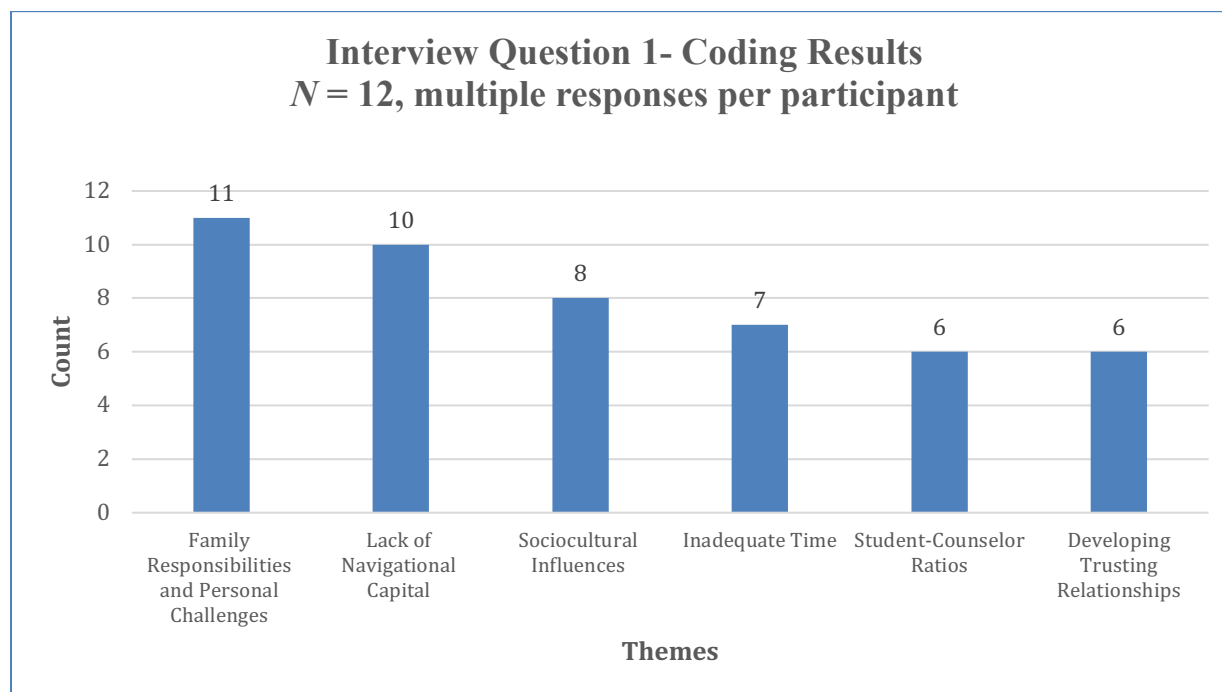
Family Responsibility and Personal Challenges. Nearly all participants (92%) cited responsibility to family and personal challenges as barriers for Latino male college readiness. SC 6 reported that students often struggled "to make it in life" and "they feel a sense of urgency on how to contribute to the family." SC 1 described the cultural expectation "that if the family needs us, we are going to be there and need to take on that role." Participants described specific students whose situations prioritized the expectation to provide fiscal support or care for younger siblings over furthering their education.

Personal challenges also surfaced in students' lives that prevented them from considering higher education and preparing for that option in high school. SC 8 and SC 1 both discussed parent and family members' incarceration as impacting students' aspirations to attend college, with some having to assume adult responsibilities because of a parent being incarcerated or deported. SC 3 recalled a student whose girlfriend became pregnant during his senior year. SC 3

continued to remain in touch with the student, who completed their nursing degree much later, but the immediate situation delayed the student's aspirations of attending college.

Lack of Navigational Capital. Ten of the participants (83%) identified a need for navigational capital as a challenge. SC 4 stated that for many of her Latino male students and their families, the school is the primary, or only, resource parents have in navigating the college-going process. SC 7 echoed this in saying "no one in their family had a college education, so there was no help or assistance to navigate the process other than the school." SCs 5, 6, 7, and 10 identified a lack of knowledge among students and their families in how to navigate the college application process or how to fund a college education. SC 7 recalled that students shared that they had a "lack of exposure and conversations about higher education at home." Help seeking behaviors were a challenge as SC 10 found that Latino male students did not ask for help. SCs 2, 3, 4, and 10 spoke about parents' lack of understanding and knowledge when exploring the possibility of college. SC 6 and 10 added the challenge that immigration status had on capturing financial aid. SC 10 added that counselors themselves have challenges "navigating the FAFSA and all of the intricacies of financial aid" and that this learning required additional time.

Sociocultural Influences. Eight of the 12 (67%) participants found that sociocultural influences presented barriers toward Latino male college readiness. SC 3 spoke of the challenge that gangs presented in the families of some of her Latino male students. SC 4 and 9 both identified community factors as influencing students' aspirations, especially students coming from low socioeconomic neighborhoods. SC 6 and 9 identified siblings as a significant influence, with Latino males likely to follow the path of an older sibling. SC 6 stated that "having peer groups that have a similar mindset would be a huge contributing factor to Latino males aspiring to go to college."

Immigration status also significantly impacted college readiness among Latino male students. SC 10 spoke of questionable residency status as a barrier and that "even finding resources for DACA" was challenging. SC 6 found that first-generation Latino male students learning a new language and attempting to meet requirements, and accessing an education were "variables that impinge upon their ambition."

Inadequate Time. Not having adequate time emerged as another theme. Seven of the 12 (58%) of participants identified time as a challenge when counseling Latino male students. SC 5 stated that the workday was "only seven hours long" and insufficient time to meet with students or complete other tasks. SC 1 spoke of the time required to work with Latino male students with college counseling and noted the time limitation and trying to serve students "that I have under my radar adequately."

Student-Counselor Caseloads. The number of students that counselors served on their caseload was another challenge experienced (50%). Such numbers made it difficult for school counselors to get to know or provide sufficient guidance for Latino male students. SC 2 stated, "I have tried to make a connection with all the students, but it is hard to know every single student with a caseload of 400 or more." SC 5 echoed this sentiment: "I have a caseload of 400 students, you know, like, if you don't ask for help, it's going to be hard for me to reach out to you."

Developing Trusting Relationships. The ability to develop trust and build relationships with Latino male students was another theme identified by six of 12 (50%) participants. Given the challenging circumstances of many students, SC 8 described the mistrust students and families had about school and higher education when their "environmental factors were in direct opposition to that." SC 3 reflected that for many of her Latino male students and their families "building trust was really important for them" and "trying to convince them that there was more

to life that the life they knew."

      Interview Question 3. For the next related interview question, "Generally speaking, what obstacles do you believe academic counselors experience that inhibit Latino male students' college readiness and prevent them from success in high school and beyond?", participants identified the following themes: (a) student-counselor ratios, (b) not enough time, (c) lack of understanding of the role of a counselor, (d) non-counseling responsibilities, and (e) unfamiliarity with the Latino culture. Figure 2 depicts the bar chart displaying the themes and the number of responses per participant.

Figure 2

IQ3 Frequency Bar Chart
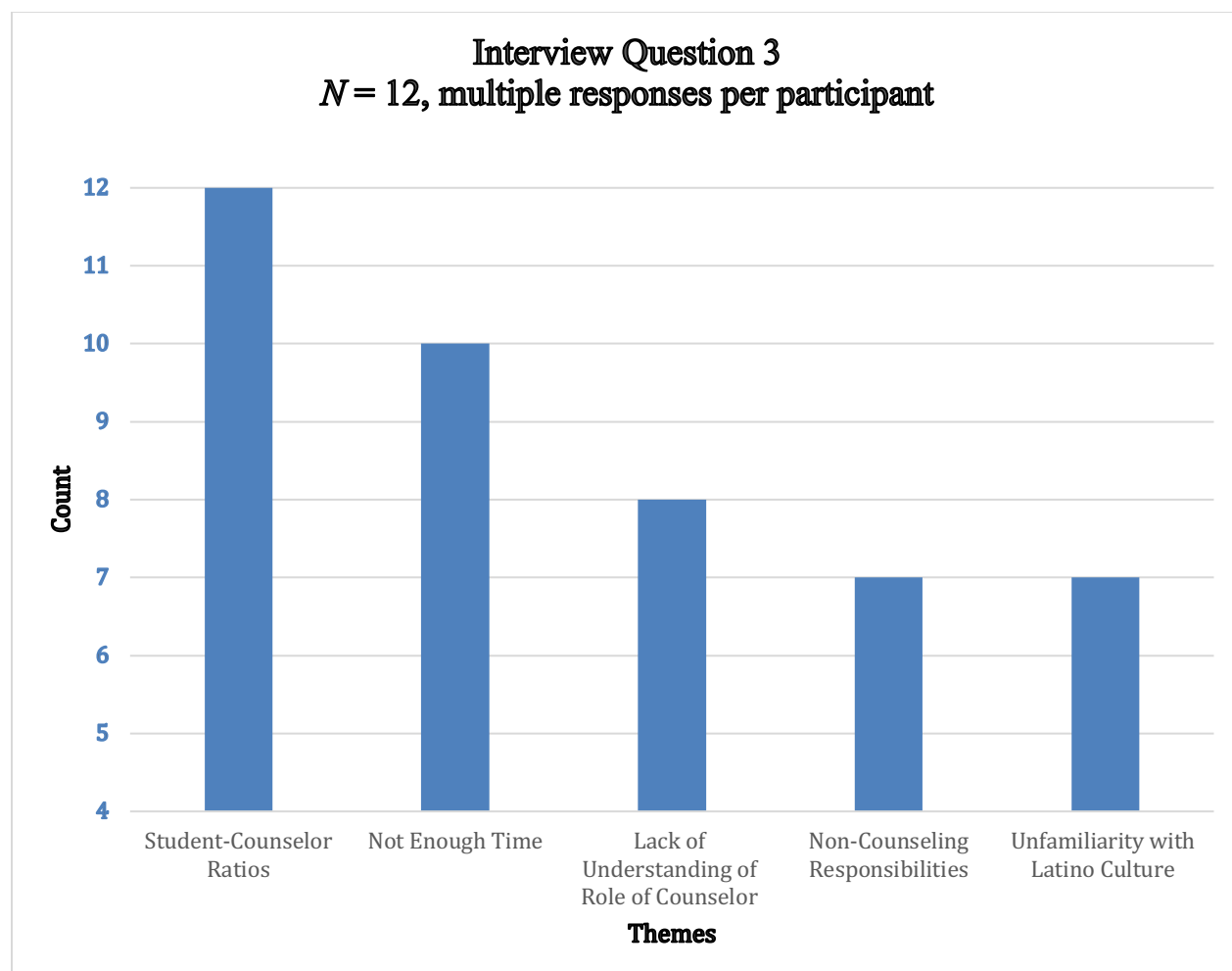
Student-Counselor Ratios. 100% of participants mentioned the overwhelming number of students each counselor serves as an obstacle that prevents school counselors from adequately serving and preparing Latino male students to be college ready. SC 7 questioned one's effectiveness toward assisting students and wondered, "How can you be intentional when I have a caseload of 550, and you have emails coming in and this and that? I can only do so much." SC 3 compared their current caseload of 400 students with a previous caseload of 250 and that they did not feel "overwhelmed" as they and their colleagues now feel.

Not Enough Time. Approximately 80% of participants identified time as challenging when working with Latino male students. For SC 7, working with Latino males required being purposeful about how time was utilized. They felt that school counselors could "be more intentional with their time to support Latino male students." SC 10 added, "I think with a high caseload and all of the other things involved with counseling, it's just the challenging task to get all that done."

Lack of Understanding of the Role of a Counselor. Six of 10 participants cited that administration, both at the campus and district levels, needed to understand the role of the counselor. SC 3 reported "I think a lot of times administration doesn't really understand the role of a counselor and how multifaceted the job really is." SC 5 stated that their school district did not have a clear direction regarding counseling and the sentiment among counselors was "every man on their own."

Non-counseling Responsibilities. Tasks outside of counseling was another dominant theme identified by participants. SC 9 mentioned that school administration often tapped them and their peers to help on testing days for the SAT or state assessments. SC 2 described conflicting feelings when taking on non-counseling duties: "When we're put in the role of

disciplinarian, it really becomes an issue because that is not who we are like down in our hearts."

   Unfamiliarity with Latino Culture. Another emerging theme presented was a need for more understanding of Latino culture among school counselors, personnel, and structures. SCs 1, 4, and 6 all spoke to a lack of understanding of Latino culture among adult educators, including some of their counseling peers. SC 10 stated that they recently became aware of the crisis among Latinx students and the declining college-going rates of Latino males. SCs 4 and 9 identified a need for more Spanish-speaking counselors, especially more Latino male counselors.

   Interview Question 5. "Generally speaking, what obstacles do you believe Latino male students experience that inhibit their college readiness and prevent them from success in high school and beyond?" Participants' responses resulted in the following themes, in order of frequency: (a) stereotypes and biases from adult educators, (b) familial responsibilities, (c) unsupportive school environment, and (d) lack of long-term prioritization of education. Figure 3 shows the frequency bar chart which displays the themes and the multiple number of participants per theme.

Figure 3

IQ5 Frequency Bar Chart

Interview Question 5
N = 12, multiple responses per participant
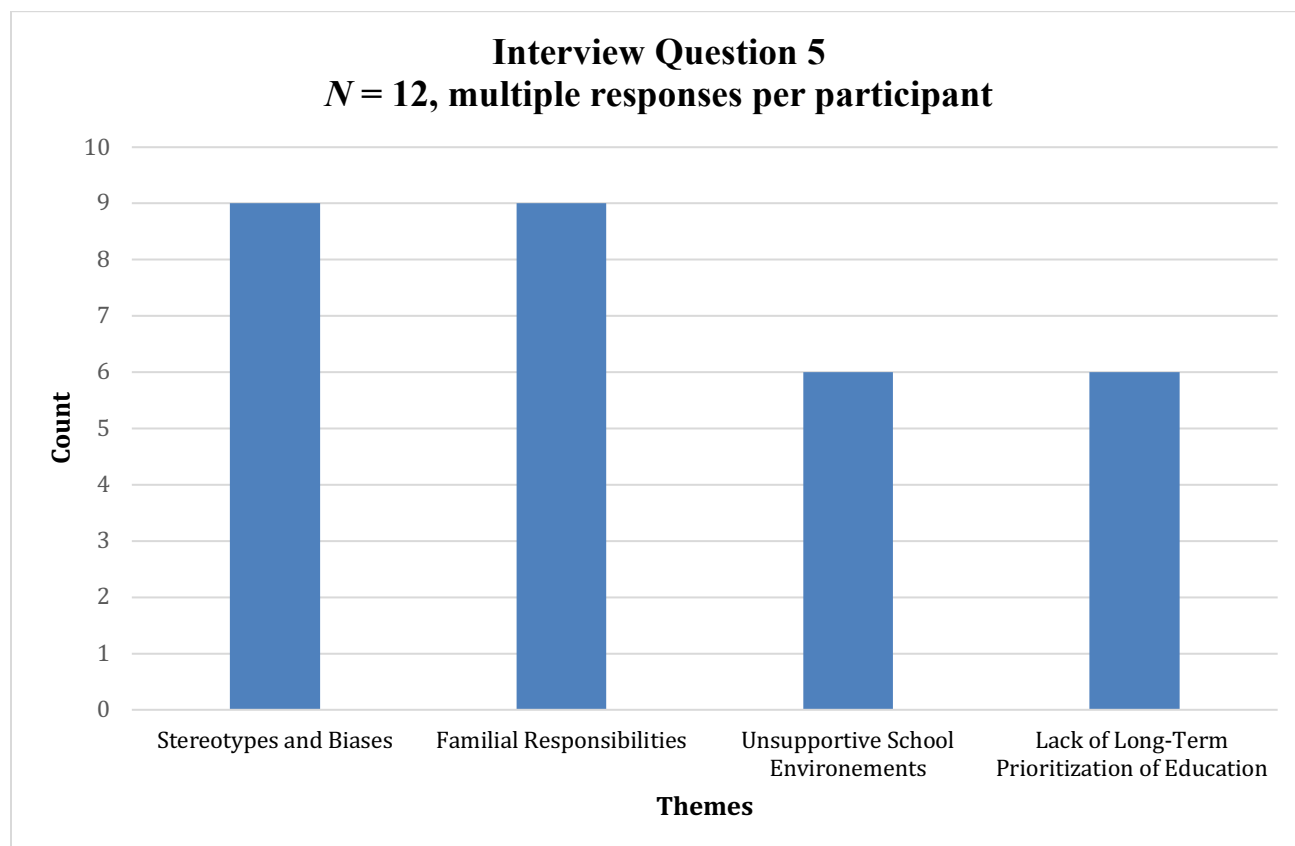
Count / Themes

Stereotypes and Biases. Nine of 12 participants (75%) identified stereotypes and biases

of Latino male students from adult educators, including counselors and teachers, was the most

frequent theme identified by school counselors. SC 10 did not hesitate in stating that all too

often, Latino male students are recipients of "deficit framing" with many adults stating that

"they're not college bound." SC 1 stated that "we still have that view of our male students as

being very active and not proper students. Those biases from some of our teachers are still there

and is something we have to work through." SCs 4 and 6 both identified teachers as often writing

students off, rather than understanding factors contributing to why a student may be

unsuccessful.

Familial Responsibilities. Equally identified as the most cited theme was the

responsibilities to family that many students had that posed a challenge for counselors when

preparing Latino male students for college. SC 5 shared an experience with a Latino male in

danger of not graduating who "has a lot of pressure at home and is responsible for taking his

younger siblings to school." SC 1 spoke of the cultural expectation "already embedded in them

that 'I need to support my family,' especially for older brothers."

Financial hardships that families experienced also contributed to the challenge of Latino

male college readiness. SC 2 shared that financial hardships coupled with a poor relationship at

home was a barrier for Latino males aspiring to attend college. SC 9 stated that the desire to

contribute to their own family led students to seek a "quick solution" and address the immediate

financial instability as opposed to exploring career development through obtaining a college

education.

Unsupportive School Environment. The third theme reported was an unsupportive

school environment. SC 10 and SC 7 found that their schools did not engage Latino male

students. Half of participants (50%) identified this as a challenge.

Lack of Long-Term Prioritization Of Education. The final theme of prioritizing

education emerged as six of 12 (50%) participants noted the difficulty in counseling Latino

males to develop long-term goals. SC 3 noted, "I think going to school to them is secondary to

taking care of the family." SC 7 stated,

> It's the hardest part I think, even telling them "You could do work study and like, you'll
> get a little paycheck and if you want to send some of that back to your parents, you can"
> you know. But they that they didn't understand that it was an investment for a couple
> years or a few years but that was the biggest challenge as a counselor, their financial
> piece and helping them see like, it's going to pay off in the long run. But at that moment,
> when you're a kid, and you're like, "Well, my mom and dad need help. I'm the older
> sibling" like, what's more important?

SC 10 noted that anxiety around the student or an immediate family member's immigration status was a priority and minimized any long-term planning toward obtaining a college degree.

Summary of RQ1. This study's first research question sought to understand academic counselors' challenges when supporting Latino males in college readiness. Analysis of data collected through the three interview questions yielded 14 themes. The themes identified were: (a) family responsibility and personal challenges, (b) navigational capital, (c) sociocultural influences, (d) inadequate time, (e) student-counselor ratios, (f) developing trusting relationships, (h) building capacity among families, (i) lack of understanding of the role of a counselor, (j) non-counseling responsibilities, and (k) unfamiliarity with the Latino culture, (l) stereotypes and biases from adult educators, (m) unsupportive school environment, and (n) lack of long-term prioritization of education.

Research Question 2

RQ2 asked, "What strategies and best practices do academic counselors utilize to increase Latino male college readiness and success?" To answer this question, participants were asked:

- IQ1: What strategies or best practices did you use, or believe should have been used, to overcome these challenges (where the Latino male student you were counseling was least ready for college)?

- IQ2: What strategies or best practices did you use, or believe should have been used, to overcome these challenges (obstacles that academic counselors face)?

- IQ3: What strategies or best practices did you use, or believe should have been used, to overcome these challenges (that inhibit Latino male students' college readiness)?

Interview Question 2. IQ2 asked, "What strategies or best practice did you use, or believed should have been used, to overcome these challenges (where the Latino male student you were counseling was least ready for college)?" Participant responses resulted in the following themes: (a) building a supportive and caring environment for students and families, (b) increasing opportunities to foster a college-going culture, (c) availability to students and families, and (d) culturally responsive practices. Figure 4 shows the frequency bar chart with the themes and multiple number of responses per participant.

Figure 4

IQ2 Frequency Bar Chart
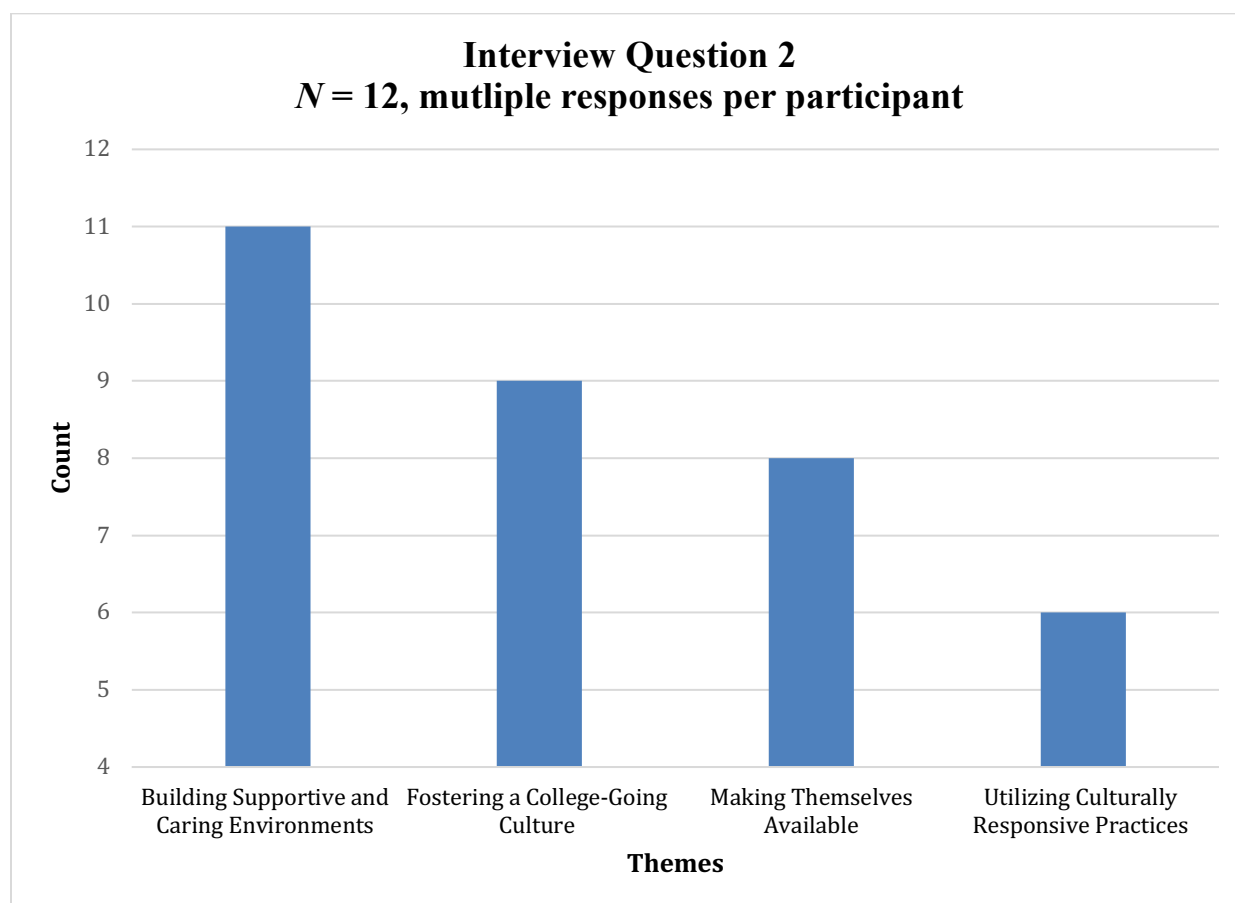
Building Supporting and Caring Environments. Building supportive and caring environments was raised by 92% of participants. For SC 9, getting to know students and "just

connect" with Latino male students is critical. SC 6 felt it vital that students also needed to hear narratives from adults about how they navigated challenging pathways. In one instance, SC 6 stated: "You need to be there to support them. That's the one central part about anything in life is it can't be a one-sided journey because not one travels alone." SC 5 stressed the importance of one-on-one meetings to talk and get to know students.

School counselors established supporting and caring environments by engaging adult educators. SC 3 visited classrooms when delivering lessons and used the opportunity to "build rapport with teachers and students." For SC 1, having a "good support team with all the counselors" gave them "comfort that I may have missed them today, but someone else is taking care of it" when supporting students.

Another way counselors built supportive and caring environments was through networking and mentoring. SC 7 recruited alumni to speak to current students and described the interactions as a "game changer." SC 9 utilized student peers to support and encourage one another through clubs where students developed their own supportive networks. SC 10 noted a program that brought teachers, counselors, and administrators to identify and provide assistance to students to ensure they were on track to complete a-g requirements and know they had support.

Fostering a College-Going Culture. Providing opportunities to foster a college-going environment for Latino males was cited by several participants. SC 10 enrolled students in college preparatory classes such as Advanced Placement or dual enrollment courses as a way to build a college-going culture among Latino males. SC 6 increased enrollment in the Puente Program to foster collegiality and support for Latino male students. SC 7 addressed "kids not knowing the different resources available to them" by coaching them on "how to utilize" the

resources at their disposal. SC 6 and 7 both arranged funding and coordinated college visits for students. SC 9 started a club for marginalized students, including Latino males, to develop action plans for applying and enrolling in college. SC 7 and SC 8 recruited parents and provided informational workshops to foster a college-going culture.

Making Themselves Available. Using all opportunities to make themselves available to students was another theme identified by participants. SC 3 stated that "just being there" let students know they were supported. SC 9 took it upon themselves to go out during lunch and passing periods: "We need to go out there and expose our students to what we have to offer." School counselor took effort to "make myself available" to respond to student concerns or allow for students to drop into their office.

Utilizing Culturally Responsive Practices. Participants shared that employing culturally responsive practices with Latino male students helped to overcome barriers to Latino male college readiness. SC 5 grew up and attended the same high school they were at and commented that it was important for educators to understand where students were coming from and "meet them halfway." SC 8 shared this same sentiment and said, "I think it was always important to meet students where they're at and not try to impose your own agenda on people and just try to get to know them at first." SC's 2, 3 and 4 all spoke Spanish and were able to better communicate with families and support their colleagues. SC 1 shared of a workshop geared toward Latino students where "they saw their roots, and they saw their connection to college." This counselor sought opportunities that showed "that their culture could be not a burden or barrier, but something that will support their success."

Interview Question 4. For the second question, "What strategies or best practice did you use, or believed should have been used, to overcome these challenges (obstacles that academic

counsels face)?" The following themes emerged from participant responses in order of frequency: (a) targeted, intentional planning and support, (b) engaging all educational partners, (c) having clear goals and direction for counseling, and (d) decreasing student-counselor ratios. Figure 5 shows the frequency bar chart with the number of participants per theme.

Figure 5

IQ4 Frequency Bar Chart

Interview Question 4
N = 12, multiple responses per participant
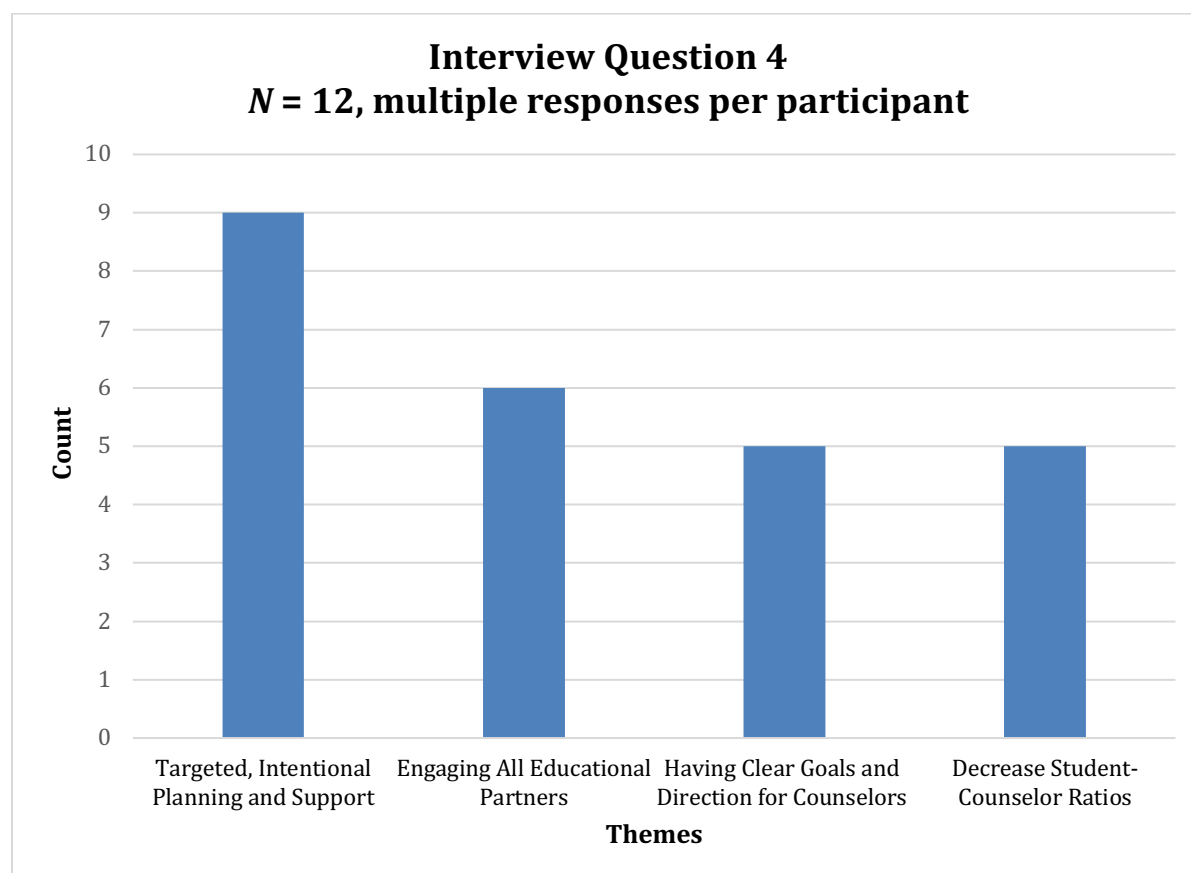
Targeted, Intentional Planning and Support. Ten of 12 participants (83%) identified that school counselors should provide targeted planning and support for Latino male students.

According to SC 9:

> So, thanks to CARPE, we could really focus on and offer the different tiers of support, right? And so, if we're really trying to help a particular type of student, then we have to focus on that and make it a priority. And so that's something that we've really adjusted to here.

SC 6 also believed that counselors must be "very, very intentional" when utilizing data and determining how to support Latino male students. SC 1 developed a workshop for Latino males to build awareness of college-going resources and available support.

Engaging All Educational Partners. Half of the participants (50%) identified this theme. SCs took opportunities to engage all educational partners, including teachers and families, in increasing Latino male college readiness. SC 2 utilized virtual platforms for parents to join in student meetings and gave their meeting "more teeth" and "real substance." SC 4 engaged parents using the keyword "graduation" to increase parent attendance. SC 6 solicited input from families on how to support students best and worked with students' teachers on supportive measures.

Having Clear Goals and Direction for Counselors. The third theme for IQ4 was having clear goals and direction. Five of 12 counselors (42%) noted this theme. SC 3 and 5 stated that clear counseling goals and guidance from the district and campus levels are critical to addressing Latino male college readiness. SC 10 also stated the importance of "breaking up roles between counselors" to ensure a more unified approach to supporting students.

Decreased Student-Counselor Ratios. The final theme that emerged was having decreased student-counselor ratios. Five participants (42%) identified decreased student-counselor ratios as a best practice. SC 3 mentioned that adding a college counselor provided more time to meet individually with students. SC 5 saw a similar result when their school district increased counseling staffing ratios, allowing the counselor to meet with targeted students. With lower student numbers, SC 4 believed they could give "individualized attention" where students and families "feel heard."

Interview Question 6. "What strategies or best practices did you use, or believe should have been used, to overcome these challenges (that inhibit Latino male students' college readiness)?" Participants' responses resulted in the following themes, in order of frequency: (a) targeted support and mentoring, (b) building skills and knowledge through frequent interactions, and (c) college-readiness opportunities for Latino males. Figure 6 shows the frequency bar chart with the number of themes and responses per participant.

Figure 6

IQ6 Frequency Bar Chart

Interview Question 6
N = 12, multiple responses per participant
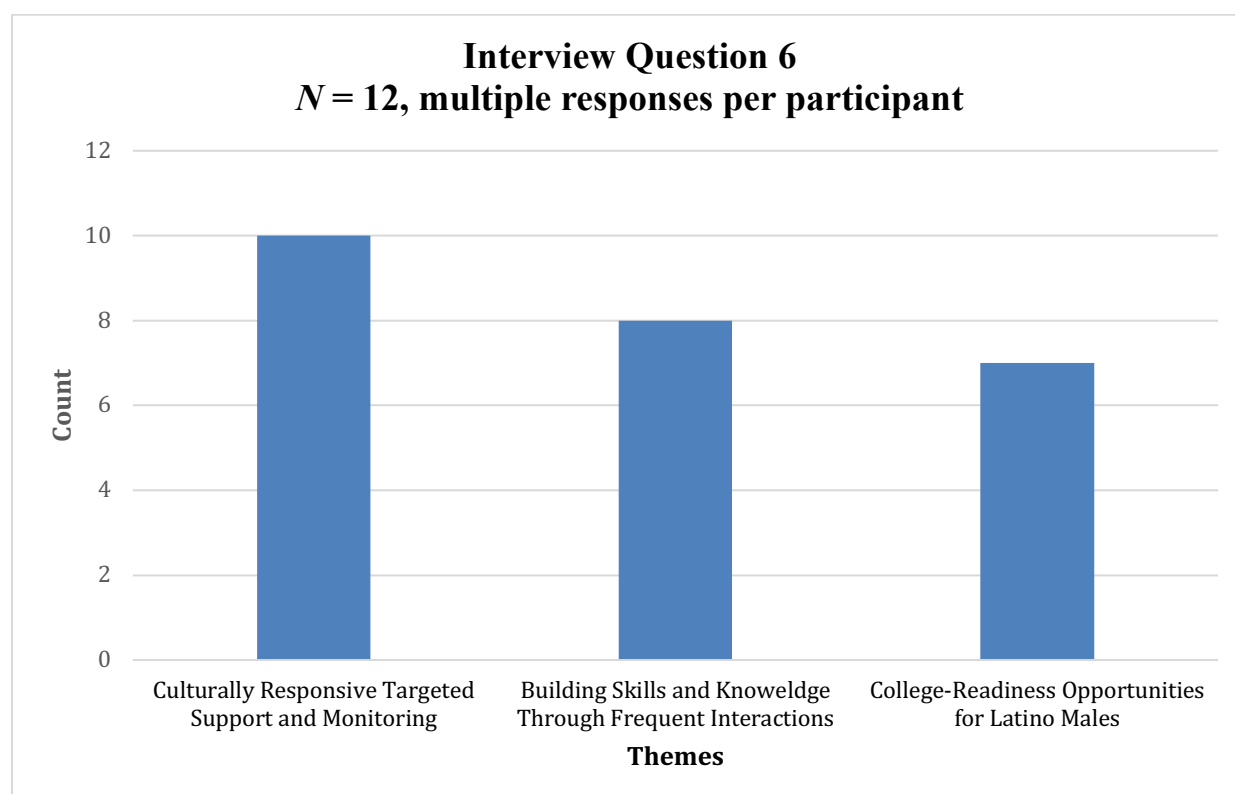
Culturally Responsive Targeted Support and Mentoring. Eighty-three percent of participants shared that targeted support and mentoring were used to overcome challenges that Latino male students faced. SC 2 said by supporting Latino male students and constantly checking up on them, "they feel like someone's caring about them and not just going to let them

fall by the wayside." SC 4 and 10 used check-in models with trusted adults on campus. SC 3 and 7 utilized data to inform decisions on how to provide targeted support. SC 7 was "intentional" in providing adequate social and academic supports such as school counseling, employing the assistance of the school psychologist and of social workers.

To best provide targeted support and mentoring it was necessary for counselors to, as SC 1 put it, "dig into the culture of the Latino male student." SC 5 utilized empathy in understanding students' community and to understand "what they are going through" to serve Latino male students better. SC 5 stated that it was necessary to "see students with an open lens" when supporting Latino males.

Building Skills and Knowledge Through Frequent Interactions. The second theme for IQ6 was building skills and knowledge through frequent interactions. Eight of 12 (67%) participants identified this theme. SC 2 and 9 increased the frequency of visiting classrooms to provide lessons or share pertinent college-going information with students. SC 9 "increased English class presentations" and utilized time "even if it's just for like five minutes just interrupting classes just to make our presence and make quick announcements." Small group conversations were a technique utilized by SC 2 and SC 6 to build knowledge. SC 2 would use the opportunity to reinforce this message to Latino male students: "To hustle, you have to work. You have to feel like you're going to put in other types of work, but I'm telling you, it's going to pay you two times more." SC 6 used these sessions to help students determine the pathway of "least resistance" to funding a college education.

College-Readiness Opportunities for Latino Males. Seven of the participants (58%) identified this theme. SC 4 encouraged and enrolled students in dual enrollment courses with the partner community college to expose and ensure students were college-ready and competitive.

SC 2 worked with district-level personnel to help students understand "different pathways" to securing a college education. SC 9 and 10 embedded additional support during the school day for students to receive tutoring or assistance with college or scholarship applications.

Summary of RQ2. There were 12 themes that emerged to answer the second research question, which sought to identify best practices and strategies employed by school counselors to enhance Latino male college readiness. The themes included (a) building a supportive and caring environment for students and families, (b) increasing opportunities to foster a college-going culture, (c) availability to students and families, (d) culturally-responsive practices, (e) targeted, intentional planning and support, (f) engaging and being responsive to all educational partners, (g) having clear goals and direction for counseling, (h) decreased student-counselor ratios, (i) targeted support and mentoring, (j) understanding culture of Latino male, (k) equipping students with skills through frequent interactions, and (l) college-readiness opportunities for Latino males.

Research Question 3

The third research question (RQ3) asked, "How do academic counselors define, track, and measure success as it relates to Latino male college readiness?" To best answer RQ3, participants were asked three questions, with the first question divided into two parts. The three interview questions were:

- IQ7: When counseling Latino males for college readiness, how do you define your own success, measure your success and track your success?

Interview Question 7. IQ 7 asked, **"**When counseling Latino males for college readiness, how do you define your success? Measure your success? Track your success?" Based on the participants' responses, the following themes emerged in order of frequency: (a) quality relationships with students and families, (b) graduation and earning a diploma, and (c) college

eligibility and acceptance. Figure 7 depicts the frequency bar chart with the number of themes per participant.

Figure 7

IQ7 Frequency Bar Chart

Interview Question 7
***N* = 12, multiple responses per participant**

Count / Themes

Quality Relationships with Students — 9
Graduation and Earning Diploma — 7
College Eligibility and Acceptance — 5
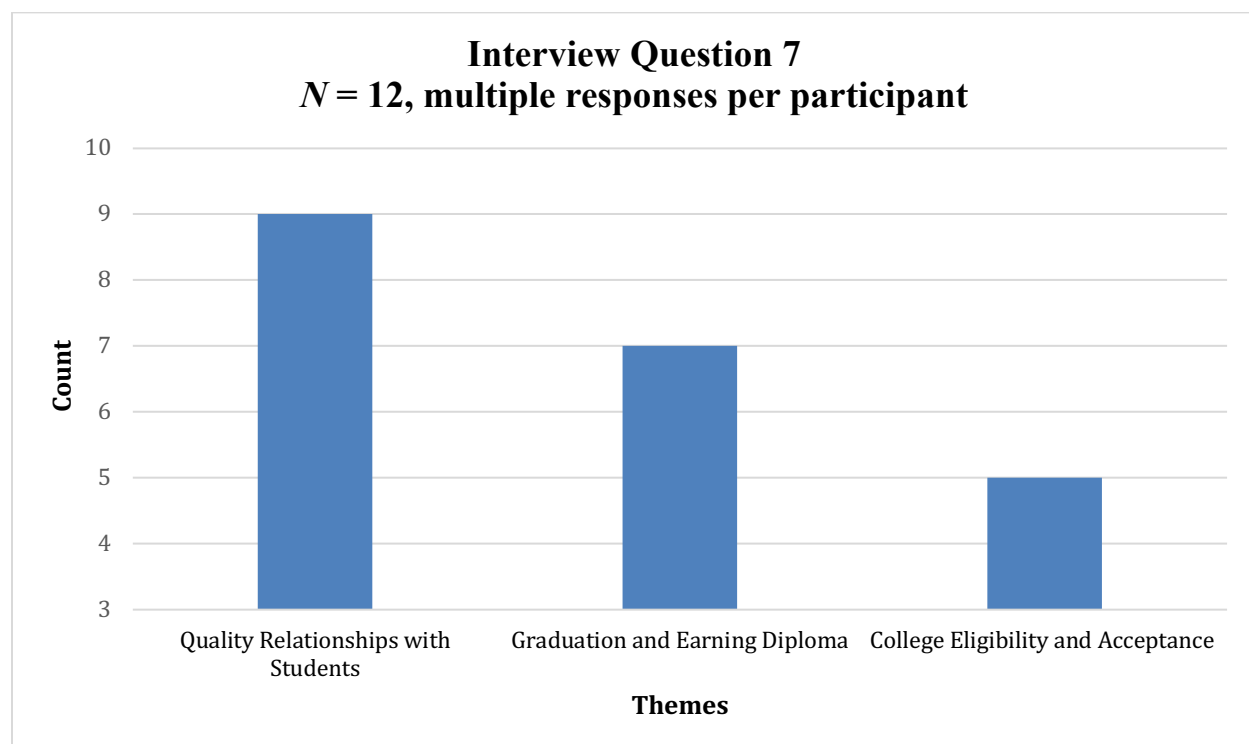
Quality Relationships with Students and Families. The most frequent theme identified by nine of the 12 (75%) school counselors was quality relationships with students and families. SC 7 saw success in the relationships developed, with former students reaching out for letters of recommendation and the relationship developed with students' families. SC 6 also cited success as "the relationships I developed with students and hearing the narratives from families." Success for SC 8 was also identified as the relationships and ability to support students strategically by getting to know them. Having students return from college and visit to report progress was another indicator of quality relationships identified by SC 5 and 9.

Graduation and Earning Diploma. The second theme from IQ7 was students graduating and earning diplomas, with seven of the 12 participants identifying this theme (58%). SCs identified utilizing district data platforms to measure graduation rates.

College Eligibility and Acceptance. The final theme identified by five participants (42%) for IQ7 was college eligibility and acceptance. SC 2 described a spreadsheet that they created to track students completing "a–g" courses to become eligible for California colleges and to track college acceptance among their students. SC 10 utilized a similar tool and tracked student trends utilizing a national database to track where students landed and persistence rates. SC 4 and SC 9 tracked acceptance and monitored student completion rates of the FAFSA.

Summary of RQ3. The third research question aimed to understand better how school counselors defined, measured, and tracked their success in preparing Latino male students to be college ready. Participants emphasized quality relationships with students and families as indicative of their success with students. Additionally, the second most frequent theme was equally students graduating and earning their diplomas and providing a support system for students. The last theme identified that indicated success with Latino male college readiness was measuring college eligibility and acceptance to college upon high school graduation.

Research Question 4

RQ4 asked, "What recommendations would academic counselors make for increasing Latino male college readiness?" To best answer RQ4, participants were asked three questions, with the first question divided into two parts. The three interview questions were:

- IQ8: If you could go back in time, what is the one thing you would change to make you more successful as a counselor?

- IQ9: What guidance would you provide to other counselors who are facing challenges with increasing Latino male college readiness?

- IQ10: Is there anything else you would like to add?

Interview Question 8. IQ8 asked, **"If you could go back in time, what is the one thing you would change to make you more successful as a counselor?"** Based upon participants' response, the following themes emerged, in order of frequency: (a) professional growth and learning, (b) creating systems of support, and (c) committing more time for student meetings. Figure 8 displays a frequency bar chart with the number of responses per theme by multiple participants.

Figure 8

IQ8 Frequency Bar Chart
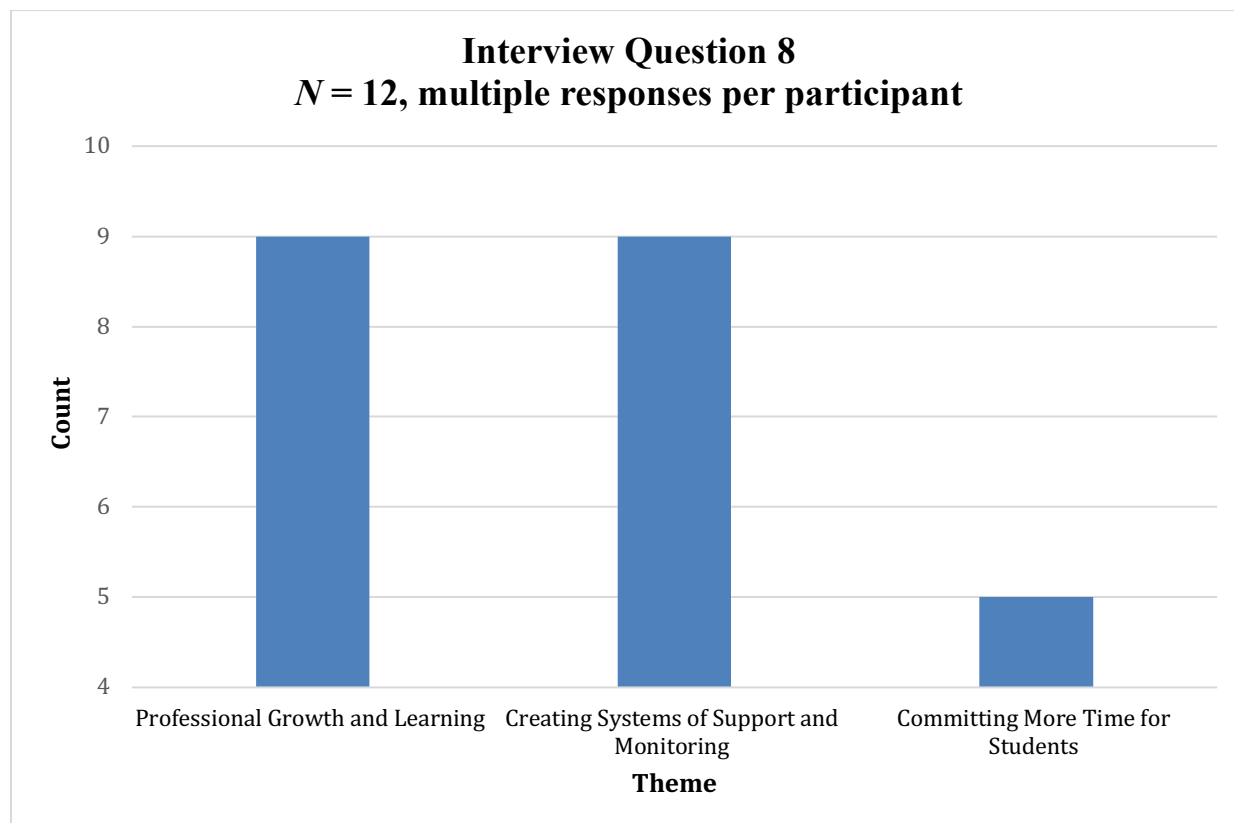
Professional Growth and Learning. Eight participants (75%) cited increased learning and opportunities for professional growth as the change they would likely make to increase their effectiveness as a school counselor. SC 1 stated that they "need and want to continue learning about more strategies to support all of our students, especially our Black and Brown students." SC 10 also identified increased training and advocating by "pushing for more training on different topics helpful to my career." Professional learning and growth also included collaboration. SC 7 stated that it was necessary to "work with middle level school counselors to do early identification" and using that information to implement "interventions early in ninth grade." SC 8 served as a lead counselor, working with their peers on "using more data and trying more research-based practices" and realizing that professional growth is "the way you challenge yourself that is going to influence directly, you know, hundreds of students."

Creating Systems of Support and Monitoring. A change 75% of participants would make was to create systems for student support and monitoring. SC 7 stated having systems to "do early identification from the middle school level" and using that information to conduct "interventions early in ninth grade" would help students to be successful. SC 9 would implement surveys and data tracking systems to monitor student progress better. This counselor also described that data monitoring systems would provide substantial evidence to secure funding for successful initiatives.

Committing More Time for Collaboration. The last theme identified in IQ8 was a desire to commit more time for collaboration. Five participants (42%) identified this theme. SC 1 wished for "more time with other counselors to map out how to specifically help black and brown students." SC 10 stated that "ongoing training" with colleagues annually and taking more time to collaborate and "spend more time with students" would help them better understand how

to serve Latino students.

Interview Question 9. IQ9 asked, "What guidance would you provide to other counselors who are facing challenges with increasing Latino male college readiness?", participants shared responses in which the following themes emerged: (a) connecting with students and building relationships, (b) meeting more frequently with students, (c) strategic and intentional student supports, (d) open to learning, and (e) taking care of self. Figure 9 shows the frequency bar chart with the themes correlating with the number of participants per response.

Figure 9

IQ9 Frequency Bar Chart

Interview Question 9
N = 12, multiple responses per participant
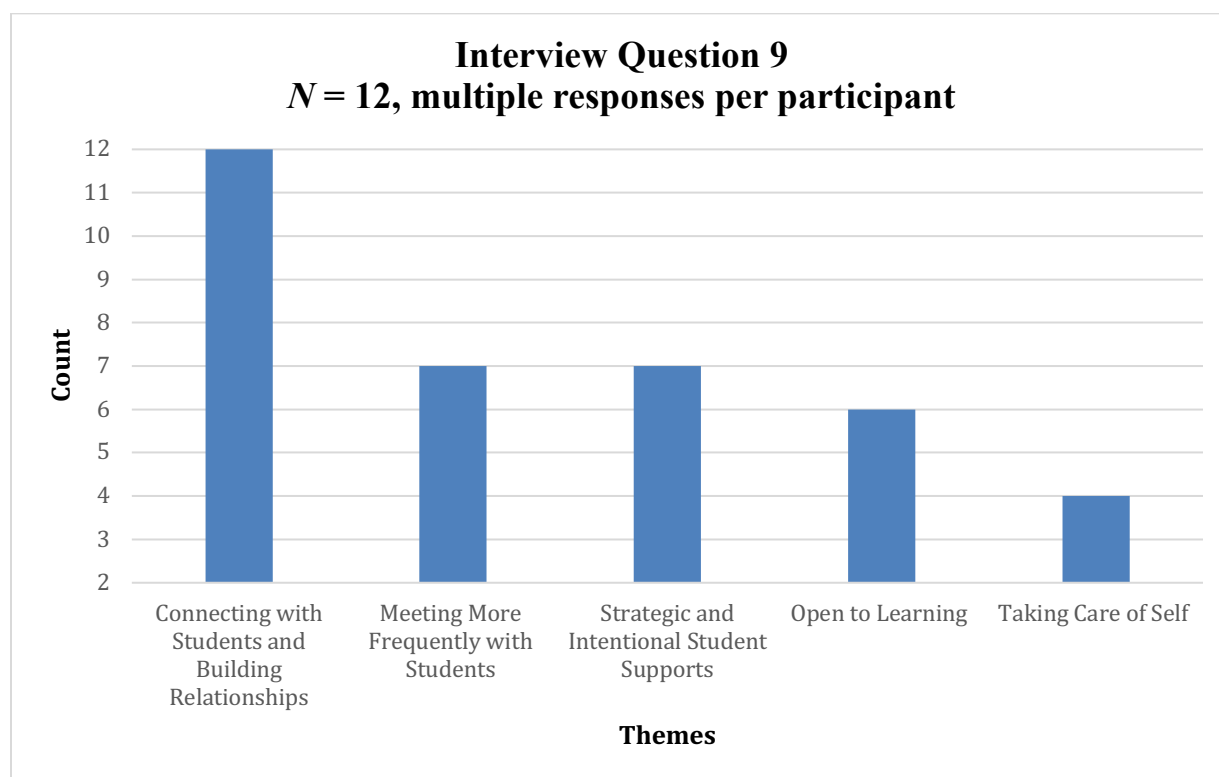
Connecting with Students and Building Relationships. The most frequent theme that surfaced for IQ9 was the importance of connecting with students and building relationships. 100% of participants believed building trusting relationships and connecting with students were

key to Latino male students being successful. SC 10 urged counselors to "go out there and connect with Latino male students" so that they see "you as a resource and a support." SC 2 said for other counselors, "always to let them know that they could do it" and to stay "positive" and "uplifting" while "always having a plan for them." SC 8 recommended that counselors "try to build genuine relationships and connections with Latino students" and "gotta break down those walls." SC 8 stated that "through the relationship building process," one can work on areas of "social-emotional intelligence" with Latino male students.

Meeting More Frequently with Students. Another recommendation identified by seven (58%) of participants was to meet more frequently with students. SC 4 advised "meeting with students individually and developing relationships and trust." SC 7 recommended that counselors reflect on how they reach out to students, leave their office, and go into classrooms more frequently.

Strategic and Intentional Student Supports. The third theme recognized by seven (58%) of the school counselors interviewed was the need for strategic and intentional student support. SC 5 suggested that counselors "encourage students early to get on 'a-g' track" and share supports available on campus. SC 9 observed that counselors must prioritize targeted groups and warned against being a "typical counselor doling out institutional, academic talk." SC 2 targeted students by creating a schedule of meetings in which they would share support, both academic and social-emotional.

Open to Learning. Open to learning was a theme cited by half (50%) of the participants. Counselors must remain open to learning in addressing the challenges of increasing Latino male college readiness. SC 6 stressed that counselors not "shy away from learning" and to build knowledge that would benefit students. SC 1 stated that counselors must "understand the

barriers" encountered by Latino males to inform their practice better. SC 10 suggested that counselors "get to know school programs" and learn about community resources that could benefit Latino male students preparing for college.

  Taking Care of Self. Self-care was the last theme identified in IQ9. Four of the twelve participants (33%) identified this theme. SC 2 described the shifting responsibilities of a counselor and stressed the importance of taking care of oneself. SC 3 and SC 8 both cited the need to "balance" work and other life priorities. Given the challenges presented in their profession, SC 7 advised counselors to "validate that it is difficult", and to "give yourself grace."

  Interview Question 10. IQ10 asked, **"**Is there anything else you would like to add?" This was open-ended and allowed participants to share any final thoughts or contribute any information not discussed in the structured questions. Through this question, the following themes emerged: (a) enhancing learning and innovative practices, (b) going above and beyond, and (c) underestimating Latino male students. Figure 10 shows the frequency bar chart with the number of themes and responses per participant.

Figure 10

IQ10 Frequency Bar Chart
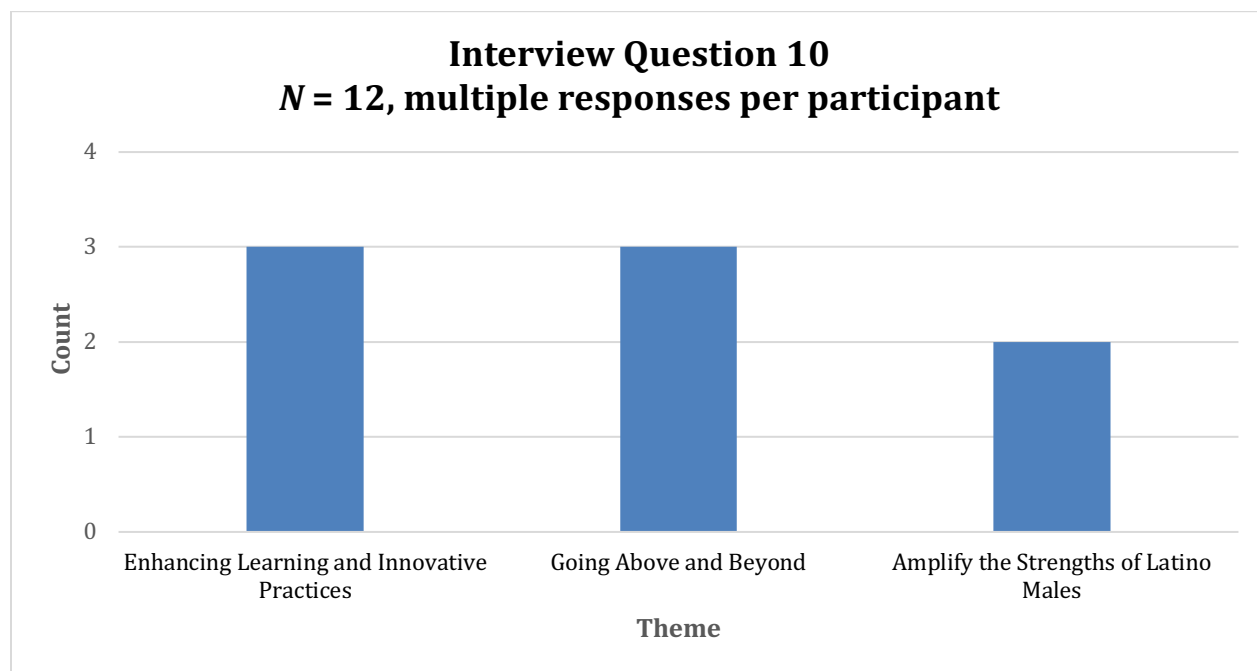
Enhancing Learning and Innovative Practices. 25%, or three participants, added the importance of learning and innovative practices. SC 7 used their experience in charter schools to help initiate actions to focus on better supporting college-going rates among marginalized student groups, including Latino males. SC 3 advocated for increased professional development for counselors to learn about research-based practices.

Going Above and Beyond. Making the extra effort to build relationships with Latino male students was a common theme identified for IQ10 by three participants (25%). SC 9 described the lengths of connecting with students, from catching students between classes to going out to the baseball practice field to ensure a student got all the college application deadlines. SC 6 took time out of school holidays to write students letters of recommendation or to assist former students with college financial aid or course selection after they completed high school. SC 10 shared similar experiences of assisting students after high school and

communicated to students that "I will always be your counselor."

Amplify Strengths of Latino males. Two participants stressed the importance of amplifying the strengths of Latino male students. SC 6 found that many of his Latino male students possessed a broader knowledge base and were more attuned to preparing for college through siblings and peers. SC 10 stated that educators "simply do not give Latino male students enough credit" for their ability to persist amidst competing obligations to family and their aspirations to attend college.

Summary of RQ4. The final research question of this study solicited recommendations that participants made to colleagues as it pertained to increasing Latino male college readiness. A total of 11 themes were found that summarized the answers for RQ4. The themes were (a) professional growth and learning, (b) creating systems of support, (c) committing more time for student meetings, (d) connecting with students and building relationships, (e) meeting more frequently with students, (f) strategic and intentional student supports, (g) open to learning, (h) taking care of self (i) enhancing learning and innovative practices, (j) going above and beyond, and (k) underestimating Latino male students.

Chapter Summary

This phenomenological study aimed to identify best practices school counselors incorporated to overcome challenges in supporting college readiness among Latino male students. Data collected from the responses of 12 school counselors to the 10 semi-structured interview questions produced 41 overarching themes, shown in Table 5. The themes were validated through an interrater review process, with specific themes appearing more frequently across the interview questions. The following chapter provided an in-depth examination and discussion of these themes as well as conclusions, implications, recommendations for future

study, final thoughts, and conclusions of this study. Table 5 shows the research questions and

their corresponding interview questions and themes.

Table 5

Research Questions with Corresponding Interview Questions and Themes

RQ1: What are challenges encountered by academic counselors when striving to increase Latino male college readiness and success?	RQ2: What strategies and best practices do academic counselors utilize to increase Latino male college readiness and success?	RQ3: How do academic counselors define, track, and measure success?	RQ4: What recommendations would academic counselors make for increasing Latino male college readiness?
IQ1	IQ2	IQ7	IQ8
Family Responsibilities and Personal Challenges	Building Supportive and Caring Environments	Quality Relationships with Students and Families	Professional Growth and Learning
Navigational Capital	Fostering College-Going Culture	Graduation and Earning Diploma	Creating Systems of Support and Monitoring
Sociocultural Influences	Making Themselves Available	College Eligibility and Acceptance	Committing More Time for Collaboration
Inadequate Time	Utilizing Culturally Responsive Practices		
Student-Counselor Ratios			
Developing Trusting Relationships			
IQ3	IQ4		IQ9
Student-Counselor Ratios	Targeted, Intentional Planning and Support		Connecting with Students and Building Relationships
Not Enough Time	Engaging All Educational Partners		Meeting More Frequently with Students
Lack of Understanding Role of Counselor	Having Clear Goals and Direction with Counseling Program		Strategic and Intentional Student Supports
Non-counseling Responsibilities	Decreased Student-Counselor Ratios		Open to Learning

RQ1: What are challenges encountered by academic counselors when striving to increase Latino male college readiness and success?	RQ2: What strategies and best practices do academic counselors utilize to increase Latino male college readiness and success?	RQ3: How do academic counselors define, track, and measure success?	RQ4: What recommendations would academic counselors make for increasing Latino male college readiness?
Unfamiliarity with Latino Culture			Taking Care of Self
IQ5	IQ6		IQ10
Stereotypes and Biases	Culturally Responsive Targeted Support and Mentoring		Enhancing learning and incorporating innovative practices
Familial Responsibilities	Building Knowledge and Skills Through Frequent Interactions		Go Above and Beyond
Unsupportive School Environment	College-Readiness Opportunities for Latino Males		Awareness of Influences on Latino Male Students
Lack of Long-Term Prioritization of Education			Building Up Strengths of Latino Male Students

Chapter 5: Findings

The Latino population in the U.S. continues to grow and, in some states, now compromises the majority of citizens (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022; U.S. Census Bureau, 2023). Latinos now also account for the largest minority population group in U.S. public schools (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2022), and it is expected to grow to 30% of the total population by 2050 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2023). However, there continues to be a discrepancy between the growth rate of Latinos in the U.S. and the rate of Latinos earning higher education degrees (Becerra, 2012; Duncheon, 2018; Manzano-Sanchez et al., 2018). This gap has alarming implications on opportunities for upward mobility, but also larger implications on the economy of the U.S. (Murphy & Murphy, 2018) and the Latino community (Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009). L. M. Gonzalez et al. (2013) state that educational advancement has the potential to provide the economic and social upward mobility that Latinos, both immigrants and U.S-born, seek. Scholars point to the urgency for school systems to address the needs and support Latino students and families (Arredondo et al., 2014; Smith-Adcock et al., 2006). Sibley and Brabeck (2017) note that educators must also learn and prioritize how Latino students learn in classrooms. There is also an emerging need to examine the discrepancies that exist among Latino males and college degree attainment (Saenz & Ponjuan, 2011).

Summary of the Study

The purpose of this study, the researcher sought to identify the best practices that school counselors utilized to overcome the challenges Latino male students face that limit their ability to be college ready upon high school graduation. Four research questions and ten open-ended, semi-structured interview questions were developed through an examination of current research in the literature review. For this study, a phenomenological qualitative approach was utilized.

Purposive sampling was used to develop a master list of participants from the High Tech High CARPE college access network, a collective body of Southern California high schools aimed at increasing college-going rates for low-income, Black, and Latinx students. The researcher developed the master list by obtaining the participating schools on the High Tech High CARPE webpage. The research used an internet search of the school webpages and was able to locate counselors' email addresses. A total list of 163 potential participants was generated and participants were contacted using a Pepperdine University IRB-approved recruitment script that outlined the study and the criteria for inclusion. The initial email sent yielded 16 responses, which would have met the goal of 15 participants. Unfortunately, four candidates were unresponsive, and two candidates communicated that they were unable to participate. The researcher sent a follow-up email that yielded two additional participants for a total of 12 participants. Each participant was sent an informed consent form and a link to schedule a time convenient to them to conduct the interview. The researcher was flexible given the professional and personal commitments of participants.

Semi-structured interviews were utilized for data collection for this study. The researcher interviewed 12 participants using 10 open-ended questions designed to elicit the best practices utilized by counselors in increasing Latino male college readiness. To ensure validity of the study, a three-step process including prima-facie, peer review validity, and expert review validity was utilized. Initial interview questions were reviewed by doctoral students at Pepperdine University with modifications accepted by the researcher. Finally, the process involved the researcher's dissertation committee chair and co-chairs reviewing and revising to obtain data more accurately for this study.

To ensure security and confidentiality, the interviews were conducted utilizing the researcher's Pepperdine Zoom account with only the audio recorded utilizing OtterAI. The platform created a transcription utilizing the recorded audio from the interview. To ensure accuracy of the interview, the researcher listened to the recording and revised the transcript so that information was accurate. Three participants took part in the interviews, and the initial data was categorized into buckets based on significant concepts and words. To review the initial three interviews, the researcher enlisted the help of three Pepperdine colleagues with prior experience in qualitative research. Each peer was given access to the working codebook and deidentified transcripts for independent review. Each peer offered suggestions, and the researcher accepted the suggestions. The researcher conducted the remaining 10 interviews and identified common themes and key words. The researcher created bar graphs for each interview question to reflect the frequency of themes addressed by participants.

Discussion of Findings

For this study, the researcher sought to identify the best practices that school counselors utilized to overcome the challenges Latino male students face that limit their ability to be college ready upon high school graduation. The qualitative data collected and analyzed for this study yielded 41 themes. The four research questions that guided this qualitative phenomenological study were:

- RQ1: What are challenges encountered by academic counselors when striving to increase Latino male college readiness and success?

- RQ2: What strategies and best practices do academic counselors utilize to increase Latino male college readiness and success?

- RQ3: How do academic counselors define, track, and measure success as it relates to

Latino male college readiness?

- RQ4: What recommendations would academic counselors make for increasing Latino

    male college readiness?

Results for RQ1

The first research question asked, "What are challenges encountered by academic

counselors when striving to increase Latino male college readiness and success?" IQ1 and IQ2

were opportunities for the researcher to build rapport with each participant and asked them to

reflect on a specific Latino male they counseled. They were asked to describe the challenges

faced by the student as well as challenges they encountered. IQ3 transitioned the participant to

describe, in general, the obstacles encountered by school counselors that inhibit Latino male

student college readiness. These interview questions resulted in 15 themes.

The researcher consolidated the codes into the following larger themes: Student External

Commitments and Challenges, Sociocultural Influences, Time, Misperceptions of the Role of

Counselors, Student-Counselor Ratios, and Unsupportive School Environments. Student

External Commitments and Challenges was developed through common themes identified in IQ1

and IQ5. Sociocultural Influences included themes identified in IQ1 and IQ5. Time was a

common theme identified in IQ1 and IQ3. Misperceptions of the Role of Counselors included

themes of Misunderstanding the Role of the Counselor as well as Non-counseling

Responsibilities identified in IQ3. Student-Counselor Ratios was repeated in IQ1 and IQ3.

Finally, Unsupportive School Environments included themes identified in IQ3 and IQ5.

Discussion of RQ1

Data collected and analyzed for RQ1 revealed challenges school counselors faced that

included competing commitments and challenges that students experienced that were barriers to

college readiness, sociocultural factors, limited time to serve vast numbers of students, a misunderstanding of the role of counselors by administration, and unsupportive school environments for Latino male students.

Preparing for college is often secondary to the immediate pressures of familial responsibilities that Latino males encounter (Becerra, 2012; Cerna et al., 2009; Manzano-Sanchez et al., 2019). Almost all the school counselors interviewed recounted stories of counseling Latino males and their families to understand the long-term value going to college has and the potential to support themselves and their families to a greater extent. Unfortunately, for many Latino males, taking care of siblings or providing financial support to their families often supersedes aspirations of applying, attending, and completing college, reinforcing the concept of *familismo* (Tello & Lonn, 2017). Even for families that commit to the short-term sacrifice, participants noted that the stress students carried after graduation and the commitment to family often resulted in students returning or leaving school. Carey (2018) discusses the additional pressure these students face in securing a financially stable job upon college graduation as a means of contributing financially.

The lack of navigational capital possessed by students and families was another significant barrier for Latino males identified by participants. For many of these families, schools are the primary resource when receiving assistance or knowledge about the college-going process (Martinez & Welton, 2014). According to participants, funding a college education was the most significant challenge throughout the college-going process, with many families receiving misinformation or needing to fully understand the details of financial aid packets. This finding was consistent with current literature, which finds that this is the most significant barrier to Latino males pursuing, continuing, and completing their college degree program (Anderson &

Larson, 2009; Carey, 2018; Huerta et al., 2018). Additionally, participant responses indicated that for many students, a lack of navigational capital was also exacerbated by limited school resources such as personnel or opportunities, consistent with Hines (2019), who found that inequitable schooling impacted access to connections.

Sociocultural factors were another challenge school counselors faced in preparing Latino male students for college readiness. This included community influences, such as gang affiliation, peer groups, and the concept of machismo. While four participants identified gang affiliation or influence, it remains problematic in that all participants mentioned generational or familial association with gangs. These revelations by participants echo previous research that found that for Latino communities, gangs are a normal presence in urban, low-income areas (Huerta, 2015). Conversations with students and families to reverse these influences was not always successful. While these experienced counselors stated that gang presence had minimized more recently, gang presence leads to perceptions of unsafe schools and impacts other students (Toldson, 2019).

Peer relationships and influence also challenged some counselors when preparing Latino male students for college readiness. A lack of role models with college degrees and conversations about higher education were absent for students from low socioeconomic homes and communities. One participant also described how peers who did not have college-going desires often contributed negatively to another student's goals. Clark et al. (2013), Perna and Titus (2005), and Valenzuela (2008) found that peer groups had the potential to support or derail college-going aspirations.

The lack of time counselors possessed to address the needs of Latino male students and families was one of the most significant challenges identified by participants in IQ1 and IQ3.

Balancing time with various tasks and responsibilities (i.e., attending IEP meetings, providing guidance lessons, supporting students, and clerical tasks, prevented counselors from meeting with students and families). Time constraints contribute to school counselors' inability to provide the needed attention from students, especially for groups historically furthest from higher education (McKillip et al., 2012, Stone-Johnson, 2015). Participants also reported that meeting with first-generation students and their families is time-intensive, often requiring multiple meetings.

Participants shared that their role needs to be clarified with clear expectations and directions. Such findings have been emphasized in previous literature that focuses on school counselor tasks (Rayle & Adams, 2007). They reported that campus administrators and district leadership often needed to understand how multifaceted their jobs were. These are consistent with a study conducted by McKillip et al. (2012), which found that administrators interviewed could not provide a consistent clear description of the role of counselors.

As a result of this, counselors were often tasked with duties outside of counseling such as assisting administrators with standardized testing, developing master schedules, enrolling students, or taking on the role of disciplinarian. Such tasks are outside of the direct student service areas of instruction, appraisal and achievement, and counseling that are outlined and recommended by the ASCA Framework (2019). While these tasks may be operationally essential, participants noted that opportunities to work with students and families are sacrificed. Previous research by Tuttle and Haskins (2017) highlight the essential nature of these meetings as critical for students and families of color.

All participants reported large student-counselor ratios as another challenge in supporting Latino male students. Given the various tasks in addition to serving large numbers of students,

many counselors often felt overwhelmed. Large caseloads contribute to counselors' inability to meet the needs of a diverse student body (Martinez & Welton, 2014; Stone-Johnson, 2015) and leave Latino students and families with perceptions of inequitable support (L. D. Hill, 2012; Vela-Gude et al., 2009).

Participants also identified challenging school environments that were unsupportive of the aspirations and needs of Latino male students. Some participants had only recently become aware of the larger crisis of college matriculation and degree attainment among Latino male students. Participants shared stories of students who reported incidents of bias and stereotypical comments made by adult educators. Saenz and Ponjuan (2009) emphasized the need for school officials to raise awareness surrounding the Latino males' crisis; however, much remains to be desired. Additionally, participants identified a need for more bilingual personnel to interpret meetings and information into families' home language. Having personnel who can communicate in families' home languages helped to forge positive relationships has been identified as a strategy to increase engagement, according to Clark et al. (2013) and Martinez et al. (2020).

RQ1 yielded six broader themes: student external commitments and challenges, sociocultural influences, time, misperceptions of the role of counselors, student-counselor ratios, and unsupportive school environments. Given their expertise and knowledge, participants shared that limited time to meet with students was impacted by non-counseling duties, a lack of understanding of the role, and large student caseloads. Participants also shared that structures and environments inside and external to school contribute to marginalizing Latino male aspirations to prepare for college and continue their studies successfully.

Results for RQ2

RQ2 asked, "What strategies and best practices do academic counselors utilize to increase Latino male college readiness and success?" Through analysis of data collected, 11 themes were identified. Upon further analysis, the researcher condensed these 11 themes into three key themes: Supportive and Caring Environments, Fostering a College-Going Culture, and Targeted, Proactive Support.

Discussion of RQ2

Participants believed that Latino males experienced success when they were part of supportive, caring environments. Strategies identified included building relationships and connections with Latino male students, engaging stakeholders, and through mentoring. School counselors interviewed got to know their students by connecting with them and getting to know them as individuals. They used opportunities as lunch time or school extracurricular events to connect and demonstrate their support to their students. Such opportunities counter negative perceptions of accessibility, as noted by Vela et al (2016). Additionally, these personal connections and building rapport were identified by students as being essential to their success (Reichert, 2016). This helped counselors establish rapport and trust with Latino male students. Ochoa (2009) states that this action is critical given the historic mistrust that Latino families and students have had with schools. Participant responses around building authentic, trusting relationships are consistent with previous literature from (Perez-Felkner, 2015) and Tuttle and Haskins, (2017), who found that students who have developed trusting relationships with counselors develop a sense of worth.

Counselors help to foster supportive and caring environments by engaging other educators and leveraging community organizations (Smith-Adcock et al., 2006). Participants

shared that they sought opportunities to build connections with teachers to provide space to share counseling lessons and enlisted school personnel to encourage and support students. Actions of involving different partners at all levels of the school were found to be effective in supporting students, according to Hines et al. (2019). Participants also coordinated nonprofit organizations and professionals to support students and families as part of career counseling, understanding the implications of immigration status and higher education, or soliciting help when guiding families through the financial aid process.

Participants identified the importance of developing a college-going culture with shared responsibility among students, families, and school personnel. Having a clear direction with goals aligned to college preparation was necessary for school counselors to identify how to support students best. Shared responsibility included input from families and students on what they needed most. Having a clear direction for a comprehensive counseling program is an integral factor in cultivating a college-going culture (McKillip et al., 2012). School counselors who were interviewed also took responsibility for leading college-going initiatives and sought multiple opportunities to recruit and involve teachers. The building of shared responsibility among a comprehensive group of individuals has been emphasized in earlier work by Carey (2018) and Hines et al. (2019).

Participants also developed a college-going culture by conducting multiple sessions geared toward students and families of first-generation college students who were mostly Latino males. Consistent with current research (Anderson & Larson, 2009; Carey, 2018; Huerta et al., 2018), funding a college education was the most requested topic by students and families. Sessions varied according to timelines centered on deadlines, but counselors also met individually with families. Strengthening and providing support in response to the needs of

families have been shown to positively affect the trajectory of Latino students (Carey, 2018; N. E. Hill & Torres, 2010). Participants also utilized class time to conduct group lessons at each grade level to understand how to become college-ready, including financial aid awareness.

Providing college-readiness opportunities was another way that participants fostered a college-going environment. School counselors encouraged students to enroll in the local community college's Advanced Placement or dual enrollment courses. Supporting students in tackling rigorous courses increases competitiveness for Latino male students when preparing to apply to college (Welton & Martinez, 2014). In addition to college preparatory courses, counselors directed students toward college readiness programs such as Puente and Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) when available. Counselors also coordinated college visits for Latino male students to expose them to the possibility of attending college. Counselors also recruited alumni and hosted panels both at the campuses and on high school campuses to let students interact and see students from the same neighborhood and background. By providing spaces to build positive peer networks and hear from students from similar backgrounds, research has shown that counselors empower (Padilla & Hipolito-Delgado, 2016) and create a sense of belonging among students (Cerna et al., 2009).

The last theme identified in RQ2 was targeted, proactive support. Intentional interventions and plans of action were the most identified code in IQ4. Counselors utilized data to inform meetings with students, where resources would be shared with students as counselors sought to understand their needs better. Determining student needs from students themselves echoed findings from studies conducted by Anderson and Larsen (2009) and Watson et al. (2016), where students felt valued and were more motivated when they developed trust with school counselors. This level of emotional support gives students of color a healthier sense of

self and higher aspirations (Harper, 2015). Participants also sought to identify students early and intervene in ninth grade to ensure students remained on track to complete 'a-g' courses and graduate college ready.

Results for RQ3

RQ3 asked, "How do academic counselors define, track, and measure success as it relates to Latino male college readiness?" Participant responses yielded three themes out of RQ3.

Discussion of RQ3

Quality relationships with students and families was the most cited metric that participants mentioned when defining, tracking, and measuring success with Latino male college enrollment. Participants continued to support students after high school graduation by providing letters of recommendations for graduate school or when students applied to jobs. Some participants continued assisting former students with college scholarships, financial aid applications, or selecting courses. Parents and family members of students continued to reach out to participants to share narratives that included accomplishments and challenges or to seek advice. While traditional thinking would connect success with quantitative measures, responses from counselors demonstrate the diverse perspective needed to examine the status quo of what success means as mentioned in previous scholarly literature (Howard et al., 2019).

These findings emphasize the important resource that schools and their agents, in this case school counselors, represent to many Latino families. While no formal structure of maintaining supportive relationships exists in many of the participants' schools, many expressed a desire for continued contact after high school graduation. Taking time to understand students and their families strengthened relationships, which are critical to school-family relationships among Latino families (Carey, 2018). Two participants with experience in charter schools stated

that alumni coordinators communicated and supported students as they transitioned into their respective college or university.

SC 7 saw success in the relationships developed, with former students reaching out for letters of recommendation and the relationship developed with students' families. SC 6 also cited success as "the relationships I developed with students and hearing the narratives from families." Success for SC 8 was also identified as the relationships and ability to support students strategically by getting to know them. Having students return from college and visit to report progress was another indicator of quality relationships identified by SC 5 and 9. The continuation of support and reliance families have on the counselors aligns with findings from Paolini (2015), which speak to the support needed by families.

The second theme from IQ7 was students graduating and earning diplomas. Participants identified success with Latino male college readiness in examining percentages of students graduating within four years and graduating 'a-g' ready. By completing 'a-g' course requirements, students could apply to the University of California and California State University schools. Counselors mentioned tracking these measures through centralized district data platforms, state data websites, and personally developed spreadsheets of their respective student cohorts. Five participants (38%) mentioned tracking student status in postsecondary institutions of higher education through the National Clearinghouse Data Platform.

The final theme identified for IQ7 was college eligibility and acceptance. In addition to completion of 'a-g' courses, counselors measured college readiness by students completing AP or International Baccalaureate (IB) courses, completing College and Career Pathways, and college credits earned through examination or completion of dual enrollment courses. Counselors also tracked the number of students applying and getting accepted into post-secondary

institutions of higher education. Counselors also tracked FAFSA completion rates and requested that students share financial aid award letters to celebrate and help students and families determine the best match for students and families. These actions cultivated students' aspirational capital while reinforcing their dreams of attending college (Holland, 2015).

Results for RQ4

RQ4 asked, "What recommendations would academic counselors make for increasing Latino male college readiness?" Based on the three interview questions for RQ4, 12 themes were identified. The researcher narrowed these themes into four critical concepts for RQ4. The first professional learning and growth theme included committing more time for collaboration, being open to learning, and incorporating innovative practices. The second theme was connecting with Latino male students and included themes identified in IQ9 and IQ10. Developing intentional support systems was another critical theme designed from IQ8 and IQ9. The final theme of self-care emerged out of IQ10.

Discussion of RQ4

Participants frequently identified professional learning and growth opportunities as a recommendation to other counselors when striving to increase Latino male college readiness. This included understanding the barriers Latino male students encountered and understanding a student's home and community culture, strategies that have supported and validated Latino males' identity (N. E. Hill & Torres, 2010). Such actions are also consistent with recommendations suggested by Saenz et al. (2015) for building awareness. One participant urged counseling peers to venture out into the community to learn and identify resources that could be leveraged to support students. Smith-Adcock et al. (2006) speak to the importance of leveraging resources that exist in communities of students.

Collaboration with peers to review data and evaluate identified benchmarks was a recommendation put forth by participants. One participant stressed the importance of intentionally identifying and developing action plans around Latino and Black males. Another participant recommended that counselors seek out opportunities to serve on academic material committees to advocate for increasing culturally relevant material to build confidence among Latino male students. Foxx et al. (2020) suggest that counselors engage in curriculum decisions that better reflect the student bodies they serve. Professionally, participants also urged counselors to become involved in policy decision-making to petition for increased support. This advocacy work exemplifies the social action and sociocultural awareness culturally responsive educators cultivate with students (Padilla & Hipolito-Delgado, 2016).

Incorporating innovative practices was also recommended by participants. This included visiting other schools with successful college-readiness programs. Participants who had public and charter school experience suggested that public schools could incorporate effective strategies that charter schools utilize. These suggestions are supported by Means and Pyne (2017), who found it critical to have professional development opportunities for faculty to understand Latino students' challenges better.

Participants believed that making connections and building relationships with Latino male students was pivotal in both reaching students and students being successfully prepared for college. Participants recommended that counselors be authentic and genuine in their interactions to remove barriers. By connecting with Latino males, one participant found that they could comfortably challenge perceptions of machismo and develop help-seeking behaviors while working with students on emotional intelligence. Creating a safe space and building trust enables Latino males to experience success (Saenz, Drake et al., 2018). Another recommendation that

surfaced from participants was the responsibility of school counselors to advocate and recognize Latino male students' strengths, such as the ability to work, provide fiscally, or care for younger siblings, something often overlooked or minimized by school personnel. Perez and Taylor (2015) note the importance of recognizing the various strengths that Latino males possess.

To best support Latino male college readiness, B. Sanchez et al. (2008) suggest starting as early as ninth grade, integrating first-year programs designed to help students transition from middle school while also beginning to explore postsecondary plans and options. Participants echoed the importance of intervening early to ensure students were academically successful and had a supportive experience through their high school years. Participants were strategic about how and when to provide students with lessons and guidance on the college-going process. Counselors also identified Latino male eighth-grade students as candidates for college preparation programs such as AVID and Puente. Counselors advocated for these programs that provided the support needed and collaborated with families and middle school counselors to recruit students. Bryan et al. (2011) underline the positive impact of these early interventions and actions on Latino students' academic success. Participants also expressed that collaborative opportunities with colleagues needed to occur frequently, identify specific student groups, and tailor supports based on the needs identified. This was a theme revealed during IQ10 as the interviews concluded.

The final recommendation participants identified was the concept of self-care. More senior participants recommended that recent counselors be patient and care for themselves. They also described their increasing responsibilities with providing lessons centered on social-emotional learning, career counseling, and college counseling to students, parents, and even colleagues. This finding was consistent with earlier mention of school counselors increasing their

role as school-based mental health providers (CASC, 2019).

Implications of the Study

This study aimed to identify best practices and strategies that school counselors utilize to overcome the challenges Latino male students face in their path toward college readiness and continuing their education after high school. Thus, this study could be used by counselors, teachers, classified staff, and administrators in the K-12 setting to understand better how to identify and overcome barriers Latino students and their families face while engaging in culturally responsive and relevant practices from a strengths-based approach. In addition to educators, the results of this study can also benefit parent groups and committees responsible for decision-making concerning school budgets and the allocation of resources. This study also can benefit nonprofit and community organizations that work with Latino males in developing a better understanding of how to empower and build the capital these young men possess. Finally, this research could be used by employers and personnel at the collegiate level as a resource to understand how to improve systems of support and culturally relevant practices.

Application

This study aimed to identify best practices employed by school counselors to overcome challenges that Latino males face preventing them from successfully preparing for college. One of the recommendations identified through this study was

- a desire for increased awareness of the challenges Latino students, especially males, encounter in schools that prevent success, and

- a need for continued professional learning.

The researcher intended to utilize the results of this study by developing professional learning opportunities that facilitate an understanding of the challenges Latino students face, the

historical and structural factors that have helped those challenges, and examining current data to develop a foundation for future learning. The next module will examine theoretical frameworks and challenge participants to reflect on biases and current perceptions around the Latino male population. The following module or phase will explore the various capital Latino males possess, and participants will utilize protocols to identify actions and systems that can cultivate and add to the capital students and families carry. The final training will culminate with participants developing an action plan and establishing a clear direction to strategically engage, monitor, build knowledge, and empower Latino students and their families. A graphic depiction of the training is provided in Figure 11.

Figure 11

Professional Learning Series for Counselors Model

Module 1: Understanding Latinos and U.S. Education

The first module of this professional learning series aims to accomplish the following outcomes:

- facilitate an understanding of the current landscape of Latinos, including demographic trends, educational trends, and employment trends.

- understand the historical and structural factors that have contributed to the current reality of Latino students in the U.S.

- understanding the various factors to consider when working with this population, including countries of origin, generational status, immigration and citizenship, gender roles and expectations, values, and linguistic patterns.

- engage in activities designed to help identify prior knowledge, add new knowledge, reflect on how these factors influence educational expectations and performance, and

- to share these reflections and observations with peers.

As part of ongoing work, participants will be assigned to identify current patterns of Latino males within their respective schools or organizations. Participants will also identify new learning they will utilize to influence their work and how it can be applied to their setting.

Module 2: Identifying Assets & Operating from Strengths-Oriented

This next module is intended for participants to accomplish the following objectives:

- understand how theoretical frameworks and perspectives will guide learning.

- engage in protocols to identify current thinking around Latino male student achievement and deconstruct perceptions about this student group.

- examine current actions and institutional structures that support or prevent Latino student engagement and achievement.

Module 3: Identity and Building Capital Through Counseling

The following module explores the various capital that Latino males possess, and participants will utilize protocols to identify actions and systems that can cultivate and add to the capital students and families carry. Participants in this module will be able to:

- understanding Yosso's (2005) CCW and the types of capital.

- identify examples of the various forms of capital present with current students' families and the structures and practices that cultivate and recognize these forms of capital.

- Determine the following steps to address improvement areas related to expanding social, navigational, and aspirational capital.

- Conduct root cause analysis on organizations' challenges concerning Latino males and their families.

As part of homework and preparation for the following module, participants identified the current action plan and brought this to the next session. Participants will also identify one form of capital they influence and how to enhance current practice and application with Latino students and families.

Module 4: Developing a Plan of Action

The final training will culminate with participants developing an action plan and establishing a clear direction to strategically engage, monitor, build knowledge, and empower Latino students and their families. Participants will

- identify the current plan of action (i.e., goals, metrics, actions or strategies, timeline for monitoring performance, theory of action) related to improving outcomes for Latino males and their families.

- modify the current plan of action or develop a plan of action that incorporates new learning and theoretical frameworks to improve outcomes for Latino males and their families.

- identify opportunities to integrate new learning that will influence institutional knowledge and structures.

This training will utilize a strengths-based perspective toward understanding Latino male students. Given the complexity and various topics presented, these professional learning modules are intended to build upon each other. This training format could be modified as a one-day workshop, multi-day workshop, or a two-or three-year process, based upon the needs or timeframe available of the intended audience.

Study Conclusion

While this study sought to contribute to the growing literature surrounding Latino male college readiness and degree attainment, this study emerged out of an identified need to improve life outcomes for students and families who aspire to attain the promises this country has afforded so many generations before. This study also sought to identify the best practices and challenges Latino males face, both within and out of school, that contribute to the current crisis Saenz and Ponjuan (2009) have identified. The researcher reflected on personal biases and utilized brackets to reduce bias during this study. Best practices and strategies counselors utilize to increase Latino male college readiness include creating supportive and caring environments. The findings presented in this study reinforce the importance of establishing environments where Latino males and their families feel valued and supported regardless of socioeconomic status, immigration status, or educational level attained. Latino students have higher rates of going to college when counselors help foster college-going cultures. This includes opportunities for

students to strengthen academic skills while also bringing in alumni and students who have similar stories and succeeded. Targeted, proactive support starts early in a student's high school career. Counselors need to find ways of collaborating with middle school counselors to prepare and adequately provide academic, socioemotional, and navigational support for Latino students to improve opportunities and outcomes for Latino male students after high school.

Recommendations for Future Research

More scholarly literature regarding Latino males is necessary (Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009, 2011). There is also a need for more qualitative analyses when examining outcomes for Latino males (Cervantes et al., 2022). Recommendations for future research include

- A study that explores best practices about how counselors provide aspirational capital to Latina/o students.

- A study evaluating the impact of two-year versus four-year college-preparation programs for Latino male students during high school.

- A study that examines how Latino families perceive asset accumulation and investment in college education.

- A study that examines school counselors' best practices in setting long-term and short-term college and career goals.

- A study that examines best practices of culturally sustaining counseling programs.

Final Thoughts

My experience as a first-generation college graduate and educator resembled what I found throughout research, especially during the interviews and stories counselors told of Latino male students they counseled. While the path was not smooth, and there were lessons learned, I was fortunate for the capital provided by family, peers, trusted adults, and mentors, and the

systems that I continue to learn to navigate. Over the last 20 years, tuition and fees for in-state universities have increased by 175% (Kerr & Wood, 2022), leading some to wonder if the investment is worth the financial risk as more students and families rely on student loans. Given the challenges and aftermath of the pandemic, college aspirations are especially difficult for students of color. Now more than ever, it is critical that we ensure adequate funding to ensure opportunities are available to students with the skills and will to better themselves, their families, and future generations. Doing so will require a mindset shift among adults and the courage to venture into innovative practices to better respond to our student's needs to ensure a healthier, secure future. As this study suggests, we all can mentor, advocate, and support effective practices that support Latino males and all students who desire the support and opportunity to thrive.

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APPENDIX A

CITI HSR Certificate

Completion Date 11-Sep-2020
Expiration Date 10-Sep-2025
Record ID 38339033

This is to certify that:

Robert Hernandez

Has completed the following CITI Program course:

Not valid for renewal of certification through CME.

GSEP Education Division
(Curriculum Group)
GSEP Education Division - Social-Behavioral-Educational (SBE)
(Course Learner Group)
1 - Basic Course
(Stage)

Under requirements set by:

Pepperdine University

Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative

Verify at www.citiprogram.org/verify/?w00041db4-d634-47a7-800a-a5fce18ed8d8-38339033

APPENDIX B

IRB Approval Notice

NOTICE OF APPROVAL FOR HUMAN RESEARCH

Date: February 21, 2023

Protocol Investigator Name: Robert Hernandez

Protocol #: 22-09-1954

Project Title: Best Practices Utilized by School Counselors in Increasing Latino Male College Readiness

School: Graduate School of Education and Psychology

Dear Robert Hernandez:

Thank you for submitting your application for exempt review to Pepperdine University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). We appreciate the work you have done on your proposal. The IRB has reviewed your submitted IRB application and all ancillary materials. Upon review, the IRB has determined that the above entitled project meets the requirements for exemption under the federal regulations 45 CFR 46.101 that govern the protections of human subjects.

Your research must be conducted according to the proposal that was submitted to the IRB. If changes to the approved protocol occur, a revised protocol must be reviewed and approved by the IRB before implementation. For any proposed changes in your research protocol, please submit an amendment to the IRB. Since your study falls under exemption, there is no requirement for continuing IRB review of your project. Please be aware that changes to your protocol may prevent the research from qualifying for exemption from 45 CFR 46.101 and require submission of a new IRB application or other materials to the IRB.

A goal of the IRB is to prevent negative occurrences during any research study. However, despite the best intent, unforeseen circumstances or events may arise during the research. If an unexpected situation or adverse event happens during your investigation, please notify the IRB as soon as possible. We will ask for a complete written explanation of the event and your written response. Other actions also may be required depending on the nature of the event. Details regarding the timeframe in which adverse events must be reported to the IRB and documenting the adverse event can be found in the *Pepperdine University Protection of Human Participants in Research: Policies and Procedures Manual* at community.pepperdine.edu/irb.

Please refer to the protocol number denoted above in all communication or correspondence related to your application and this approval. Should you have additional questions or require clarification of the contents of this letter, please contact the IRB Office. On behalf of the IRB, I wish you success in this scholarly pursuit.

Sincerely,

Judy Ho, Ph.D., IRB Chair

cc: Mrs. Katy Carr, Assistant Provost for Research

APPENDIX C

Recruitment Script

Dear [Participant name],

My name is Robert Hernandez and I am a doctoral student in the Graduate School of Education and Psychology at Pepperdine University. I am conducting a qualitative research study examining best practices and challenges school counselors face in supporting Latino male college aspirations and academic achievement. I am inviting you to participate in this research study.

If you agree to participate, you will be invited to participate in a Zoom interview with audio being recorded via Otter AI to discuss practices, challenges, and recommendations that school counselors face. This research aims to enhance current research on effective practices that contribute to Latino male students' academic success and college matriculation. The interview is expected to be at most 45 minutes; however, an hour will be blocked out if more information is discussed or you have any questions.

Confidentiality is of utmost importance and your identity will remain confidential during and after the interview. Additional security measures will include password-protected communication, a password-protected Zoom meeting, and all data will be deidentified and stored on a two-factor authentication data cloud storage system.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me via email and I look forward to your response. I appreciate your consideration in participating in this research study.

Thank you,

Robert Hernandez
Pepperdine University
Graduate School of Education and Psychology
Status: Doctoral Student

APPENDIX D

Informed Consent Form

PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY

(Graduate School of Education and Psychology)

INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

https://community.pepperdine.edu/irb/content/socialbehavioraladultparticipantform_nov2021.pdf

APPENDIX E

Peer Reviewer Form

Dear reviewer:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my research study. The table below is designed to
ensure that may research questions for the study are properly addressed with corresponding
interview questions.

In the table below, please review each research question and the corresponding interview
questions. For each interview question, consider how well the interview question addresses the
research question. If the interview question is directly relevant to the research question, please
mark "Keep as stated." If the interview question is irrelevant to the research question, please
mark "Delete it." Finally, if the interview question can be modified to best fit with the research
question, please suggest your modifications in the space provided. You may also recommend
additional interview questions you deem necessary.

Once you have completed your analysis, please return the completed form to me via email to
robert.hernandez@pepperdine.edu. Thank you again for your participation.

Research Questions	Proposed Interview Questions Validity Survey
RQ1: What are challenges encountered by academic counselors when striving to increase Latino male college readiness and success?	IQ 1: What challenges do you believe academic counselors encounter that inhibit Latino male students' college readiness and prevent them from being successful? **The question directly addresses the research question – Keep as is.** **The question has little or no relevance to the research question – Delete** **Revise the question as suggested:** change to "obstacles" and "experience" Otherwise it is too close to your research question. And I would add "successful in high school or beyond" IQ 2: What challenges do you believe Latino male students encounter that inhibit their college readiness and prevent them from being successful? • **The question directly addresses the research question – Keep as is.** • **The question has little or no relevance to the research question – Delete**

Research Questions	Proposed Interview Questions Validity Survey
	• **Revise the question as suggested:** Again I would change to "obstacles" and "experience" and "successful in high school"
RQ 2: What strategies and best practices do academic counselors utilize to increase Latino male college readiness and success?	IQ 3: How do you establish trust and foster positive relationships with Latino male students? • **The question directly addresses the research question – Keep as is.** • **The question has little or no relevance to the research question – Delete** • **Revise the question as suggested:** IQ4: How do you educate and inform Latino males and their families on the college-going process? • **The question directly addresses the research question – Keep as is.** • **The question has little or no relevance to the research question – Delete** • **Revise the question as suggested:** IQ5: How do you provide access to college-preparatory classes for Latino male students? • **The question directly addresses the research question – Keep as is.** • **The question has little or no relevance to the research question – Delete** • **Revise the question as suggested:**
RQ3: How do academic counselors define, track, and measure success as it relates to Latino male college readiness?	IQ6: How do you define college readiness? • **The question directly addresses the research question – Keep as is.** • **The question has little or no relevance to the research question – Delete** • **Revise the question as suggested:** IQ7: How do you monitor Latino male students' progress toward being college ready? • **The question directly addresses the research question – Keep as is.**

Research Questions	Proposed Interview Questions Validity Survey
	• **The question has little or no relevance to the research question – Delete** • **Revise the question as suggested:** IQ8: What metrics do you use to determine if Latino males are college ready? • **The question directly addresses the research question – Keep as is.** • **The question has little or no relevance to the research question – Delete** • **Revise the question as suggested:**
RQ4: What recommendations would academic counselors make for increasing Latino male college readiness?	IQ9: If you were a school leader, what steps would you take to increase college readiness among Latino male students? • **The question directly addresses the research question – Keep as is.** • **The question has little or no relevance to the research question – Delete** • **Revise the question as suggested:** IQ10: What advice would you give to other counselors who are facing challenges with increasing Latino male college readiness? • **The question directly addresses the research question – Keep as is.** • **The question has little or no relevance to the research question – Delete** • **Revise the question as suggested:**