‘I AM MY MOTHER'S DAUGHTER’: THE INTERWOVEN ROLE OF FAMILY AND COMMUNITY IN THE PERSISTENCE AND SUCCESS OF FIRST-GENERATION LATINA COLLEGE STUDENTS

by

Martha A. Castillo

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

In the Graduate College

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

2024

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
GRADUATE COLLEGE

As members of the Dissertation Committee, we certify that we have read the dissertation prepared by: Martha A. Castillo

titled: 'I AM MY MOTHER'S DAUGHTER': THE INTERWOVEN ROLE OF FAMILY AND COMMUNITY IN THE PERSISTENCE AND SUCCESS OF FIRST-GENERATION LATINA COLLEGE STUDENTS

and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the dissertation requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Education.

Jamaica Delmar — Date: Apr 29, 2024
Jamaica Delmar

Judy Kiyama — Date: Apr 29, 2024
Judy Kiyama

Karina Salazar — Date: Apr 29, 2024
Karina Salazar

Final approval and acceptance of this dissertation is contingent upon the candidate's submission of the final copies of the dissertation to the Graduate College.

I hereby certify that I have read this dissertation prepared under my direction and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the dissertation requirement.

Jamaica Delmar — Date: Apr 29, 2024
Jamaica Delmar
Dissertation Committee Chair
Educational Policy Studies and Practice

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The completion of this dissertation not only signifies an academic milestone, but also the culmination of a transformative journey. This path, filled with learning, challenge, and growth, was not traversed alone, but with the invaluable support and guidance of my committee members.

I extend my deepest gratitude to my committee chair, Dr. DelMar, whose intellectual rigor and insightful feedback were pivotal in refining my research. Your scholarly rigor and dedication to excellence have been a constant source of inspiration and guidance. You have been an advisor and mentor who has taught me the value of precision and the power of perseverance.

I am equally thankful to Dr. Marquez-Kiyama, whose expertise and thoughtful perspectives have enriched my understanding and depth of the subject matter. Your meticulous attention to detail and profound insights have contributed significantly to the breadth and depth of this work.

To Dr. Salazar, I am grateful for your encouragement and the constructive critiques that challenged me to push the boundaries of my research. Your wisdom and extensive knowledge have been instrumental in sculpting the framework of this study.

Each of you has played an integral role in my academic journey, providing unwavering support, patience, and scholarly guidance throughout research and writing. Your collective expertise has been a beacon that has illuminated my path through the complex landscape of doctoral research.

I am deeply grateful for the considerable time, energy, and genuine commitment you have invested in me and my work. Your contributions have been significant and have greatly impacted the quality and depth of this research.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We respectfully acknowledge that the University of Arizona is on the land and territories of Indigenous peoples. Today, Arizona is home to 22 federally recognized tribes, with Tucson being home to the O'odham and the Yaqui. Committed to diversity and inclusion, the University strives to build sustainable relationships with sovereign Native Nations and Indigenous communities through education offerings, partnerships, and community service.

DEDICATION

To my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, for whom all things are possible and who lights my path—this journey has been enveloped in Your grace. You have shown me that I can do all things through you who strengthen me (Philippians 4:13).

To my husband Jorge Raziel Ortiz, the rock upon which I could always seek refuge, your unwavering support has been the quiet strength behind my every word.

To my mother, Martha Castillo, who planted the seeds of wisdom about the power of education and the relentless pursuit of 'Ganas'—thank you for nurturing those seeds into fruition.

To my father, Gonzalo Castillo, whose work ethic, and unwavering faith have sculpted my aspirations and endeavors—your example is a compass I carry.

To my grandmothers, Maria Ibarra and Socorro Garcia—true guerreras (warriors). Your legacies of courage, resilience, and unfaltering love for family blaze a trail for generations. Your lives are a testament to the indomitable spirit of women who forge futures from dreams and determination.

This dissertation stands on the foundation you built, a structure of love, faith, and tenacity. I am because you all are.

Table of Contents

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the challenges and support systems impacting the success and perseverance of first-generation Latina college students. It emphasizes the critical role of family involvement and the cultural wealth within their communities, which have been overlooked in prior research. Utilizing interviews with first-generation Latina students, this study aims to understand how their perceptions of family and community support impact their educational journeys. The objective is to underscore these support systems' importance in enhancing a key demographic's success in higher education. The research questions seek to explore: (1) How does familial capital, regarding values and customs within families, influence the aspirational persistence of first-generation Latina college students in their education? (2A) Which school-provided family engagement approaches have first-generation Latina college students found to be the most helpful in ensuring their success and persistence when transitioning from high school to college? (2B) What intrinsic family values and informal engagement strategies in the home environment contribute to the educational success and persistence of first-generation Latina college students in college? (3) How have social and navigational capitals, manifested through community support systems, shaped first-generation Latina college students' preparation for and transition to college? (4) How have first-generation Latina college students utilized their cultural wealth, explicitly drawing on aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational, and resistant capitals, to overcome institutional barriers in higher education? This study explores how community resources and family involvement affect first-generation Latina college students' persistence and success, offering educational institutions guidance on enhancing support for this growing demographic.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Latinas in the U.S. encounter many institutional barriers that hinder their pursuit of higher education, as revealed by a recent study by the UCLA Latino Policy & Politics Institute. These obstacles encompass socioeconomic factors such as the restricted availability of top-notch primary and secondary education, linguistic and cultural barriers, and discrepancies in income and earnings. Multiple studies have shown that those who possess a bachelor's degree tend to have higher earnings and experience lower rates of unemployment compared to those who do not have a bachelor's degree. Consequently, a significant amount of legislative effort has been dedicated to increasing the rates at which students of color complete four-year university programs. Despite facing challenges, Latinas have made significant progress in increasing their representation among individuals with bachelor's degrees (UCLA Latino Policy & Politics Institute, 2024).

The journey toward completing a degree for first-generation Latina college students is filled with challenges. Despite efforts to improve college access and persistence for these students, such as the initiatives mentioned in the U.S. Department of Education's 2014 plan, gaps persist, particularly among Latina populations (Ishitani, 2016). According to Markle and Stelzriede (2020), persistence means making progress in a program of study until graduation. The statistics related to this demographic have raised concerns; for example, even though Latinos and undergraduate students make up a portion of California's population, their rates of attaining bachelor's degrees need to catch up (The Campaign for College Opportunity, 2021).

A crucial aspect of improving outcomes for first-generation Latina students revolves around the role of family and community. These external supports play a significant role among this population of students. However, they still need to be fully explored despite their potential to

significantly impact students' ability to navigate the complexities of higher education. While we recognize the importance of family and community support in first-generation Latina students' journeys, there is a pressing need for effective strategies that actively involve and mobilize these support systems. This research aims to address this gap by examining how family and community engagement influence first-generation Latina college students' persistence and academic achievements.

Understanding the relationship between family engagement and community cultural wealth provides insights into how these external resources contribute to persistence among first-generation Latina students. Educational institutions play a role in creating an environment that appreciates and incorporates the strengths of families and communities. This includes recognizing first-generation Latina students' challenges while valuing the cultural knowledge and support their families and communities provide. As Herrmann and Varnum (2018) discussed on acculturation and biculturalism, a nuanced approach emphasizes the importance of respecting the sacrifices made by first-generation families as their strategies for navigating through different cultures.

This study aims to provide practical approaches that educational institutions can use by investigating the impact of family and community participation on the persistence rates of first-generation Latina students. Effective practices that empower and involve Latino families and their communities as essential participants in the educational process are vital to improving this significant student population's persistence and success rates.

Need for the Study

The transition to college poses unique challenges for first-generation Latina students, highlighting the importance of recognizing obstacles and utilizing support systems. Family's role

in fostering these students' accomplishments cannot be emphasized enough. Ceja (2004) pointed out how Chicana students credit their motivation and success to the values and aspirations instilled by their parents, who find inspiration from their experiences of hardship and sacrifice.

Establishing environments in both K-12 schools and higher education settings is crucial. Plunkett and Bámaca-Gómez's (2003) research has shown a connection between students' self-esteem and self-confidence and the support and guidance provided by their parents, highlighting the need to involve families in the process. Additionally, Bartle Haring et al. (2022) emphasized the value of student-parent relationships on college persistence, suggesting that nurturing these interactions could significantly improve retention rates for first-generation students.

The concept of cultural capital significantly informs the analysis of persistence and success among first-generation Latina students. As defined by Bourdieu and Passeron (1977), cultural capital refers to the cultural assets passed down through family education. The value of cultural capital depends on the difference between the cultural norms enforced by the dominant educational system and the cultural norms instilled by the family education within various social groups or classes. This perspective allows for a nuanced exploration of how disparities in cultural capital contribute to educational inequalities. It underscores the importance of family and community involvement within educational institutions and how these engagements shape the educational trajectories of communities of color, particularly those comprised predominantly of first-generation college students.

Identifying a community as a first-generation Latina student transitioning to college is also an essential aspect of success, as noted by Clayton et al. (2019). In this study, the students' first-generation status and Latino identification were significant determinants of how they perceived their experiences. Students also expressed and embraced their Latino identities in

many ways while in college, and they yearned for a feeling of community. According to Fernandez et al. (2023), students of color used cultural conceptions of family to build academic families and recreate familial ties with faculty, staff, and administrators on campus, activating their familial capital. Campus areas that resemble homes or families effectively reactivate students' familial capital and bring it into college settings.

Similarly, in the study of Gutierrez-Serrano et al. (2023), most students found that their relationships with classmates in ethnic studies classes and student organizations met their demands for relatedness. Latina students attending a predominantly white institution establish a feeling of community in these areas. According to research, these connections help pupils feel validated and like they belong in these spaces. Given these insights, there is a pressing need to build upon existing research to understand further and support first-generation Latina students' transition to college. By exploring strategies that enhance family and community engagement and leverage the cultural wealth within Latino communities, this study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of how external supports can improve first-generation Latina students' persistence and success in higher education.

Based on these insights, there is a need to expand current research efforts to gain a deeper understanding and provide support during the transition period for first-generation Latina students entering college. This study explores strategies that enhance family involvement, strengthen community engagement, and tap into resources within Latino communities. In doing this, the goal is to comprehend how these external resources can impact the persistence and achievements of Latina students who are the first in their families to pursue higher education.

Purpose of the Study

First-generation Latina students may need help adjusting to college, mainly if they attend schools where they feel excluded. Many studies have shown how important it is for these students to interact with their classmates and get involved in their communities to experience feelings of validation and belonging, including the study done by Gutierrez-Serrano et al. (2023). In this study, participants noted that ethnic studies classes and student associations were critical in addressing the needs of Latina students enrolled at primarily white universities. These results highlight the importance of actively fostering connections that support first-generation Latina students' communal identities rather than merely acknowledging them.

Building on these concepts, this study aims to investigate the variety of resources available to first-generation Latina students. The main goal will be to comprehend the functions that community cultural resources and family participation play in these support networks. The aim is to find and evaluate tactics that can strengthen these support systems to provide this population of students with an inclusive and encouraging learning environment. This study will specifically investigate how family and community involvement practices support first-generation Latina students' perseverance and academic success. It will examine the relationships between knowledge, family involvement, and community support.

Expanding on these observations, this study aims to investigate the range of support systems for first-generation Latinas. The study emphasizes explicitly the significance of family involvement and the valuable resources within their communities. For these students, the emphasis will be on realizing the value of affluent cultural communities and family involvement in creating a conducive learning environment. The focus will be on understanding the importance of family engagement and community cultural wealth in facilitating a supportive

educational environment for these students. The study will specifically explore strategies that can enhance these forms of support while also examining how cultural capital, family involvement, and community support impact the persistence and success of first-generation Latina students.

This study explores how external support impacts the educational journeys of first-generation Latina college students. The objective is to offer insights to institutions by identifying and recommending strategies that recognize and use the unique community cultural richness and close-knit familial connections within Latino communities. Ultimately, this research aims to deepen our understanding of how involving families and building communities for this group of students can assist in the persistence and success of first-generation Latina students in education. This can help alleviate their challenges and foster a sense of belonging and accomplishment.

Research Questions

Research Question 1: How does familial capital, regarding values and customs within families, influence the aspirational persistence of first-generation Latina college students in their education?

Research Question 2A: Which school-provided family engagement approaches have first-generation Latina college students found to be the most helpful in ensuring their success and persistence when transitioning from high school to college?

Research Question 2B: What intrinsic family values and informal engagement strategies, in the home environment, contribute to the educational success and persistence of first-generation Latina college students in college?

Research Question 3: How have social and navigational capitals, manifested through community support systems, shaped first-generation Latina college students' preparation for and transition to college?

Research Question 4: How have first-generation Latina college students utilized their cultural wealth, explicitly drawing on aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational, and resistant capitals, to overcome institutional barriers in higher education?

Keywords: *first-generation college students, Latina college students, cultural capital, family engagement, community support, educational persistence, academic success, institutional barriers, cultural wealth, intersectionality, educational equity, resilience*

Research Design

The Critical Phenomenology technique is used in this study to explore the experiences of first-generation Latina college students, focusing on how cultural wealth from community and family influences the student's capacity to pursue higher education. Every student must go through a transition period while moving from school to college, but it can be challenging for those who are first in their families and identify as Latina. I will examine this transitional phase in detail using a critical phenomenology method and pay close attention to the experiences, expectations, and support shaping it. This investigation can offer insights into how educational institutions might enhance the first-time college student transition experience, making it smoother and more encouraging.

The approach of this study is informed by the frameworks created by Creswell and Poth (2007), who characterize research as investigating the collective interpretations a community gives to events. This approach is particularly effective for exploring the complex and multifaceted experiences of first-generation Latina students and comprehending their families and communities' responsibilities in their lives. The use of critical Phenomenology, a field that goes beyond simply characterizing phenomena, is crucial. It seeks to expose the structural injustices and power relationships that may affect people's experiences in life, thereby elevating

typically underrepresented voices. This is especially important when researching first-generation Latina college students, a demographic that is often overlooked in research. This approach is instrumental in gaining knowledge of the difficulties and resources unique to this student population, thereby aiding in the development of successful educational methods and policies.

This study, in line with critical phenomenology's dedication to comprehending people's lived experiences within their unique socio-cultural contexts, places a strong emphasis on documenting participants' experiences. This meticulous strategy ensures that first-generation Latina students' perspectives of their educational experiences are kept at the forefront, underscoring the importance of social and cultural support networks to their learning. The detailed and in-depth nature of critical phenomenology allows for a thorough investigation into the effects of cultural norms, customs, and community practices on these students' academic resilience and paths. It enables a comprehensive exploration of the various ways that students experience, understand, and use cultural capital while navigating higher education. This study aims to shed light on how first-generation Latina students view and benefit from the assistance that they receive from their families and communities. Ultimately, it uses the participant's real-life experiences to provide policymakers and educational institutions with information on how to interact with and strengthen these essential support networks effectively.

Theoretical Framework

This study employs the phenomenological method and the unique lens of the Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) model to delve into how cultural capital characteristics bolster the success of first-generation Latina students. The CCW model, from an asset-based perspective,

Figure 1.1
Community Cultural Wealth Model

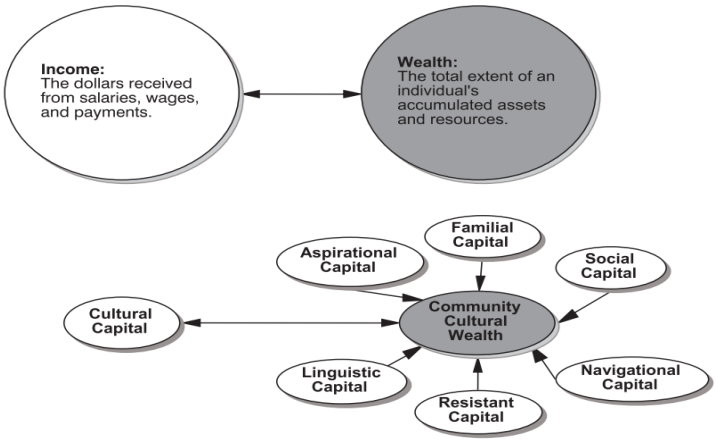


Figure 2. A model of community cultural wealth. Adapted from: Oliver & Shapiro, 1995

Source: Yosso (2005)

not only acknowledges but also values the types of capital that students from marginalized groups develop and utilize within educational environments that may marginalize them. It delineates the diverse and distinct types of strength (i.e., capital) that students from historically underprivileged groups nurture and depend on in marginalized environments like schools (Locke et al., 2017).

The CCW model, a cornerstone of this study, illuminates six forms of capital: aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational, and resistant capital (Yosso, 2005). This model will be instrumental in examining the experiences of first-generation Latina students and their families, providing a comprehensive framework for our analysis.

Through the lens of CCW, this study aims to identify and understand the invaluable forms of cultural capital that Latino families pass down to their children. This study will primarily focus on how these assets, nurtured and shared within the family, support first-generation Latina students in their journey through secondary education. This study specifically aims to explore the types of capital directly linked to persistence and success among this population of students to gain further understanding of how this population of students interacts with and navigates through systems of higher education.

Assumptions

This study makes some assumptions, one of which is that Latina students will be more persistent if there is greater family involvement during high school. Furthermore, as Rios-Aguilar et al. (2011) point out, the idea of activating capital and knowledge stores begs the question of whether people—individuals, communities, and especially families and students from underrepresented backgrounds—are aware that this is an effective way for students to achieve their goals and that it will help them achieve their career and academic goals. The premise of this study is that first-generation Latina college student's ability to pursue higher education is greatly enhanced by the cultural capital that comes from their families and communities. It asserts that aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational, and resistant types of capital are essential for navigating the terrain of education.

Another presumption is that first-generation Latina college students' experiences are legitimate and applicable as the primary data sources. The study assumes that these experiences represent more widespread phenomena in related groups.

It is assumed that power dynamics and structural inequalities significantly impact first-generation Latina students' educational experiences; as a result, a research approach that not only identifies these experiences but also discusses their ramifications is required.

Limitations

Because of the small number of students in this community, there is not enough data to conclusively determine how cultural capital affects persistence rates.

Despite concentrating on first-generation Latina college students, the study might have needed to adequately represent the group's variety, including differences in geography, socioeconomic status, and family dynamics.

Due to Critical Phenomenology's interpretive character, the results are subject to the researcher's viewpoints and interpretations, which may create bias or restrict the study's conclusions' applicability in larger contexts. The research's qualitative design and narrow focus on a particular group mean that not all first-generation college students or Latina students in other educational or cultural contexts can apply the findings.

Delimitations

The study purposefully narrows its attention to first-generation Latina college students, leaving out the perspectives of students from other backgrounds or those who are not the first in their families to pursue higher education.

By selecting these frameworks, the research potentially ignores other pertinent variables or theoretical stances to restrict itself to examining experiences and cultural capital inside preset conceptions.

The study's boundaries may come from the educational institutions and geographic area in which it is carried out, which may impact the participant's experiences and the kinds of cultural riches they can access.

Significance of the Study

First-generation Latina students comprise a sizable and rising share of undergraduates in the United States. Latina persistence rates lag that of other student groups in a recent report from The Campaign for College Opportunity (2021). Compared to white men who enroll in the University of California as freshmen, the four-year graduation rate for Latino first-year students is 17 percentage points lower, at 53%. Latinas and white women who enroll in the UC systems as first-year students have four-year graduation rates 14 percentage points apart. The acculturation process is one of the challenges that Latina students transitioning to college confront.

To help this population of students continue to college, this study focused on understanding the kinds of cultural capital that their families instill in them to help them persist through college. It also outlined tactics and resources students use to navigate higher education systems, focusing on community and support systems in higher education spaces.

Summary

This study examines how first-generation Latino families, and their communities assist them on their educational journeys. It recognizes the difficulties this population of students' experiences. It highlights how crucial it is to comprehend and use Latino families' and communities' cultural assets and engagement tactics to enhance college achievement and persistence. This study uses a Critical Phenomenology methodology to explore the individual experiences of first-generation Latina college students, paying close attention to how cultural

norms, values, and familial and community support affect these students' commitment to continuing their education.

First-generation Latina students' persistence and perseverance in school will be the focus of the research, which will look at the impact of cultural capital passed down from families. To help this student population successfully navigate educational systems, it will also investigate how educational institutions may give them a sustained sense of identity via a community. This study aims to identify the systematic obstacles that first-generation Latina students must overcome to be supported and included in college environments. The findings of this investigation will help educational stakeholders take concrete steps toward achieving these goals.

Through elevating the voices of first-generation Latina students, this study seeks to fill a gap in the literature by offering perspectives on the interactions between cultural backgrounds, family involvement, community engagement, and the educational system. The findings from this study will inform policies and practices that acknowledge and strengthen the support structures necessary for the academic success of first-generation Latina college students. Ultimately, this research contributes to understanding how to support this population in K-12 and postsecondary education settings.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Research on family engagement extensively covers its influence on student success. However, it often neglects the nuanced impacts on first-generation Latina college students, focusing predominantly on K-12 students from a predominantly white-centric perspective. This overlooks the critical roles of community support and cultural wealth in navigating educational systems and sustaining students' sense of identity. This literature review expands the scope to examine how family engagement and community cultural wealth contribute to first-generation Latina students' educational success and persistence, exploring how educational institutions can enhance their identity and belonging.

Methods of Searching

To investigate how family engagement, community support, and cultural wealth impact first-generation Latina students' persistence in college, searches utilized keywords like "college persistence among first-generation Latina students," "community cultural wealth resources," and "support systems for first-generation Latina education." Through this method, studies were discovered that shed light on the influence of family and community on these students' academic journeys. The primary data collection methods employed in interviews capture students' real-life experiences and viewpoints pioneering their family's journey into education.

Lifelong Impact of Family Involvement on First-Generation Latina Students'

According to research focused on the role of parents in academic achievement among adolescent students, there is a positive correlation between parental involvement and improved academic outcomes, consistent among students from underserved communities (Jeynes, 2007; Plunket et al., 2003). In addition, there is a correlation between academic achievement and persistence among first-generation students. Research specifically focused on persistence among

first-generation adolescents between the ages of 12 and 16 years identified that the relationship this population of students had with their parents was one of the most significant indicators that determined college persistence (Bartle-Haring et al., 2022). Therefore, in identifying research that aligns with the topic, studies focused on underserved and underrepresented populations in college were searched, such as students whose parents are immigrants or who attended urban schools because these students often identify as first-generation. Ceja's (2006) study focused on identifying parents' role in the Chicana student's college choice process. It found that these students often felt alone when going through the college choice process because their parents were unfamiliar with the college application process. However, students indicated they benefit from their parents' emotional support, which communicated to them the high importance their families placed on obtaining a college education.

Emotional support from parents and family is crucial at this age and can be even more impactful in promoting academic success in students in this age bracket. Jeynes (2007) highlights three contributing factors: First, this population of students is more likely to be influenced by their parent's values. Second, parents tend to be more engaged during this stage in their children's lives. Third, when they eventually reach secondary school, children have established ideas about their strengths, weaknesses, and academic standing. One of the many variables correlated to students' academic outcomes among adolescents is parental warmth, monitoring, involvement, and educational levels (Plunkett & Bámaca-Gómez, 2003).

According to Auerbach (2007), moral and emotional support for Latino parents was broadly defined as apoyo, which translates to support instead of the traditional parent involvement strategies. They described supporting their children by speaking to them about the

value of getting an education, studying, and working hard. The Latino parents in Auerbach's study rarely attended school events and instead provided support from home.

In Contreras and Kiyamas's (2022) study, participants who were parents gave their children *consejos* on how to support their children as they transition to college. Consejos are a "cultural component of communication fueled with emotional empathy and compassion, as well as familial expectation and inspiration." (Delgado-Gaitan 1994, as cited in Contreras & Kiyama, 2020, p. 300). One of the student participants in Contreras and Kiyama's (2022) study shared that the advice given by his mother helped him adjust to college life. He described how his unauthorized immigration status prevented him from receiving federal financial help and a scholarship his college offered him. Despite this, he maintained his aspirational capital, believing he could finish his degree.

The importance of continued support and structure are valuable to and through college, as highlighted in a study by Suwinyattichaiporn and Johnson (2022), which shows a substantial correlation between stress and depression and isolation, or the perception of having few meaningful interactions and communication with close others among Latina first-generation students. Based on the research, there is a continued desire for family and community among this population of students. Arevalo and McNaughton-Cassill's (2016) findings revealed that Latino-American college students are more likely than non-Latinos to endorse situations that involve helping, interacting, and being cognizant of non-family network members. Their research also highlights that it is possible that making and maintaining new acquaintances in the academic setting is more important than ties with family. This could be conceivable because, once in college, individuals tend to form adoptive families because of their shared daily routines and expectations. Aside from this research, Rook (2013) talked about how the League of United

Latin American Citizens (LULAC) developed a collectivist mindset and highlighted how successful this strategy is at energizing and extending the organization's mission. This historical viewpoint offers insight into how the Latino-American community has used collectivism to support social movements, advance employment, and educational opportunities, and develop social movements.

The collective insights from this research shed light on collectivism's impact on education, social movements, and economic behavior within the Latino-American community. Research in this area is essential to developing interventions and support networks to enhance first-generation Latina students' college experiences and success rates.

The extensive body of research examined emphasizes the crucial influence of parental engagement in determining the academic paths of first-generation Latino/a students, emphasizing the significance of emotional support and practical guidance as essential components. Although these studies have established a strong foundation by identifying essential elements of parental involvement, such as providing emotional support and culturally specific advice, they often need to explore the long-term effects of such engagement on students' entire academic journey.

This study provides essential insights to fill this research gap. My research examines how the beliefs and practices passed down within families, known as familial capital, impact the determination and drive of first-generation Latina college students. This study takes a long-term approach, which has not been given much attention in previous studies. Jeynes (2007) and Plunkett et al. (2003) primarily focus on the beneficial associations between parental involvement and academic achievements throughout adolescence. My research expands on this by investigating how these effects endure in higher education, offering proof that the advantages

of family involvement are not temporary but continue to have a vital impact in higher educational environments.

Furthermore, my research focuses on filling a significant knowledge gap on the influence of specific types of familial support, such as the cultural tradition of providing advice consejos, on the long-term academic perseverance and achievement of Latina students after they initially enroll in college. While Ceja (2006) and Contreras & Kiyama (2022) acknowledged the influence of parents in the college selection process and transitional stages, my research explores the extent to which continuous family involvement practices lead to long-term academic engagement and achievement. This is crucial since the support systems provided by families change when students move from high school to college. Therefore, it is necessary to reassess the tactics used to engage with this specific group, considering their cultural and contextual needs.

Additionally, my research emphasizes utilizing familial and community resources by Latina students to navigate the academic environment, using the concept of community cultural wealth. This study builds upon the research conducted by Auerbach (2007) by demonstrating how the wider community's support enhances the efforts made by families, resulting in increased cultural knowledge and a more substantial commitment to education among pupils. This research element highlights the significance of taking a comprehensive approach to assistance, going beyond the immediate family to encompass the broader community, which has received less attention in prior studies.

By combining these observations, my research addresses essential areas that have been overlooked in existing studies and provides practical suggestions for creating support initiatives that consider the specific cultural and familial dynamics experienced by first-generation Latina

students. My research highlights the long-lasting effects of these support systems and argues for policies and practices that prioritize culturally sensitive engagement tactics. This will improve the academic success rates and well-being of this underrepresented community.

Positive Effects of Family and Community on First-Generation College Students

Research on parental involvement's positive effects on first-generation college students was consistent with those focused on adolescent first-generation college students. Both populations benefited from words of encouragement and support from their parents, which was not necessarily tied to college knowledge but rather the value parents placed on a college education and how they consistently communicated this to their children (Ceballo, 2004; Matos, 2015; Covarrubias et al., 2020). In addition, a strong relationship with parents promotes persistence among students transitioning from high school to college. Therefore, campus programs that promote a constant family connection, including parents, as part of the college experience would increase persistence among this population of students (Bartle-Haring et al., 2022). It makes sense why parent support is so vital among this population of students. According to Markle and Stelzriede (2020), first-generation students for this study felt less academically ready for college and, as a result, needed more confidence than continuing generations students in transitioning to college.

A Ceballo (2004) study identified four family characteristics as contributing factors to a student's academic success among a small group of first-generation Latina students: (1) A firm commitment from parents toward their children's education. (2) Providing their children with autonomy. (3)Parents' non-verbal support. (4) Supportive role models outside the home. The literature also indicates that all students, regardless of their parent's educational background or financial status, benefit from their parent's emotional support. As noted in Yasuike's (2019)

study, where a group of undocumented Latino college students was interviewed, even though their parents could not assist the participants with their schoolwork or the college application process, they were supportive of their children's decision to pursue higher education on an emotional level. A few interviewees cited their parents' tireless efforts and long workdays to support them as inspiration to persevere in the face of hardship.

However, compared to their peers, first-generation students did not benefit from their parent's financial support (Roksa & Kinsley, 2019). The research also indicates that although support from parents can lead to improved persistence in first-generation students, other support systems also contribute to this population of students' persistence and self-efficacy in college (Garriott et al., 2017). According to Ishitani's (2016) study, social and academic integration is crucial in first-generation student retention. It reduces the chances of student withdrawal in their first and fifth year of college.

Previous studies have consistently confirmed the crucial impact of parental and community support in augmenting the academic achievement of individuals who are the first in their families to attend college. Research conducted by Ceballo (2004) and Covarrubias et al. (2020) has shown that even when parents acknowledge the importance of education, it can significantly impact a student's determination and self-assurance. In addition, according to Matos (2015), consistent assistance from family members has been associated with higher levels of student perseverance, especially during the transition from high school to college.

Expanding on these fundamental understandings, my research adds unique aspects to our understanding of how family involvement directly impacts the academic experiences of first-generation Latina college students. While previous research has emphasized the overall good effects of family support, my study explores how Latina students express and understand this

support. This involves examining the specific forms of motivation and the culturally ingrained customs of family assistance that are most successful in fostering academic perseverance among these individuals.

For instance, prior research conducted by Markle and Stelzriede (2020) indicates that first-generation students frequently experience lower academic readiness levels and require additional support and encouragement. My research delves deeper into investigating the facets of parental support, such as emotional, motivational, or practical assistance, that first-generation Latina students most highly regarded. Additionally, I aim to understand how these different forms of support contribute to their confidence level in their academic abilities, also known as their academic self-efficacy. Furthermore, my research examines how these students comprehend and derive empowerment from the independence granted by their parents, as highlighted by Ceballo (2004), and the non-verbal support mechanisms that enhance their self-assurance.
In addition, while Yasuike (2019) emphasizes the emotional assistance given by parents of undocumented Latino students, my study expands on this by investigating a more comprehensive range of family and community interactions. It examines how various types of support, including verbal encouragement, affect students. Additionally, it examines the influence of external community networks and non-family role models, which offer an extra level of support that complements the efforts made by the family.

One noteworthy aspect of my study is its emphasis on assimilating these students into the academic environment. In line with Ishitani's (2016) research on the significance of social and academic integration, my study thoroughly examines how first-generation Latina students efficiently employ familial and community resources to navigate and integrate into the college setting. This involves analyzing how these networks provide students with emotional and

financial assistance and help them develop social connections essential for their academic and future career achievements.

My study analyzes the unique family and community support dynamics among first-generation Latina college students. By doing so, I aim to address the gaps in the existing literature and provide practical insights that can be used to design more effective support programs specifically tailored to this group of students. These programs can more effectively cater to the distinct requirements of this demographic, ultimately improving their academic achievement and entire college journey.

Inclusive Family and Community Engagement Practices in Higher Education

There is a rising awareness of the shift from family involvement to a more all-encompassing family engagement approach. According to Kiyama and Harper (2018), shifting from involvement to a more inclusive strategy that recognizes the importance of varied families in helping college students is imperative. Furthermore, Rowan-Kenyon et al. (2008) examined how contextual factors affect college admissions involvement, providing insight into how socioeconomic issues affect family involvement in education. Furthermore, the study by Witkowsky et al. (2020) focused on establishing a link between family involvement and students' sense of belonging in the classroom, emphasizing the critical role that diverse families—especially those from collectivist cultures—have in encouraging students to persist in their studies and finish their degrees. These studies indicate that families have a role in higher education. It emphasizes the necessity of an approach to involve diverse families in supporting students' academic pursuits. Engaging families and going beyond involvement is essential for fostering a supportive and inclusive environment in higher education (Kiyama & Harper, 2018; Rowan-Kenyon et al., 2008; Witkowsky et al., 2020).

Family empowerment is a powerful tool to elevate the voices of marginalized families. Which often requires partnering with community organizations to facilitate the process. Baquedano-López et al. (2013) suggest collaboration through community development models to help build more effective relationships with families of color. This can be done by moving past traditional family engagement models and building meaningful collaborations between communities, families, and schools. These models vary but focus on providing full-service school models that offer various services outside of school—focusing on community revitalization to build up families and motivate them to work toward improving their schools through active community involvement.

College access programs can also be an excellent resource for families to help them support their children by providing the proper guidance and support needed and providing a continued community for students as they transition to college. One example of this is highlighted in Auerbach's (2007) study, where a college access organization in Los Angeles created a forum that addressed issues that directly affected families of color. They accomplished this by bringing awareness about barriers to college access and how to overcome them. In addition, this forum called parents to do more to help their children. According to Saunders and Sernas (2004), a reconfiguration of relationships and positive social bonds occurs as first-generation Latino college students move from high school to college. Their study primarily focused on the reconfiguration process. Their results demonstrate that many of these students have benefited from involvement in equity and access studies and college-access programs in keeping their college-going identities.

Yasuike (2019) study noted a range of initiatives provided by educational institutions and non-profits that support low-income and aspiring first-generation college students—the majority

of whom are from racial minority groups—can offer the support and materials undocumented Latino students require without first necessitating the establishment of dependable connections with specific educators and counselors. Approximately two-thirds of the participants in this study reported that they benefited from school-run and nonprofit-run initiatives that collaborate with nearby community colleges and high schools. According to the participants, these programs include Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID), Upward Bound, QuestBridge, College Summit, and International Baccalaureate (IB) at the high school level.

The shift from simple family involvement to comprehensive family engagement in higher education highlights the importance of strategies that acknowledge and utilize the variety of family structures and cultural backgrounds. The significance of inclusive tactics considering varying familial settings, especially in tackling the obstacles to involvement experienced by families from different socioeconomic origins, has been established by groundbreaking research conducted by Kiyama and Harper (2018) and Rowan-Kenyon et al. (2008). Moreover, a study conducted by Witkowsky et al. (2020) demonstrates the positive influence of increased family participation on a student's feeling of inclusion, which substantially affects their ability to continue and successfully finish their academic pursuits.

Expanding on these fundamental findings, my study provides detailed insights into the mechanisms by which inclusive family engagement practices can be enhanced to promote the academic achievement of first-generation Latina college students. Previous research has acknowledged the overall significance of including families. However, the existing literature needs more information about specific, culturally customized tactics that effectively empower these students and their families.

My research aims to investigate how community-based models might be tailored to meet the unique needs of Latino families. This research will focus on promoting empowerment and encouraging active involvement in their children's educational path. Baquedano-López et al. (2013) propose that community development models provide a structure for establishing productive connections with families of color. My research expands on this by investigating how these models can be customized to provide enhanced support for Latino families by incorporating cultural values and community strengths into the engagement process.

Additionally, my research assesses the efficacy of college access programs that offer guidance and assistance and foster a feeling of ongoing community as students journey from high school to higher education. Research such as Auerbach's (2007) establishes a basis by highlighting platforms that tackle difficulties encountered by families of color. My study expands on this by evaluating how these programs can be improved to better cater to the requirements of Latino families, guaranteeing that these initiatives are not only easily accessible but also culturally sensitive.

Furthermore, I investigate the impact of restructuring relationships and forming strong social connections, as Saunders and Sernas (2004) described, on the effective adaptation and academic perseverance of first-generation Latina students. By incorporating these observations with the discoveries from programs emphasized in Yasuike's (2019) research, such as AVID and Upward Bound, my work offers comprehensive tactics that educational institutions and non-profit organizations can implement to establish more inclusive and supportive settings.

My research fills essential gaps in the existing family and community engagement literature. It also provides practical recommendations for developing engagement practices specifically designed to meet the needs of first-generation Latina students. This strategy offers

the potential to improve their educational results by utilizing the advantages of their family and community connections, therefore fostering increased academic achievement and fairness in higher education.

Community Cultural Wealth in Academic Success

Research on the experiences of minority students in higher education has considered the concept of community cultural wealth. This paradigm has allowed researchers to understand better how minority students' forms of capital enable them to not only access higher education but also succeed. These studies have also highlighted the challenges that students encounter and the value of assistance when navigating the intricacies of the educational system. Various cultural capital within their communities impacts First-generation Latina college students' academic achievement.

Research on the experiences of minority students in higher education has considered the concept of community cultural wealth. This paradigm has allowed researchers to understand better how minority students' forms of capital enable them to not only access higher education but also succeed. These studies have also highlighted the challenges that students encounter and the value of assistance when navigating the intricacies of the educational system. Cultural capital within their communities impacts First-generation Latina college students' academic achievement.

The academic achievement of students who are the first in their families to attend college with a Latina background is a complex matter influenced by multiple factors. One crucial factor that plays a role in this issue is community wealth. According to Phillips et al. (2020), first-generation college students' reasons for going to school frequently reflect interwoven cultural values, such as giving back to their communities, that do not align with the ideals prevalent in

American higher education, which focuses on independence. This mismatch in values can initially negatively impact their academic success compared to their classmates. Additionally, the detrimental effects of this mismatch are not temporary; they persist throughout the student's time in college, influencing their journey until graduation. First-generation students who embrace norms tend to feel less connected and have lower GPAs in college, highlighting the importance of creating inclusive environments that support diverse cultural backgrounds to achieve fair academic results.

Perez (2017) studied how Latino males with affluent cultural backgrounds were encouraged to pursue their academic aspirations at top universities, emphasizing the importance of peer networks in helping them succeed. In addition, a study by Yasuike (2019) highlighted the value of extracurricular activities and non-profit organizations in making up for the lack of social capital that undocumented Latino students lack, highlighting the critical role outside support networks have in academic success. Additionally, Mieziene et al. (2022) discuss the direct and indirect effects of social capital and school support on students' academic success, highlighting how relationships with parents and teachers foster positive learning outcomes and attitudes, particularly in distance learning. Together, these studies show how several types of capital, such as aspirational capital, social capital, and neighborhood cultural richness, are crucial to first-generation Latina college students' success and academic perseverance. The results emphasize how crucial it is to identify and take advantage of the resources and networks of support that students already have in their communities to improve their educational experiences and results (Perez, 2017; Yasuike, 2019; Mieziene et al., 2022).

Researchers Rincon et al. (2020) discovered that Latinx students pursuing STEM careers utilize Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) by leveraging social networks, family support, and

resistance tactics. During that period, individuals must navigate establishments that frequently do not match their cultural expertise and available resources. This emphasizes how crucial it is to put educational methods into place to support this population of students better. Social and cultural capital components also influence the decision to pursue higher education. As noted in Clayton et al. (2019) study, first-generation students were significantly affected since they frequently lacked the social networks that generally make the college admission process more accessible. As a result, they had to handle most of the college application and admissions process independently. Notwithstanding this difficulty, a crucial discovery in their research highlighted the importance of self-determination. Despite lacking social and cultural capital, such as parental networks or encouraging high school environments, the four students in this study successfully navigated the college admissions process and got admission.

A study by Espino (2014) examined the relationship between community cultural wealth and American Ph.D. candidates' access to and perseverance in graduate school. According to the research, aspirational, social, resistant, and culturally accepted forms of capital were among the forms of capital that Mexican American Ph.D. candidates employed to succeed in their doctoral studies. This demonstrates how cultural wealth is crucial for boosting minority pupils' academic accomplishments.

Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) offers a good framework for analyzing how several types of capital, including aspirational, navigational, social, familial, resistive, and linguistic, contribute to the academic achievement of minority students in higher education. This method has played a crucial role in expanding our comprehension of the diverse resources these students utilize to traverse the educational system, as explored in studies conducted by scholars such as Phillips et al. (2020) and Perez (2017).

Expanding on these studies, my research provides a clearer understanding of the distinct functions of various community cultural riches in shaping the academic paths of first-generation Latina college students. Although past studies have provided a general understanding of the impact of community cultural wealth, there still needs to be an in-depth investigation of how Latina students specifically utilize these resources in higher education environments.

Perez (2017) and Yasuike (2019) conducted research that emphasized the significance of peer networks and extracurricular activities in providing support to Latino students. My research expands on these discoveries by investigating how these networks offer emotional and intellectual assistance and aid students in cultivating a feeling of belonging and identity within the academic community. This holds great importance, especially considering the cultural disparity highlighted by Phillips et al. (2020), wherein the prevailing principles of American higher education often clash with the collectivist and community-oriented values held by many Latina students.

In addition, my research investigates how these students employ resistant capital to negotiate and confront institutional obstacles that could impede their academic advancement. This provides an essential aspect of Espino's (2014) research, which demonstrates the utilization of different forms of capital by Mexican American Ph.D. applicants to succeed. My research focuses on analyzing the utilization of these methods by first-generation Latina undergraduates throughout their academic journey, encompassing all levels of education and not solely limited to the PhD level.

Furthermore, my research provides new perspectives on the significance of familial capital, as emphasized by Rincon et al. (2020), who discovered that Latinx students in STEM disciplines utilize family assistance and community connections. I further this investigation by

detailing how these supports are activated and sustained, providing a deeper understanding of the mechanisms through which these networks bolster students' perseverance and academic success.

This comprehensive exploration of community cultural wealth among first-generation Latina college students fills a significant gap in the literature by detailing how these forms of capital are present and actively engaged in enhancing their educational outcomes. It also underscores the need for higher education institutions to recognize and integrate these diverse forms of capital into their support structures to create more inclusive and empowering educational environments.

My research examines the contributions made by first-generation Latina students in utilizing community cultural wealth. This study addresses critical gaps in understanding and offers practical implications for policy and program development to enhance the academic success of minority students in higher education.

Cultural and Community Identity in Academic Persistence

It is necessary to consider cultural and community identification to comprehend the academic persistence of groups in various educational settings. African American students' success or failure in mathematics is influenced by several elements, including the sociohistorical backdrop, community dynamics, school impact, and individual agency (Martin, 2000). Collins (2018) examines students' ideas of STEM identities and emphasizes how community dynamics and cultural norms influence their attitudes and resolve to pursue STEM careers. These studies highlight that identity is essential to academic persistence among minority groups.

Brooks and Allen's (2016) research also clarifies how cultural influences affect persistence. They investigated how African American college students' capacity to continue their academic endeavors is impacted by their kinship ties and religious beliefs. Their study's

conclusions show how crucial religious frameworks are in helping these adolescents succeed academically. Butler-Barnes et al. (2017) also carried out a study on African American teenagers' academic perseverance, focusing specifically on the function that cultural and intellectual resources play in forming their academic identity and resolve throughout time.

The study by Chow Garcia et al. (2022) shows the relationship between identity and academic persistence, with a particular emphasis on the cultural identity of Native American students and how important it is to their success and continuous engagement in the scientific community. The importance of identity on the academic pathways of underrepresented groups in scientific disciplines is highlighted in this study. The resilience of underrepresented groups, particularly in minority communities and STEM education, is influenced by culture and community identification, as these studies demonstrate.

Perez's (2017) study focused on the motivation of male Latino college students. The research highlighted the importance of nurturing and preserving cultural wealth within institutions. It emphasized how cultural wealth plays a role in fostering determination among Latino male college students and discussed its implications for further research, policy development, and practical implementation. Similarly, the motivation of Latina students who are the first in their families to attend college is influenced by cultural values, family roles, and the significance they place on their life roles. Storlie et al. (2016) emphasized the need to understand the culture, values, and life roles experienced by these students to comprehend their career development path and meet their needs effectively.

Furthermore, Cavusoglu and Karatas (2015) conducted a study highlighting the connection between motivation, basic psychological needs, and academic procrastination among students. They demonstrated that procrastination tendencies can be predicted based on

motivation and fulfilling psychological needs. Vansteenkiste et al. (2006) explored learners' goals—whether they are driven intrinsically or extrinsically—and found that intrinsic goal orientation leads to engagement in learning activities and increased persistence. This aligns with the motivations of first-generation college students. These findings emphasize how intrinsic motivation plays a role in understanding why Latina first-generation college students persist in their journey. It is vital to consider the family dynamics experienced by these students to offer practical support throughout their educational endeavors.

Miller's (2007) study attempts to comprehend how cultural shifts and family history knowledge impact first-generation college students with low incomes. The study examines the relationship between family history knowledge and characteristics like student involvement and resilience in educational settings through various research techniques. The findings suggest a strong correlation between resilience and knowledge of family history. Additionally, these pupils' persistence is influenced by family history elements such as gender and ethnicity. The study's results highlight the possibility of incorporating family history knowledge into college programs' support networks to increase first-generation, low-income students' graduation rates.

Additionally, the study by Tsai et al. (2023) explores the connection between first-generation college students' intent to persevere, their motivation to attend college, and their integration into campus life. Regarding this group's college motivation, the study finds three profiles and looks at how they relate to integration, commitment levels to campus life, and persistence goals.

These studies shed light on the variables influencing first-generation Latina college students' capacity to continue their education. They examine how motivation, cultural changes, and family history knowledge might affect their journey. The findings have implications for

developing treatments and support systems to improve the achievement of first-generation, low-income college students.

Cultural and community identity plays a pivotal role in understanding the academic persistence of diverse student groups within various educational contexts. Previous research, such as that by Martin (2000) and Collins (2018), has shown that sociohistorical backgrounds, community dynamics, and cultural norms significantly shape students' attitudes toward education and persistence in challenging fields like STEM.

Expanding upon these fundamental understandings, my study focuses on the intricacies of cultural and community identity among college students who are the first in their families to attend college and identify as Latina. The studies conducted by Brooks and Allen (2016) and Butler-Barnes et al. (2017) have investigated how African American students' cultural frameworks contribute to their academic achievements. However, my study focuses specifically on Latina communities. It examines how similar frameworks operate, emphasizing the role of cultural wealth and familial support in promoting academic resilience and persistence.

Furthermore, Chow Garcia et al. (2022) highlighted the importance of cultural identity for Native American students in STEM fields. My research parallels these findings by demonstrating how the cultural and community identities of Latina students not only influence their academic engagement but also equip them with unique tools for navigating the educational landscape. This includes using aspirational, navigational, and social capitals, which are instrumental in overcoming institutional barriers and enhancing academic success.

Perez's (2017) research on Latino male college students emphasized preserving cultural wealth within educational institutions. My study extends this by exploring how nurturing cultural values, family roles, and community engagement explicitly supports Latina students, thereby

contributing to their motivation and persistence. This is critical as it shows how the intrinsic values associated with their cultural and community identity can be leveraged to enhance their educational experiences.

In addition, Cavusoglu and Karatas (2015), along with Vansteenkiste et al. (2006), examine the broader consequences of motivation and psychological requirements on student behavior, including procrastination and persistence. My research contributes additional depth by linking these motivational and psychological constructs to the familial and cultural narratives that shape the identities of first-generation Latina students, providing a clearer understanding of their unique academic journeys and the support systems that are most effective for them.

Miller's (2007) investigation into the impact of family history knowledge on student resilience and persistence further complements my study. I expand upon this by examining how these aspects are specifically manifested and valued in the Latina community and how they influence educational persistence among these students. Additionally, my research incorporates recent findings by Tsai et al. (2023), which help delineate the motivational profiles of first-generation students, adding a layer of complexity to how these profiles interact with cultural and community identities.

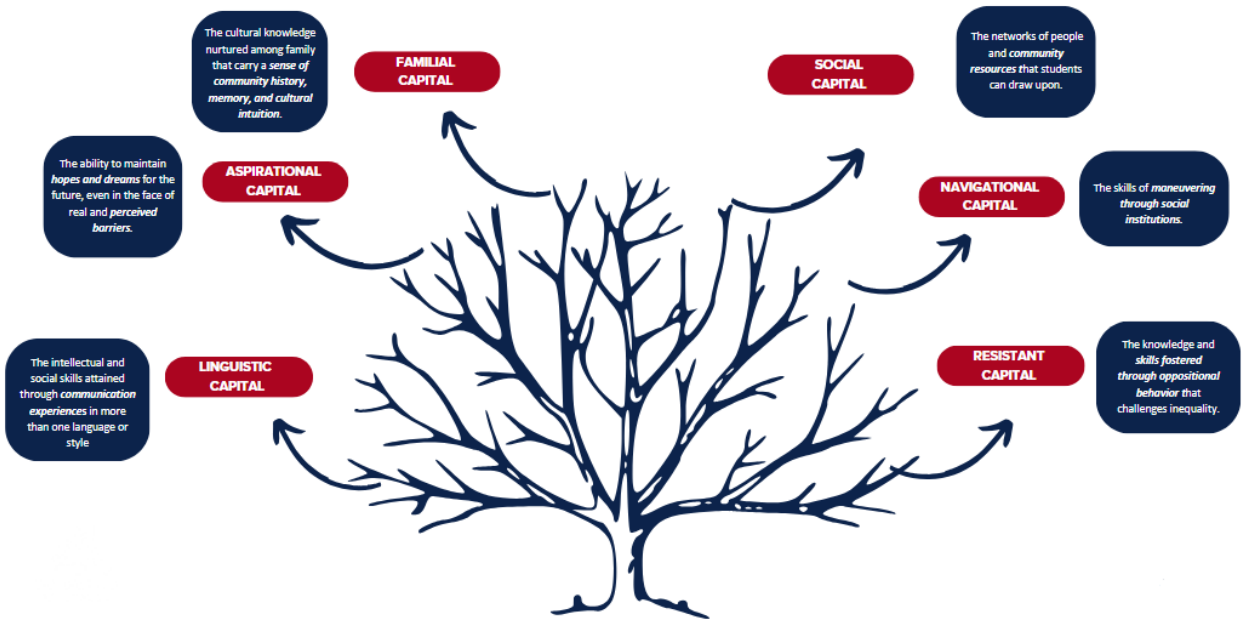
My research addresses an important issue by providing a detailed analysis of how culture and community identification significantly impact the academic perseverance of first-generation Latina college students. This study provides fresh perspectives on how educational programs and policies might be customized to effectively assist these students by recognizing and incorporating their distinct cultural assets and community resources.

Review of Literature Related to Theoretical Framework

Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) provides a framework for understanding the priceless resources in communities of color that are frequently overlooked by traditional educational research methods. By presenting the CCW model, which outlines the types of capital that communities of color possess, including aspirational, navigational, social, linguistic, family, and resistant capital, Yosso (2005) challenges the dominant narratives around the capital and conceptualizes the idea of cultural community as wealth and challenges the historical interpretation of cultural capital through the community cultural wealth (CCW) model. This model highlights a variety of capital indicators that have been overlooked as social or cultural assets within communities of

This paradigm shifts the perception of assets and moves away from deficit-oriented perspectives, which typically view communities of color as deficient. It emphasizes the importance of recognizing these communities' assets and contributions to education. Aspirational capital, for instance, describes the capacity to hold onto goals and aspirations for the future in the face of challenges. The ability to navigate through institutions is referred to as navigational capital, and it is especially crucial in educational settings where the achievement of students from marginalized populations may not be supported. The CCW model also highlights the value of familial capital, which includes information passed down through the generations and contributes to a feeling of identity, belonging, and community. This kind of capital is essential for comprehending how children from different origins use resources from their families and communities to navigate education systems.

Figure 1.2
Six Types of Community Cultural Wealth Capital



Although education researchers have often overlooked the cultural aspects of social capital, various cultural customs create social capital relationships that lead to the evolution of constructive relationships that ultimately create favorable social capital that improves academic outcomes (Rios-Aguilar et al., 2011). By using the CCW model, academics and researchers can likely take a more affirming and inclusive stance when it comes to appreciating and comprehending the many cultural backgrounds of their students. Developing learning environments that honor and promote the contributions and strengths of all students—especially those from communities of color—requires having this viewpoint.

Through the lens of CCW, these studies aim to shed light on the often-overlooked contributions that first-generation students of color bring to the world of education. By recognizing and utilizing these resources, educators, and policymakers can strive for fairness and inclusivity through approaches that genuinely embrace diversity and wealth within all student communities.

Conceptual Framework

Introduction to The Conceptual Framework

The educational trajectory of first-generation Latina college students unfolds amid an intricate fabric of familial and community interactions, marked by unique challenges and strengths. This study is grounded in the compelling insights of Yosso's Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) model, which reframes the abilities, knowledge, and networks that students of color possess as assets, shifting the paradigm from deficit to resource-based perspectives in the educational discourse. Yosso's categorization of community cultural wealth—into six forms of capital: aspirational, navigational, social, linguistic, familial, and resistance—serves as a critical tool for disrupting the prevailing cultural narratives and power dynamics often entrenched in educational settings. This framework not only elucidates an empowering viewpoint to comprehend the experiences of these students but also guides the exploration of how such forms of capital are instrumental in supporting first-generation Latina students' academic persistence.

In this light, family engagement is re-envisioned as a comprehensive partnership among families, educators, and community stakeholders, promoting children's lifelong learning and development. Similarly, academic persistence, as delineated by educational entities such as the continuous enrollment from one academic period to the next, is a tangible measure of educational attainment and resilience. Within this scholarly frame, cultural identity is recognized as a pivotal element, rooted in understanding oneself within the cultural and familial context, which serves as a beacon for Latina students navigating the educational landscape (Connecticut Official State Website, 2017; College Future Foundation, 2015).

Through the lens of this conceptual framework, the study seeks to demonstrate the dynamic interactions between the CCW's various capitals and their role in fortifying the cultural

identity and educational perseverance of first-generation Latina students. It underscores the hypothesis that recognizing and leveraging these varied forms of capital and engagement strategies is vital for educational institutions aiming to enhance the academic achievement and persistence of this growing and significant demographic in higher education. Thus, this research contributes to the expanding dialogue on inclusive and culturally responsive academic practices, intending to broaden scholarly understanding and inform effective educational policies and interventions.

Family Engagement

One of the primary focal points of this study revolves around the notion of family engagement, which is delineated in this research as the comprehensive, balanced, and fair collaboration between families, educators, and community partners. The objective is to foster students' ongoing education and growth, from early infancy to college and beyond, into their professional lives. Family engagement is regarded not just as a supplementary assistance but also as a fundamental component of the educational structure that upholds the progress of students (Connecticut Official State Website, 2017).

Academic Persistence

Academic persistence is conceptualized as continuous fall-to-fall enrollment, which aligns with the definitions set forth by the Department of Education and the National College Attainment Network (NCAN). It is operationalized within this study as a student completing the fall term of the subsequent academic year, a tangible measure of educational continuity and success (College Future Foundation, 2015).

Cultural Identity

Cultural identity, which refers to how individuals perceive themselves in relation to their cultural and familial background, plays a crucial influence in shaping students' academic involvement and ability to persist. This statement describes how first-generation Latina college students handle the complexities of their dual cultural existence within the academic realm.

The Relationship Between Key Concepts

This study proposes that the cultural assets inherent in first-generation Latino families and their communities play a crucial role in assisting the educational pursuits of first-generation Latina students. This study acknowledges the unique obstacles encountered by this group and argues that a nuanced understanding and application of their natural, cultural assets and involvement methods are crucial for improving their academic achievements and perseverance.

The Importance of the Study

The importance of this study is in its potential influence on educational policy and implementation. Higher education institutions can boost the success rates of first-generation Latina students by acknowledging and utilizing their family and community support systems. This recognition allows for developing more effective initiatives to help this growing group. This research adds to the academic discussion and offers practical insights for individuals committed to the achievement of first-generation Latina college students.

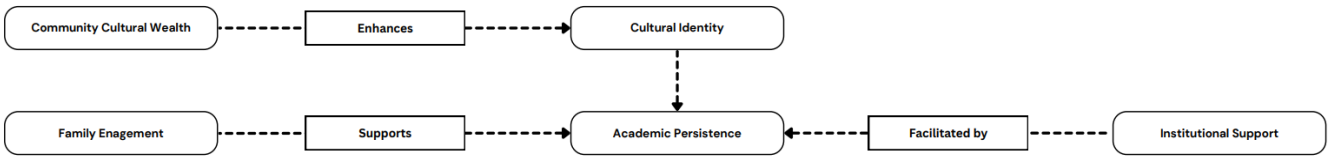
Conceptual Framework Diagram Explanation

The conceptual framework diagram provides a visual narrative of the interconnected roles that community cultural wealth and family engagement play in shaping the academic journey of first-generation Latina college students. At the onset, community cultural wealth, with its six pillars— aspirational, navigational, social, linguistic, familial, and resistance —branches

out to enhance the students' cultural identity. This identity, rooted in a deep awareness of one's cultural and familial heritage, forms a cornerstone of the diagram, indicating its centrality to the student's experience. Parallelly, family engagement is depicted as a foundational support system, bolstering academic persistence, and representing the heart of the educational journey. Institutional support is positioned to facilitate this persistence, acting as an enabling force that intersects with family engagement and cultural identity. The diagram utilizes straight, dashed lines to denote these relationships, signifying a permeable, continuous, and dynamic influence between the elements. This visual representation was chosen to illustrate these relationships' fluidity and reciprocal nature, emphasizing that each component, while distinct, is part of an integrative whole. The diagram aids in demonstrating the conceptual framework by presenting a clear, organized depiction of how each element in the network of support contributes to the overarching goal of academic persistence for these students.

Figure 1.3

Interconnection of Family Engagement and Community Cultural Wealth in the Academic Persistence of First-Generation Latina College Students



Implications for Research

The conceptual framework meticulously developed for this study intricately supports the exploration of the qualitative dimensions of familial and community influences on the academic persistence of first-generation Latina college students, reflected through four critical research

questions. Each question probes a different aspect of community cultural wealth and family engagement, focusing on their qualitative impact on education.

Research Question 1 examines how familial capital, particularly values and customs, influences the aspirational persistence of these students. This question is underpinned by the familial capital element of the framework, suggesting in-depth interviews to uncover how family values and customs foster educational aspirations.

Research Question 2A explores which school-provided family engagement approaches are most effective during transitions from high school to college. The framework suggests this involves assessing the engagement strategies that resonate with these students, using qualitative interviews to capture personal narratives and specific family practices that support educational transitions.

Research Question 2B investigates the intrinsic family values and informal engagement strategies within the home environment that contribute to the educational success and persistence of first-generation Latina college students in college.

Research Question 3 seeks to understand how social and navigational capitals, manifested through community support systems, shape students' preparation and transition to college. The framework's focus on community cultural wealth guides the use of qualitative methods to explore these capitals' roles, likely through interviews that discuss community interactions and support systems that facilitate educational pathways.

Research Question 4 delves into how students utilize their broad spectrum of cultural wealth to navigate and overcome institutional barriers in higher education. This question aligns with the overarching framework by proposing to collect detailed, qualitative data on the use of

aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational, and resistant capital through comprehensive interviews.

Methodologically, the reliance solely on qualitative research and interviews aligns perfectly with the conceptual framework, emphasizing the depth of understanding needed to grasp the complex interactions between cultural wealth and educational persistence. This approach will allow for a nuanced analysis that can articulate the interdependencies and direct influences of various forms of capital and engagement on the educational success of first-generation Latina students. By focusing on individual experiences and personal stories, the research aims to provide rich, contextual insights into the strategies that effectively support these students, offering implications for policy and practice in higher education.

The conceptual framework constructed for this study serves as a robust scaffold that integrates Yosso's Community Cultural Wealth model with a deep investigation into the role of family engagement and institutional support in the academic persistence of first-generation Latina college students. By framing the study around the vital elements of familial capital, community support systems, and a wealth of cultural assets, this framework provides a comprehensive lens to examine how these factors collectively influence educational outcomes. The importance of this framework lies in its potential to highlight and leverage the unique strengths that these students bring to their educational environments, which are often overlooked by traditional academic models.

Looking forward, the framework not only sheds light on the current academic experiences of first-generation Latina students but also lays a fertile ground for future research. There are ample opportunities to expand upon this work by exploring similar frameworks in different cultural contexts or by applying this model to other minority groups facing comparable

challenges in higher education. Future studies could also explore the longitudinal impacts of cultural wealth and family engagement, examining how these elements contribute to long-term educational success and career achievements. Additionally, this framework could inspire educational institutions to develop and implement targeted interventions and support systems that are culturally and contextually tailored to meet the specific needs of first-generation students from diverse backgrounds.

In essence, this conceptual framework does not merely fill a gap in the current academic discourse but opens a gateway to a more inclusive and equitable approach to understanding and supporting the educational journeys of underrepresented students in higher education.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODS

The intricate relationship among cultural wealth, community support, and family engagement that shapes the educational paths of first-generation Latina students emphasizes the need for a thorough investigation of these variables. This study investigated how these factors collectively influence college persistence and success rates among first-generation Latina students, acknowledging that families and communities are fundamental pillars throughout a student's educational journey. This research aims to identify strategies for educational institutions to capitalize on the distinctive qualities of Latino families and communities by analyzing the functions of family participation and community cultural assets. This research will utilize qualitative techniques to understand better these support networks' complex effects on first-generation Latina college students and pinpoint practical solutions that improve their academic performance.

Purpose of the Study

This study aims to uncover the multifaceted impacts of family engagement, community support, and cultural wealth on the persistence and success of first-generation Latina college students. Specifically, it will explore effective family engagement practices within K-12 education years that facilitate a smooth transition to college for these students while delving into the broader influence of community support and cultural identity in navigating higher education challenges. At the heart of this research is a focus on how educational institutions can leverage this understanding to develop programs and strategies that effectively utilize the cultural capital of first-generation Latina students. By examining these supportive mechanisms, the study seeks to enhance the persistence rates of first-generation Latina college students in higher education, providing insights for crafting more inclusive and impactful support systems within educational environments.

Research Questions

Research Question 1: How does familial capital, regarding values and customs within families, influence the aspirational persistence of first-generation Latina college students in their education?

Research Question 2A: Which school-provided family engagement approaches have first-generation Latina college students found to be the most helpful in ensuring their success and persistence when transitioning from high school to college?

Research Question 2B: What intrinsic family values and informal engagement strategies in the home environment contribute to the educational success and persistence of first-generation Latina college students in college?

Research Question 3: How have social and navigational capitals, manifested through community support systems, shaped first-generation Latina college students' preparation for and transition to college?

Question 4: How have first-generation Latina college students utilized their cultural wealth, explicitly drawing on aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational, and resistant capitals, to overcome institutional barriers in higher education?

Research Design

The participants' lived experiences are examined in this study using a critical phenomenological method, emphasizing structured interviews as a means of gathering data. Utilizing a purposive sample technique, individuals were chosen based on their distinct perspectives on the subject matter, guaranteeing a comprehensive and heterogeneous examination of encounters. The interviewees consented to participate in planned video conference interviews, in which the interviewer and interviewee had a structured conversation at a set time. The critical phenomenological approach inspired the interview method, emphasizing the value of recording participants' experiences and viewpoints. This method aligns with the critical reflection principle and enables a thorough analysis of how cultural and social settings influence personal experiences. This study prioritizes the participant's precise descriptions over the researcher's interpretations by stressing organized interviews. This methodology plays a crucial role in revealing how participants navigate and comprehend their environments, providing valuable insights into the effects of external support systems on their educational paths and resilience.

Procedures

Participant Selection

Consistent with Creswell and Poth (2007) and the characteristics of phenomenology, they suggested 10 to 15 individuals for a study; a diverse group of 17 first-generation Latina students over the age of 19 were identified for this study. According to Moustakas's (1994) guidelines for finding and choosing study participants, there are no predetermined standards for finding and choosing research subjects. However, age, race, religion, ethnicity and culture, gender, and political and economic variables are general considerations. In addition, the research participants must have firsthand knowledge of the phenomenon, have a strong desire to comprehend its nature and significance, be willing to participate in a lengthy interview, and grant the researcher permission to record and publish the data in a dissertation and other works.

The study focused on 17 participants who were 19 or older and identified as Latina and first-generation. The first step in carrying out the study was to identify the eligibility criteria for students to participate: first-generation college students, 19 years of age or older, and Latina. Next, an announcement was placed on a professional social media network, LinkedIn, inviting participants along with a Google survey to complete and asking them to confirm participant criteria. Finally, to those who expressed interest via the Google survey and fit the eligibility criteria, an introductory email briefly explaining the study's purpose was sent, explaining the interview length and the gift incentive for participating. In that email, a calendar scheduling link was provided, allowing participants to schedule time with the interviewer to share more about the study and eligibility, verify their willingness to participate, and move forward with scheduling the official interview.

Protection of Participants

Protecting the participants in this study was the most important thing, so this study used the ethical issues in qualitative research outlined in Creswell and Poth (2007). Before collecting the data, the first step was to go through the approval process of the local college access organizations and identify a gatekeeper at the organization that would support the research process. Ten steps make up the University of Arizona's IRB process for research involving human subjects: development and submission of the project in eIRB, acquisition of necessary approvals for submission, IRB review, obtaining all approvals, ethical oversight, mandatory training, obtaining additional approvals, preparing necessary forms, and commencement of the research upon receiving IRB approval. Ensuring ethical standards and compliance was ensured throughout the research process.

Furthermore, at the beginning of the study, the purpose of the study was shared with all participants while reminding them that participation was entirely voluntary and not required. In addition, before the study, interviewers learned more about the participants' religion, gender, culture, and other differences to respect their beliefs. Finally, in collecting the data, the researcher intentionally gathered information by being attentive to opportunities for reciprocity and offering an incentive for participation.

Expert Review

Before conducting the research for this study, a qualitative mini-study was performed using a survey with sixteen questions provided to a parent and their child in their second year of college and considered a first-generation student. One reviewer, Dr. Demps, reviewed the survey questions and results. Dr. Demps is a faculty member at the University of Arizona and is an Assistant Professor in Educational Policy Studies and Practice. She provided constructive

feedback on the survey questions and ultimately approved the questions for both participants via an online Zoom interview.

Data Collection

After identifying 22 students via LinkedIn who were willing to participate in the study and meet the participant criteria: Latina, first-generation 19-years of age or older, they were given a consent form, and after it was completed, the coordinating and scheduling of interviews took place. The interviews took place via video conference, where they were asked a series of 20 questions, which took approximately 30-45 minutes. All interviews were recorded to be transcribed and saved on an external password-protected hard drive. Creswell and Poth's (2007) suggestions were also followed, which included using high-quality recording equipment for interviews and creating a comprehensive list of the different types of data gathered. Anonymity was kept by using pseudonyms for participants in the data. A master list was used and saved separately as a visual tool for finding and identifying information for the study and creating a data-collection matrix.

Data Analysis

This study adopted a phenomenological approach, utilizing the Data Analysis Spiral developed by Creswell and Poth (2007) to guide the data analysis process. Participants were selected and agreed to be interviewed at prearranged times via synchronous video conferences, ensuring that their experiences were captured authentically. The data collected from these interviews were then meticulously transcribed using an internet transcription service, setting the stage for in-depth analysis.

Following Creswell and Poth's iterative methodology, the first step involved data management, where interview transcripts were systematically organized to facilitate detailed

examination. This phase of the analysis process allowed for immersion reading, during which emerging concepts and reflective thoughts were noted. Such deep interaction with the data went beyond mere surface-level examination, enabling the recording of initial thoughts, trends, and potential themes that reflected the nuances of the participants' experiences.

As the analysis progressed, the descriptive coding phase followed, where the data were segmented into 364 unique codes that encapsulated the intricacies of the participants' narratives. This coding was not static; it required continuous refinement to effectively capture the essence of the data. The subsequent thematic analysis phase involved grouping these codes into broader themes that resonated with significant aspects of the participants' experiences and were linked to theoretical frameworks. This cyclical and recursive approach emphasized not only data security and accessibility but also laid the groundwork for synthesizing the data into meaningful themes that were deeply grounded in the participants' lived experiences.

Overall, the structured yet adaptable framework provided by the Data Analysis Spiral ensured a rigorous and reflective analysis process, crucial for exploring the depth of phenomenological data and enhancing our understanding of the themes that emerged.

Data management was conducted using MAXQDA software. This involved entering all the relevant codes while removing data from participants who did not meet the criteria for inclusion in the study, specifically two male participants and several who had already graduated college. This ensured that the analysis would focus only on the targeted demographic—first-generation Latina college students still pursuing their degrees. In the next step of the procedure, the descriptive coding phase, the data was meticulously divided into a total of 364 unique codes. These codes were designed to reflect the nuances of the participants' experiences. This coding method required frequent review and improvement of the codes to capture the data's substance

effectively. Following the coding process, the analysis progressed to the thematic analysis phase. The codes were grouped together into broader themes that encompassed the important experiences and insights shared by first-generation Latina college students. This theme creation was based on an iterative process of integrating, contrasting, and comparing data points across the dataset.

Subsequently, I employed Yosso's CCW framework to categorize these themes. The framework describes six types of capital—Aspirational, Navigational, Social, Linguistic, Familial, and Resistant Capital. Each identified theme and sub-themes were analyzed to determine how they fit into these six forms of capital, thus aligning the qualitative data with Yosso's theoretical constructs. This step was crucial as it directly linked the empirical findings with the theoretical framework that guides this study.

For each of the research questions, which themselves were designed to explore the six types of capital, I integrated direct quotes from participants. This was done to exemplify how each specific type of capital was represented in the students' experiences. By associating direct quotes with the corresponding sub-themes and types of capital, the study not only provided empirical evidence but also enriched the narrative with the authentic voices of the participants.

In the latter phases of Creswell and Poth's spiral, the results were interpreted considering the study's theoretical framework, the Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) model. This analysis critically examined how first-generation Latina students' experiences interact with larger socio-cultural and educational systems rather than merely presenting the facts. The spiral proposed by Creswell and Poth stressed the dynamic interaction between data collection, processing, and interpretation while providing a flexible and iterative method. Through a more thorough engagement with the data, this approach enabled a more nuanced understanding of the lived

experiences of first-generation Latina college students and the cultural wealth that influences their academic paths.

Instruments

One primary researcher created the tools to collect and analyze the data. In addition, the following instruments were used:

- Laptop for all data collection
- Google Docs to create an interview guide questions and the survey form
- Rev.com for transcribing
- MAXQDA Data Analysis Software
- Gmail for emailing participants.
- Zoom.com to conduct interviews.

Researcher's Role

As a first-generation Latina navigating the complex terrain of higher education, my journey into this research field is deeply rooted in my narrative. Facing academic, cultural, and social challenges due to a lack of familial experience with the American education system, I charted my own course. Despite the steadfast support from my parents, immigrants from Mexico, their unfamiliarity with college processes left me to make decisions in solitude. This significant hurdle was only fully understood and overcome during my master's program, where I found a sense of community among my peers as a New York City teaching fellow, marking a pivotal turning point in my educational journey.

Building on this experience, my role as a researcher involved creating tools for data collection, communicating with participants through emailed surveys, and selecting candidates for individual interviews. My approach was informed by both the knowledge acquired from my

master's program and my ongoing doctoral studies at the University of Arizona, providing a robust framework for engaging with my research subjects effectively.

This research is not just an academic pursuit for me; it is a personal endeavor to unravel the complexities I once faced and that countless first-generation Latina students continue to navigate. My experiences have instilled in me a profound appreciation for the role of community and familial engagement in education. This realization was further reinforced during my tenure as a training consultant for a local non-profit organization, where I specialized in enhancing parent engagement strategies within schools. This role gave me invaluable insights into the importance of involving parents in their children's educational journey. It underscored the undeniable correlation between family engagement, community support, and the persistence of first-generation Latina students in their academic endeavors. Therefore, this research project aims to study and clarify the dynamics of family and community engagement in supporting academic perseverance among first-generation Latina students. It is a convergence of my professional ideas and personal experiences.

My research is motivated by my experiences as a first-generation Latina and my professional observations. It highlights the need for culturally inclusive educational practices by identifying a significant knowledge gap regarding the influence of family and community engagement on the academic persistence of first-generation Latina students.

In my experience as a training consultant, I have seen the impact of family and community on a first-generation student's education. On the other hand, more research needs to be done on bridging family and community tactics for this population of students. Consequently, my research seeks to close this gap by examining the part that family and community involvement play in these individuals' journeys. Due to my professional experience, I have

developed an understanding of the distinct difficulties that comparable students encounter, underscoring the necessity of using individualized engagement strategies to promote their success.

Because of my personal experience as a first-generation college student, I have a unique perspective on Latina students' academic opportunities and challenges. This perspective has helped me develop empathy and deeply understand the intricate relationship between cultural identity, family dynamics, and academic success.

The University of Arizona provided me with excellent academic preparation that established my methodological foundation for this research undertaking. As part of my education, I took a thorough course on data methodologies, which gave me the information and abilities I needed to plan, carry out, and evaluate research accurately. This course covered a wide range of approaches and technologies, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of efficient data gathering and analysis principles.

In addition to this hands-on instruction, Moustakas' (1994) literature on phenomenological research methods has significantly impacted my research methodology. Moustakas's literature, which emphasizes the significance of capturing the substance of participants' experiences, gave me a deep theoretical framework for comprehending and carrying out qualitative research.

With my extensive knowledge and expertise in research methods, I am well prepared to do a study that comprehensively understands the intricacies of personal experiences while maintaining strict adherence to rigorous methodologies. My expertise in these fields guarantees that I can carry out a thorough and perceptive inquiry within the context of phenomenological research. Although my personal experiences have ignited my curiosity in this subject, I have

consistently employed the technique of bracketing throughout the study process. This entails suspending my personal experiences to let the experiences of my participants be the exclusive voice, guaranteeing an impartial and genuine investigation of their lived realities.

Previous Knowledge and Bias/Positionality Statement

As a first-generation student of color, I must identify the obstacles for first-generation students in their K-12 experience to identify the strategies and resources to ensure equitable access to postsecondary education. Therefore, in exploring the topic of parent engagement among first-generation students and the correlation to first-generation students' persistence in college, I must express my positionality. According to Bourke (2004), positionally is objective and subjective, and it is virtually impossible to separate ourselves from honest research. However, researchers must remain aware of their subjectivities. Although I am a first-generation Mexican American, heterosexual female, I grew up in a predominately Latino community in La Puente, California, approximately twenty miles east of Downtown Los Angeles. Although I was the second child in my household to attend public school, my parents immigrated to California from Mexico, and neither of them completed high school in Mexico. My school was predominantly Latino students.

When I transitioned to middle school, I noticed differences between my level of understanding in school and how engaged other classmates' parents were in their education. The other students in my classes, whose primary language was English, were often placed in Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) classes. Before middle school, I was doing well and had decent grades. I started to feel that I was at a deficit in middle school because my parents were not native English speakers, and they did not understand the education system very well. In addition, I struggled with math very early on and continued to do so throughout college. I often felt my

peers knew more than I did and became aware that my strength was not math. I recall that during one of the first parent-teacher conferences in the fourth grade, my deficit in math was the primary focus. I had to translate my deficit for my mom since she did not speak English, and my teacher, a white woman, did not speak Spanish. My mom made every effort to attend my parent-teacher conferences. However, there was only so much she could do to support me until middle school, as she needed to become more familiar with supporting my learning best. I wanted to go to college, and although my parents were supportive and encouraging, they lacked the skills and resources to help me plan my education. More support was needed at school to educate my parents on the importance of college and how to prepare for the transition to college.

I went on to attend Mount San Antonio Community College, as I needed to meet the requirements to attend a four-year university. I aspired to attend UCLA. However, I struggled to complete my community college requirements in math and was eventually placed on academic probation in my sixth year at community college. As a result, I was referred to the disabilities office for a series of tests that determined I had an undiagnosed learning disability in math, dyscalculia. This experience eventually led me to major in education and became a special education teacher in the Bronx, New York, where I taught for three years. I later transitioned to a College Readiness Counselor position at a local Los Angeles, California non-profit. There, I worked with a caseload of current and former foster youth, grades 9-12, providing them with college readiness guidance.

Through these experiences, I developed a unique lens into the challenges that first-generation students and their families experience when attempting to transition to postsecondary education.

Qualifications

Training and experience conducting interviews consist of formal classes in the Doctor of Education program at the University of Arizona. Within this program, interviews used for field research were supervised and guided by course requirements.

Ethical Considerations

Creswell and Poth's (2018) ethical framework was used at each stage of the research process, including planning the study, starting it, collecting data, analyzing it, reporting the results, and publishing it. In addition, the University of Arizona IRB board completed IRB approval for this project before beginning the study.

Summary

This study examined how specific cultural capital traits, including aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational, and resistant capital, contribute to the success and persistence of first-generation Latina students in potentially marginalizing learning environments. The study drew on the frameworks proposed by Yosso (2005) and Locke et al. (2017). The aim was to highlight the methods through which these students leverage their distinctive cultural resources to achieve academic success. A homogeneous sampling strategy will be used in this study; 17 first-generation Latina students were interviewed. Through my own life experiences and my current doctoral program of study, I have gained a distinctive perspective on the difficulties first-generation students and their families face while seeking to move to postsecondary education. Through this research, I focused more on family engagement, specifically regarding first-generation Latina students.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

Introduction

The Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) model is used to inform this phenomenological study that examined the support systems of first-generation Latina college students. Based on Yosso (2005) and Locke et al. (2017), this study explored how certain cultural capital traits—like aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational, and resistant capital—support these students' success and perseverance in potentially marginalizing learning environments. Its goal is to highlight how these students can capitalize on their distinct cultural strengths to succeed academically.

The chapter's organization is consistent with its theoretical foundation. It examines how first-generation Latina students' education is shaped by their families and communities using the Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) model. It examines how each kind of CCW capital enhances their experience and offers suggestions for improving these support networks based on phenomenological observations.

In keeping with the asset-based viewpoint of the CCW model, this chapter also aims to place the results in the larger context of the discussion around Latina students' educational success. Doing this advances our understanding of the complex support systems that first-generation Latina college students rely on for their education. It also provides valuable information for institutions looking to create more welcoming and encouraging learning environments.

According to People (2020), each research question should be fully addressed in the findings section, with quotes from interview transcripts and supplemental resources to support the conclusions. As such, the present chapter employs a phenomenological methodology and the

Community Cultural Wealth model, organizing the results using research questions as headings. This analytical structure makes it possible to thoroughly analyze how cultural capital affects first-generation Latina students' academic performance.

Using the framework from Chapter 3 as a guide, this study explores the experiences of first-generation Latina students through synchronous video interviews, informed by the phenomenology of Moustakas (1994). It strongly emphasizes documenting actual events while ignoring prejudice to highlight participants' opinions. Based on the research of Lichtman (2010) and Creswell and Poth (2007), this approach thoroughly examines how these students use their wealth from the community to further their education. It also establishes a basis for a nuanced, participant-centered explanation of the findings' importance and consequences.

Description of the Sample

To investigate the influence of outside support, this study uses a homogenous sample strategy to examine the educational paths of 17 first-generation Latina college students older than 19. Participants were offered a range of expertise from various academic subjects and were chosen via a rigorous procedure advised by Creswell and Poth (2007) and directed by Moustakas (1994). In line with phenomenological research principles, this focused strategy, which uses social media for recruitment, seeks to comprehend the subtleties of community and family support in promoting educational success among this population and to record their distinct stories.

The study emphasizes the influence of community and family support on the academic success of first-generation Latina college students, using social media for recruitment to access a broad, engaged group. By collecting detailed narratives from 17 students, the research explores the impact of cultural identity and support systems on educational achievement. These stories

highlight resilience and diverse support networks, offering insights to improve support for this marginalized group. This modern approach not only streamlines data collection but also aligns with contemporary engagement strategies, making it effective in capturing the unique challenges faced by these students.

Table 1.1
Demographic Summary of First-Generation Latina College Students

Participant	Age Group	Parents w/Bachelors	Highest Degree Completed	Higher Ed. Institution Attending	Field of Study	Year of College
Lorena	Over 19	No	Bachelor's	4-Year	School Psychology	Graduate -Year 1
Elena	19	No	High School	2-Year	Communications	Undergraduate – Year 2
Gabriela	Over 19	No	High School	2-Year	English/Computer Science	Undergraduate – Year 4
Isabella	19	No	High School	2-Year	Economics/Accounting	Undergraduate – Year 2
Carmen	19	No	High School	2-Year	Economics	Undergraduate – Year 2
Lucia	19	No	High School	2-Year	Kinesiology	Undergraduate – Year 2
Mariana	19	No	High School	2-Year	Political Science	Undergraduate – Year 2
Valeria	Over 19	No	Bachelor's	4-Year	Marriage/Family Therapy	Graduate – Year 1
Bianca	Over 19	No	High School	2-Year	Environmental Studies	Undergraduate – Year 3
Leticia	Over 19	No	Bachelor's	4-Year	Educational Counseling	Graduate – Year 2
Adriana	19	No	High School	2-Year	Education	Undergraduate – Year 2
Camila	Over 19	No	Bachelor's	4-Year	Education	Graduate – Year 1
Daniela	Over 19	No	Bachelor's	4-Year	Psychology	Graduate – Year 1
Natalia	Over 19	No	Bachelor's	4-year	Higher Education	Graduate – Year 2
Alejandra	Over 19	No	High School	2-year	Education/Spanish	Undergraduate – Year 3
Paula	Over 19	No	Master's	4-year	Higher Education	Undergraduate – Year 3
Teresa	Over 19	No	Bachelor's	4-year	Sociology	Graduate – Year 3

Presentation of Data and Results of the Analysis

A qualitative study was conducted to better understand the experiences of first-generation Latina college students navigating the challenges of higher education, and the results are presented in this chapter. Four main research questions were addressed, each concentrating on a distinct facet of cultural richness and capital, which served as the study's emphasis. These questions aimed to investigate the complex relationships between familial, social, navigational, resistive, and family involvement capitals and how these capitals affect these students' success and perseverance in their post-secondary educational journey.

Research question one explores the significance of familial capital by examining how family values and traditions affect first-generation Latina college students' aspirational persistence in their education. Research question two is about family participation and students' responses to what strategies have helped them succeed and persevere during the high school to college transition. The focus of research question three is examining the influence of social and navigational capital on students' readiness and adjustment to college life, as demonstrated by community support networks. Research question four, which asks how first-generation Latina college students have used their different capitals to navigate and overcome institutional constraints in higher education, concludes the discussion on the spectrum of cultural capital.

The study's data collection and analysis highlight the numerous and essential ways that first-generation Latina college students' educational experiences are influenced and supported by their cultural richness. Insights into the lived experiences, coping mechanisms, and resilience of these students as they seek higher education are provided by the following sections, which also outline the themes that emerged from the data and are intimately linked to each study topic.

Familial Capital and Aspirational Persistence

Research Question 1: *How does familial capital, regarding values and customs within families, influence the aspirational persistence of first-generation Latina college students in their education?*

This study emphasizes family values and traditions as a pivotal form of capital, especially when comprehending how familial capital supports the aspirational perseverance of first-generation Latina college students. It explores how these students' familial capital significantly impacts their resilience, long-term learning goals, and aspirations. This type of capital captures the spirit of cultural identity, family history, and inherited values since it is so strongly infused with cultural dynamics and family influence. Combined, these components create a pathway for tenacity in the face of difficulty and cultivate an atmosphere supporting academic success.

Through an understanding of their familial and contextual landscapes, Ceja's (2004) study on resilience theory demonstrates how Chicana students use parental guidance to turn life's adversities into strengths. This study explored how the academic aspirations and resilience of first-generation Latina college students are shaped by the complex web of familial rituals and beliefs, which are symbolic of tenacity and support from the community.

This study emphasizes the critical significance of familial capital by examining the intricate linkages between cultural identity, familial background, and the participants' steadfast commitment to their education. It illustrates how this capital helps first-generation Latina college students achieve their goals and persevere in their studies by giving them the fortitude and resolve to face challenges head-on.

Work Ethic and Persistence Mentality

The core of this familial work ethic is succinctly expressed by Adriana, who said:

"I do not know if this is stereotypical, but it is just something that I have always noticed. Mexicans are hardworking. You can never take that away from their work ethic. For them, it is always "I can" or "Yes, you can do it...you can." That is a persistence mentality."

This statement emphasizes how deeply cultural norms influence the development of an unwavering belief in one's skills and the significance of persistence.

Adriana's reflection on the work ethic and persistence characteristic of her cultural background aligns closely with Yosso's CCW model, particularly the concepts of aspirational and familial capital. Her statement underscores how deeply ingrained cultural norms contribute to fostering a strong belief in one's abilities and the importance of perseverance.

In the CCW framework, aspirational capital refers to the ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future, even in the face of real and perceived barriers. This form of capital is vividly illustrated by the "I can" or "Yes, you can do it" mentality that Adriana describes. It showcases a resilience and forward-looking perspective that transcends immediate obstacles through a collective cultural narrative of possibility and achievement.

Familial capital extends this idea by emphasizing the importance of kinship ties in nurturing motivation, educational aspirations, and emotional support. The work ethic described by Adriana is not just a personal trait but a communal value passed down through generations, reinforcing the family's role in supporting and believing in each other's success. This collective encouragement can be pivotal in building the psychological and motivational foundation that enables individuals to persist in their educational and personal endeavors.

Adaptability and Resilience

The same participant, Adriana, offered personal views on family relations, further highlighting the importance of these principles, stating:

> Hard work. Work ethic. Because my parents are, my mom is more of a stay-at-home mom, but when the time did come, especially during COVID-19, it was like she worked; she knew how to work. My dad has always been a work type of guy. So even if he lost his job or they stopped, he works as a driller. My dad always picks up something else or picks up a side hustle. That is how it was.

Adriana's narrative about her family's response to challenges, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, vividly illustrates several key components of Yosso's CCW model, particularly familial capital. Her account sheds light on the profound influence that familial values and adaptive strategies have on shaping resilience and resourcefulness.

Adriana emphasizes the strong work ethic embedded within her family, highlighting her mother's ability to adapt and contribute economically during a crisis and her father's relentless pursuit of work opportunities, even in the face of job loss. This portrayal of familial roles not only reflects a commitment to providing for the family but also instills a sense of duty and resilience. In the context of the CCW model, familial capital is enriched through these narratives, demonstrating how family members model coping strategies and work ethics that reinforce the collective family support system. This capital provides emotional, moral, and sometimes economic support that underpins the individual's ability to engage with and persist through educational pursuits and life challenges.

Seeking Support and Advocacy

Another participant, Bianca, highlighted the importance of looking for and using support, reflecting on the lessons they learned from their mother:

> The first thing that comes to mind is that my mom is unapologetic about seeking helpful programs. She would say, 'If a program exists and you can apply for it, it will make your life easier. Do not feel ashamed about asking for that help.' So, if it is going to some office and being like, I cannot pay this, I cannot do this. I need help. She instilled in me that there is no shame in that, and these programs are there for you, so take advantage of them. So, whenever there is something that I am like, this is ridiculous, I will go to the office and tell them, this is ridiculous.

Bianca's reflection on her mother's proactive approach to seeking support and utilizing available resources exemplifies familial capital. Her narrative provides a clear demonstration of how familial teachings can empower individuals to effectively navigate systems and advocate for themselves. Familial capital is vividly represented as Bianca discusses how her mother instilled in her the understanding that seeking help is not a sign of weakness but a strategic use of available resources. The familial support and advice mold her approach to challenges, enhancing her resilience and persistence. This aspect of familial capital may provide emotional and moral support while also imparting practical knowledge and strategies for dealing with bureaucratic and institutional barriers. This approach might help students like Bianca to overcome obstacles and harness the full extent of institutional support available to them, thereby enhancing their potential for success in higher education.

Effective School Provided Family Engagement Approaches

Research Question 2A: *Which school-provided family engagement approaches have first-generation Latina college students experienced when transitioning from high school to college?*

When research question 2A was addressed, it became clear that none of the 17 participants had any successful family involvement techniques to help them succeed and persevere during the high school to college transition. The following participant quotes provide more insight into the nature of their viewpoints and experiences with family engagement throughout this crucial period of change.

Building Bridges Between Schools and Families

The results emphasized the importance of families and schools working together and communicating well to build a sense of community. Participants highlighted the need for schools to start workshops and help parents and students in navigating the college preparation process, observing a notable disconnect between family involvement and school initiatives.

Through participant accounts, the dynamics of school-family connections are explained in detail, highlighting their positive aspects and areas requiring development. For example, Lucia draws attention to the low level of parental involvement that she saw at her high school:

> My high school lacked parent involvement. They had the PTA, but there were moms who did not have work. My school should have emphasized little workshops so parents could have an idea of what their student was going to get through and the possibilities that there were for students.

Two other participants shared this viewpoint, pointing out that their high schools were not doing enough to help and advise students about the procedures involved in pursuing higher education, such as financial aid and preparing for standardized tests. Lorena, looking back on her time in

high school, outlined the meager assistance she had from her school and emphasized the proactive measures she took to get ready for college:

> They could have done more outreach. I had a very negative view of my high school. Looking back, they did not do much. I did not see much mail coming our way about programs or events. I wish they would have just known more about the systems of higher education, the whole process, applications, financial aid, and how to. Many students whose parents went to college know that their students need to be involved in school; they need to take the SAT or ACT.

While her high school provided some college counselors, Bianca expressed how little assistance she felt was provided and that she was better off getting information and preparation outside the classroom. The difference between the proactive actions that students frequently need to do on their own and the institutional support systems is demonstrated by their story:

> I mean, I am sure that we had a college fair, and I know that they specifically hired one [a college counselor]; it was a small school; there were 400 kids in total, so there were only a hundred kids in my class. We had one college counselor for 200 kids: the 10th, 11th, and 12th graders. So, I know that they ended up hiring more college counselors. I did not find them helpful, but they hired them. I looked for that outside of school, and I did it myself.

As evidenced by the findings, participants in this section agreed that greater school-family ties are necessary to create a welcoming environment for students moving to higher education. The effectiveness of school outreach programs and the participation of families were found to be significantly lacking by the participants. Despite resources such as Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) and college counselors, students often felt pressured to research and prepare for college

independently. In participant narratives, for instance, it was stated that parents seldom attended school functions and that little help was available to guide parents through getting ready for college, including how to handle financial assistance and what classes to take. Based on their experiences with insufficient institutional assistance, which these narratives highlighted, the participants sought outside options to prepare for college.

Navigating Cultural, Societal, and Educational Expectations

This theme highlights participants' views on schools' need to modify engagement tactics to accommodate students from various backgrounds while identifying the intersection of cultural, societal, and educational aspects. Recognizing and adjusting to the diverse cultural and societal circumstances of families was a topic of discussion between two research participants. Although they must fully appreciate the demands of student's workloads or the relevance of their educational pursuits, they identify both the advantages and difficulties associated with parental understanding of the educational system.

One participant, Carmen, emphasized the significance of family support and how it affects students' perceptions of the worth of education. She pointed out the subtle but significant influence that parental support has on kids' educational goals, saying that even seemingly insignificant parental support and an understanding of the value of education can significantly impact student's academic motivations. She compares this with her classmates whose parents did not participate in their scholastic pursuits, including asking about homework:

> The main benefit is that the student understands that attending school is important, which becomes ingrained in their mindset. They know that they have the support of their parents, which seems so small, but I have friends whose parents would not even ask them if they had homework.

Two interviewees shared their difficulties juggling their academic aspirations with their cultural and familial responsibilities. Adriana talked about how hard it is to explain to their parents the importance of the increasing workload and how hard it is for them to get help, even though their parents may still need to fully understand the magnitude of the challenges they experience in school:

> The workload has gotten more intense, and I have let my parents know. But for me, the struggle is understanding the significance of it. They know that I am doing my work and that I have a hard time with it, but all they can tell me is, "Oh, well, ask for help. It is okay to ask for help.

Alejandra emphasized the challenges of being a first-generation student and navigating college independently with little direction or understanding, which is made worse by staying home. “Being first-gen and having to figure everything out, not knowing what college was like, and then having to be at home the entire time was different.”

These stories highlight the various difficulties students encounter in balancing the expectations of higher education with their family expectations.

Support Systems and Institutional Responsiveness

In this theme, students emphasize the need for guidance, opportunities, and critical institutional evaluation. They also highlight the significance of responsive educational institutions and wide support networks. Camila shared a poignant story of how a personal crisis led to her academic counselor encouraging her to apply to college, revealing the potential impact of attentive support systems:

> But something that helped me a lot was my personal statement. I got reported as a senior because I said some things. My academic counselor pulled me out of class to discuss it,

> opening a whole case. So, I had to talk to social workers, police officers, and my mom. So, they brought it up. But because of that, my counselor saw that I had a story and encouraged me to apply to college.

Two more interviewees discussed that parents' engagement in college is less than in high school and the general advice counselors provided throughout the pandemic. Carmen had the following to say on the topic:

> She does not come to my appointments with me, or she does not ask about my academic plan, but she is standoffish now that I am in college. Most of her involvement was in high school or middle school and such.

This highlights the critical role of parental support and how it affects students' perceptions of the worth of education. Her observation emphasizes parental support's modest but significant influence on students' academic career goals. Alejandra shared her experience with her school support system:

> I want to say that I found out from my high school counselor that I had to do the FAFSA, but it was very generic information. Again, it was during the pandemic, so no one knew what was going on or what my path would look like.

The following quote from Daniela states that she felt there was a lack of individualized support, which resulted in her decision to attend community college to make fundamental academic improvements. She also felt the school failed to adequately prepare parents to help their children navigate the educational system. As a result, it became necessary for her to look outside the school system:

> I do not think they did enough to educate parents because again, even with my counselors, they would advise my parents, yeah, 'have her start thinking of what four-

> year school she is interested in,'…but truthfully, I was still not academically strong …so I decided to go to a community college because I wanted to rebuild on those basic skills. I had to have separate conversations with my aunt's friends that went to college. I did not feel I was receiving the information I needed at my high school. I had to find other ways.

These first-generation student accounts highlight the distinct challenges they confront, such as the necessity of looking outside of the school for direction and assistance. Changes in parental participation and the kind of support offered by educational institutions also occur with the shift from high school to college.

Family Strategies for Student Success

Research Question 2B: *What intrinsic family values and informal engagement strategies, in the home environment, contribute to the educational success and persistence of first-generation Latina college students in college?*

This question explores the family values and informal strategies that foster educational success and persistence among first-generation Latina college students, highlighting the unique familial contributions often overlooked by formal educational frameworks.

Familial Influence and Educational Aspirations

The following reflection shared by Leticia illustrates the pivotal role of familial capital. Her experiences underscore how family support and engagement significantly contribute to academic motivation and success.

> My parents were there for me. My mom would leave a bit early from work to go to my conferences. And she was always there for those. So, hearing the professors talk about me in a good way to my mom and just hearing that validation, I guess it was nice. Just making them proud and just having them involved kind of played a huge role. And I see

> how different it was for my sibling, who didn't get that at all. So, I think it's just really important. Have parents there and just telling you congrats or just good job. I'm not saying I did it only for them, but a huge part was getting a good grade and telling my mom or telling my dad and just having that proud moment.

Leticia's narrative highlights the vital support she received from her parents, particularly her mother's efforts to attend school conferences. This involvement provided Leticia with both motivation and emotional support, crucial elements of familial capital. For Leticia, her mother's presence, and the positive feedback from professors during these conferences reinforced her academic self-esteem and drive.

The emotional support from seeing her parents proud and involved in her academic life played a critical role in shaping Leticia's educational aspirations. The validation she received during these interactions not only boosted her confidence but also deepened her desire to excel academically. This support is an essential aspect of familial capital, where encouragement and pride from family members enhance the student's commitment and motivation.

Leticia's observation of the contrasting experiences between herself and her sibling, who did not receive the same level of parental involvement, further emphasizes the impact of familial capital. This comparison sheds light on how varying degrees of parental support can influence children's academic paths and emotional well-being differently.

Leticia points out that parental praise, such as simple acknowledgments like "congrats" or "good job," was significant to her. These moments of recognition are more than just casual praise; they are fundamental building blocks of self-worth and ambition within the educational journey. They foster an environment where academic achievements are celebrated, which can be incredibly motivating for students.

While Leticia mentions that her academic efforts were not solely for her parents, the desire to make them proud and share her successes with them ties closely to aspirational capital. Aspirational capital refers to the ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future despite perceived barriers, fueled by supportive familial environments that highlight the possibilities beyond current circumstances.

Similarly, the following narrative from Adriana clearly illustrates the profound impact of familial capital. Her story highlights the influence of generational aspirations and the direct encouragement from her family in shaping her educational goals and career path.

> Well, I don't know. It's been like they've always pushed me to go to school. They've always pushed me, 'Do it, get your degree.' 'You don't want to be how we are.' Education runs in my mom's family; her tias (aunts) were teachers in Mexico, and they had an impact on her. My mom always wanted to be an elementary school teacher, but she never could. She didn't have her papers, and she didn't have the financial means to do it at the time. She didn't even have her resident card or anything. She would always be like, 'Adriana, I could see you being a teacher.' You're really good at helping kids and getting them to understand things. And I'm like, yeah, but I don't know if I want to be a teacher. I like it, though. I've done internships and stuff with kindergarten and fifth grade, and I do like it. So that's why I did this degree.

Adriana's account of her family's encouragement for her to pursue higher education reflects the strong presence of familial capital. Her family's encouragement to obtain a degree and pursue a professional career that differs from their own socioeconomic conditions exemplifies how familial support systems can motivate and guide educational pursuits.

The aspirations within Adriana's family, particularly her mother's unfulfilled dream of becoming an elementary school teacher, directly contribute to Adriana's educational path. Despite her mother's barriers, such as lack of legal documentation and financial means, the value placed on education remained strong in her family. This narrative not only reflects aspirational capital but also shows how previous generations' unmet aspirations can influence and motivate current generations to achieve those unfulfilled dreams.

The fact that Adriana's mother's aunts were teachers in Mexico and had a significant impact on her mother's view of education underlines the role of positive family role models in shaping aspirations. These familial influences embed a respect for and value of education that is passed down, influencing Adriana's views on her career possibilities.

Adriana's engagement in internships with kindergarten and fifth-grade students, spurred by her family's encouragement, demonstrates her navigational capital. She uses her familial support as a foundation to explore and gain practical experience in the educational field, helping her to navigate her career path effectively despite initial uncertainties about becoming a teacher. The encouragement from Adriana's mother to see her as a potential teacher plays a significant emotional role in Adriana's career exploration. This type of motivational support helps build self-efficacy and confidence in her abilities, particularly in helping children understand academic material.

Alejandra's reflections vividly illustrate how familial capital and aspirational capital, play a critical role in shaping her educational journey and motivations:

> I've always known I was going to go to college. It was just something my parents told me since I was little, like, 'Oh yeah, you're going to go to college.' So that's definitely my biggest motivation. I think the fact that my parents didn't have the opportunity to do what

> I have the opportunity to do. I feel like I have to take advantage of that and their hard work. Also, they really do value education, and seeing how their lives have been and how hard it's been for them to maintain their careers and constantly having a sense of instability and financial instability has also motivated me.

She credits her parents' early and consistent reinforcement of the expectation that she would attend college as a foundational element of her motivation. This expectation, rooted in familial beliefs and values about education, provides a strong psychological and emotional framework that supports her academic aspirations. Familial capital here not only includes the support and encouragement from her parents but also the cultural emphasis on the importance of education transmitted through family interactions.

The emphasis on Alejandra's awareness of her parents' missed opportunities highlights the concept of aspirational capital. Knowing that her parents could not pursue their own educational and professional dreams due to various barriers, Alejandra feels a strong responsibility to seize the opportunities available to her that her parents did not have. This sense of duty and recognition of her privileged position relative to her parents' experiences motivates her to fulfill not only her own aspirations but also those unmet aspirations of her parents.

Alejandra's narrative also indirectly touches on navigational capital, as she acknowledges the challenges her parents faced in maintaining stable careers due to their educational limitations. This awareness likely influences her own educational strategies, guiding her decisions and actions to navigate through educational systems more effectively to achieve stability that her parents could not. The constant financial instability her parents experienced, as mentioned by Alejandra, serves as a significant motivator for her to pursue higher education earnestly. This motivation is deeply tied to her desire to achieve financial stability and security, counteracting

the uncertainties her parents faced. It also reflects an intrinsic understanding that education can be a transformative tool for improving her and her family's socioeconomic conditions.

Role of Social and Navigational Capitals

Research Question 3: *How have social and navigational capitals, manifested through community support systems, shaped first-generation Latina college students' preparation for and transition to college?*

Rich community support structures enable the interaction of social and navigational capitals to significantly enhance the educational path and college transition of first-generation Latino/a college students (Suwinyattichaiporn & Johnson, 2022). The following participant narratives suggest that support systems are essential for students struggling with higher education. In addition to fostering a feeling of identity and belonging, according to participants, these supports help them get ready for college.

Community Support as Social Capital

Community-based support systems, which provide both practical and emotional support, can help build social capital. Elena, for example, talked about the significant influence of a program that helped her meet people from similar backgrounds and broadened her perspective on her school and culture:

> Being in that program has helped me shape or learn more about my culture and connect me with people who relate to me and who come from similar communities or experiences. That was very helpful. I am so grateful to participate in a program that celebrates my culture and helps us achieve higher education.

Elena's testimony about her involvement in a program that celebrates her culture and connects her with peers from similar backgrounds exemplifies the impact of social capital. By

participating in this community-based program, Elena shared that she was able to deepen her understanding of her cultural identity and form meaningful relationships with individuals who share similar life experiences and values. In Yosso's framework, social capital refers to the networks of people and community resources that can provide both emotional and instrumental support to navigate social institutions.

Similarly, a folkloric group on campus provided Isabella comfort and a sense of community, improving her college experience. The support and friendship she received from a campus Folklorico club helped her mental health and happiness with college life:

> Yeah, so last year, when I was struggling mentally, I told myself I had to get out there, so I joined a folklorico group here on campus. I've met a cool group of people, and I just started enjoying myself a lot more here.

Isabella reported that her college experience was greatly enhanced by joining a folklorico group on campus during a difficult period. This led to the formation of new friendships and an increased level of happiness at school. Suggesting that cultural engagement through campus activities significantly enhances student well-being and community connection. Isabella's involvement with a folkloric group on campus exemplifies the impact of cultural activities on a student's college experience, particularly in terms of mental health and social integration.

Participation in the Folklorico group provided Isabella with a critical avenue for social interaction and cultural expression. It offers her not only a supportive community but also a meaningful connection to her cultural roots, which can be stabilizing and empowering for students far from home or in culturally diverse academic settings. Isabella reported that her college experience improved significantly after joining the Folklorico group, highlighting the

positive correlation between active participation in culturally relevant activities and student happiness. Similarly, Teresa shared the following:

> So, because my undergraduate experience was a very predominantly black and brown space, it was almost full circle. Being in a high school that was very diverse in culture and race, I felt safe back home in a black and brown institution. I chose [a particular institution] because of its sense of community. So, I could thrive because I could connect in my stories, my experience connected and intertwined with others who were just like me.

Teresa's narrative about her choice of an undergraduate institution underscores the impact of a supportive and familiar cultural setting on student well-being and success. In a college that embraced diversity, Teresa experienced a strong sense of safety and belonging, like her high school experience. This sense of community, based on similar cultural and racial backgrounds, significantly influenced their choice of college and had a positive impact on her academic and personal achievements.

Teresa's narrative illustrates the concept of social capital within the CCW model, where the networks and relationships that students form in educational environments are crucial for their success and well-being. By choosing an undergraduate institution that reflected the racial and cultural diversity of her high school, Teresa accessed a familiar and supportive community. This decision highlights how social capital operates not just through present interactions but also through the continuity of similar supportive environments across different stages of education. This can also be seen as the continuation of familial support, which began in their home environment and then carries over into communities that students identify with within their

college environments by either joining a community where they can identify with others like themselves or creating their own spaces where they and others can success and flourish together.

These support systems, as participants shared, aided them in managing higher education challenges and enhanced their identity, belonging, and well-being. Participation in culturally relevant activities and supportive communities that honored their backgrounds significantly influenced their academic progress and mental health.

Navigational Capital and Educational Transition

Participants shared the following forms of navigational capital that helped them successfully navigate educational systems. Mariana's experience with the Puente Program exemplifies how academic planning can be supported and the college application process deconstructed with the use of focused support services:

> When coming to the United States, you have to work hard. You're always constantly working. They (her parents) never had the opportunity to continue their education, so I couldn't ask them. I found a program called the Puente Program, whose main purpose is to help underserved Latino students transfer to four-year universities. We get designated counselors, and we get to set up our academic plans for our entire time in community college.

The testimonial provided by Mariana exemplifies how navigational capital is critical for minority students in accessing and navigating higher education systems. Her experiences with the Puente Program highlight several important facets of how targeted support services can enhance educational outcomes for underserved communities.

Mariana's engagement with the Puente Program showcases effective utilization of navigational capital, which involves understanding and leveraging available resources to

navigate complex social institutions such as the educational system. For Mariana, the absence of a familial educational background posed a significant barrier to understanding the intricacies of college applications and academic planning. The Puente Program fills this gap by providing structured support. The Puente Program not only supports academic planning but also simplifies the college application process for transfer to four-year universities. By deconstructing this often-daunting process, the program ensures that students are better prepared and more confident in their applications, increasing their chances of success. Mariana's experience with the Puente Program underlines the importance of navigational capital.

Gabriela highlights the difficulties and resiliency needed to transition to higher education settings. She highlighted her adjustment to a different socioeconomic and cultural area at a higher education institution, underscoring the importance of strong community networks:

> Many people here in [city] are where [specific college] are very white and more on the upper-class side, which is not what I am used to. There was that kind of adjustment for people from different socioeconomic backgrounds. For the first time in my life, I felt like a minority, always having been one, but being made to feel that way and adjusting to just a different schedule, not the typical eight to four of high school, especially after quarantine and being home for so long and starting my first year of college over Zoom back in California with the time difference and everything.

Gabriela's experiences illustrate the challenges of transitioning to a higher education setting that differs significantly in socioeconomic and cultural terms from what she was accustomed to. This story highlights the role of navigational capital in adjusting to these new environments, along with the adjustment to a predominantly white and upper-class college environment, underscores the use of navigational capital, which involves strategies and skills that minority students employ

to navigate social institutions that do not inherently accommodate their cultural or socioeconomic backgrounds. Her experiences of feeling like a minority for the first time and dealing with classmates from different socioeconomic backgrounds highlight the importance of being able to navigate a new and often challenging social matrix.

Empowerment through Social and Navigational Capitals

Based on participant narratives, this theme centers on the empowerment of first-generation Latina college students through social and navigational capitals, emphasizing the role of identity and community support in overcoming obstacles and enhancing academic confidence, self-efficacy, and skill development for college success. Gabriela shared the following:

> I think just being able to find a dedicated community, other first-gen or Latina or low-income students who also care as much about learning because why would they be here if they did not? We may also sometimes struggle and need additional support to come together and help each other instead of just struggling alone. It is vital that we succeed and that we can take care of ourselves after graduation. Finding a community of people with the same background who care just as much about their education and who want to support each other and see each other succeed has been great.

The experiences shared by Gabriela offer a vivid illustration of how social and navigational capitals empower first-generation Latina college students.

Her narrative underscores the significant roles that identity and community support play in overcoming educational barriers and fostering academic confidence, self-efficacy, and essential skills for college success. Gabriela's story highlights the empowerment derived from forming connections with peers who share similar backgrounds and challenges. This type of social capital is crucial as it provides a support network where students can share resources,

provide emotional support, and collaborate to overcome common obstacles. Gabriela's ability to locate and engage with this dedicated community also reflects the use of navigational capital.

The empowerment Gabriela describes comes from the mutual support and shared aspirations within her community. This network not only helps mitigate the feeling of isolation that can accompany the college journey for her but also enhances her academic confidence. Gabriela emphasizes the goal of success beyond college, noting the importance of being able to take care of themselves after graduation. This forward-looking perspective is a key component of aspirational capital, which is fueled by the support and encouragement found within her community. It highlights a proactive approach to building a sustainable future underpinned by the educational achievements facilitated by strong social and navigational capitals.

Similarly, Carmen shares how her school community creates a safe space for her:

> I'm also in the Puente program here at school, which helps Latino students and gives us resources to transfer because I'm at community college. We are diverse-looking, so it creates a space where I can come back and share that experience as a Latino. Then, I just understood that my friends or other people in the program also do not see things the same way, but they understand how I see the world.

Carmen's participation in the Puente program at her community college exemplifies how institutional support structures can enhance both social and navigational capitals for minority students.

Her narrative highlights the crucial role these capitals play in creating safe spaces and supportive environments that are instrumental for academic success and personal development. Carmen's description of the Puente program illustrates a robust form of social capital that is fostered within educational institutions. The program specifically supports Latino students,

offering a community where members share cultural and educational experiences and challenges. This shared space allows students to feel understood and supported, which is vital for creating a sense of safety and belonging.

The Puente program also significantly contributes to the navigational capital of its participants by providing resources specific to the needs of Latino students in community colleges. These resources include guidance on transferring to four-year universities and other academic planning assistance, which demystify complex processes and make higher education more accessible. Carmen's ability to leverage these resources shows her adeptness at navigating the academic system, a skill crucial for minority students who may otherwise face systemic barriers to educational advancement. Carmen appreciates that the program not only aids in academic navigation but also fosters a culturally responsive environment where students can explore and affirm their identities.

The collective knowledge gained within such supportive programs enriches the student's educational experiences. This community knowledge is a key component of social capital, allowing students to draw on communal strengths and insights that can make navigating their educational paths less isolating and more successful. The importance of finding a committed group of peers who share comparable experiences, challenges, and goals for mutual support and academic success is highlighted by participant narratives. Participants also stressed that institutions establishing safe spaces inside their school communities, such as the Puente program, to support Latino students at community colleges, provided them with resources and a support community that cultivated a shared knowledge and experience setting.

Utilization of Cultural Wealth

Research Question 4: *How have first-generation Latina college students utilized their cultural wealth, specifically drawing on aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational, and resistant capitals, to overcome institutional barriers in higher education?*

Through these research questions, participants share the variety of capital that helps to create a resilient foundation for success and empowerment. By delving into participant narratives, insights emerge about the complex ways in which these students use their cultural richness to influence their scholastic paths.

Cultural Wealth and Aspirational Resilience

The following account from Gabriela highlighted how she embodied the resilience inherited from their mother, reminding themselves of their intrinsic value and the right to occupy space in primarily white institutions by drawing upon her inherited aspirational resilience:

> So it is something I like to say in my head mostly and pretty often for even small things, if a class is only white students or I do not know, feel uncomfortable or unwelcome in a space, I tell myself, 'I am my mother's daughter' and that means that, that I keep my head up, that I do not try to shrink, make myself small, and that I allow myself to take up space that I know what I want and that I know what I am capable of and that I deserve to be here.

Gabriela's narrative provides a poignant illustration of how aspirational capital, a key component of the CCW model, is manifested and utilized by students from minority backgrounds to navigate predominantly white academic environments.

This story exemplifies aspirational capital, which is the ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future despite encountering real and perceived barriers. By reminding herself that

she is her "mother's daughter," Gabriela draws upon the strength and perseverance passed down from her mother. This personal affirmation helps her maintain her presence and assert her right to occupy space in settings where she might otherwise feel marginalized or unwelcome. In environments that may feel unwelcoming or even hostile, Gabriela's practice of affirming her worth and her right to be there is crucial. Her mantra, "I keep my head up, that I do not try to shrink, make myself small," highlights the use of intrinsic value as a tool for self-empowerment.

The challenges Gabriela faces in predominantly white classes are indicative of the systemic and social hurdles that minority students often encounter in higher education. Her resolve to "allow myself to take up space" not only combats feelings of alienation but also challenges the norms of these institutions, advocating for a more inclusive academic environment. Gabriela's ability to link her personal identity and familial legacy to her educational pursuits illustrates the vital role of familial and aspirational capital in the CCW model. Her mother's influence provides a psychological and emotional foundation that supports Gabriela's educational resilience and assertiveness.

Leticia highlights the need for more easily accessible information to support students from the beginning of their educational journey. She touches on financial constraints and the lack of awareness about available options.

> Many things are assumed, but you do not know. Finances are a huge barrier, and it is unfair for students to be unable to go to whatever institution they like because of the lack of finances. There are so many resources that I did not know of and scholarships that I only knew of after. It is great that I know about it now so I can promote them. But that is just something that I wish I had. It is an issue that students are not given these resources that are around for them till probably after the end.

Leticia's account sheds light on the significant role of linguistic capital, a component of the CCW model, particularly concerning the barriers faced by students from underrepresented backgrounds in accessing higher education due to financial constraints and lack of information.

Leticia underscores the challenge of informational barriers that prevent students from fully understanding and accessing the resources available to them. Her statement about not being aware of various financial resources and scholarships until after they could have been most beneficial highlights a gap in the distribution and accessibility of crucial information. She points out the unfairness in the educational system where financial constraints can limit the choice of institution, essentially barring students from pursuing their preferred educational paths. Her reflections also touch on the need for making financial resources and scholarships more visible and accessible to students right from the start of their educational journeys.

Now aware of these resources, Leticia expresses a commitment to promoting them to others who might be in the position she once was. This act of sharing knowledge is a form of social capital, where individuals use their insights and experiences to benefit others in their community to make informed decisions but also affects their educational and career trajectories.

Linguistic and Familial Foundations

Students like Carmen who shares how essential language skills and family support networks are to them by citing their parents' beliefs as the source of their work ethic and perseverance:

> My mom has contributed to the way that I do things. She's very persistent, very, okay, 'well this is what I need to do, so I'm going to do it'. I have a good work ethic because she's a very hardworking lady, so I would be like, okay, well, I need to do the same.

Carmen's account illustrates the significant influence of familial and linguistic capital. Her reflections on the impact of her mother's work ethic and approach to challenges underscore the critical role that family plays in shaping students' attitudes towards work and perseverance. Carmen attributes her strong work ethic to her mother's influence, highlighting how familial capital—values, behaviors, and social knowledge passed down through generations—contributes to her personal and academic endeavors. This form of capital is a cornerstone of the CCW model, as it encompasses the emotional, moral, and educational support systems that are cultivated within family units. Her mother's persistence and proactive attitude provide Carmen with a model of resilience and determination, which she adopts in her own approach to challenges.

While Carmen does not explicitly mention linguistic skills, the implicit understanding is that communication styles and the language used at home, modeled by parental figures like her mother, play a role in shaping how she expresses and handles her responsibilities. Linguistic capital involves not only the ability to communicate in multiple languages but also the communication skills and styles inherited from family. These skills are crucial in navigating social and educational spaces, where she may need to advocate for herself or negotiate complex scenarios.

Carmen’s reflection on her mother’s influence shows how familial and linguistic capitals are interwoven, with family members instilling values and behaviors that are essential for navigating various life challenges. The emphasis on her mother’s work ethic also speaks to the empowerment Carmen derives from her familial support network. This empowerment is reflected in her personal commitment to embody these traits in her own educational journey,

illustrating how familial capital can foster resilience and a proactive approach to personal and academic challenges.

Social and Navigational Strategies

To find their way through higher education, some participants share how they navigated challenges inside and outside of their social networks—Alejandra's experience with being charged out-of-state tuition when she was in-state:

> In my first year of college, I took my gap year because I had a tough time and felt like I did not want to waste the money again. When I came back, I was still being charged out-of-state tuition. One of my cousin's wives is an advisor at [a university], and she says, 'Oh, let me look at your account.' She noticed I was being charged out-of-state tuition.

Alejandra's experience with tuition discrepancies highlights the importance of navigational and social capitals. Her story illustrates how personal networks and knowledge of institutional systems can be crucial for minority students facing systemic challenges in higher education. Her initial decision to take a gap year due to financial strain demonstrates an understanding of the economic implications of educational decisions, a key component of navigational capital. When she returned to college and continued to be incorrectly charged out-of-state tuition, it reflects the systemic barriers that often disproportionately affect minority students. Navigational capital involves the ability to maneuver through social institutions, including understanding and addressing bureaucratic errors that can significantly impact one's educational trajectory.

The intervention of a family member who is familiar with the university system underscores the role of social capital. Alejandra's cousin's wife, working as an advisor at a university, becomes a pivotal resource in addressing and resolving the tuition issue. This scenario highlights how social networks provide not just emotional or moral support but also

practical assistance in navigating institutional processes. The utilization of her cousin's wife's expertise and position within the educational institution is a prime example of how social networks function as a critical resource. This connection provided Alejandra with the necessary guidance to correct her tuition status, showcasing how relationships within one's social network can directly influence the resolution of significant issues.

Alejandra's ability to rectify her tuition situation through the assistance of her social network not only saved her financial resources but also likely contributed to her persistence in higher education. This incident illustrates how empowering it can be when students have access to knowledgeable individuals within their community who can help navigate complex situations that might otherwise hinder their educational progress.

However, the experiences of Natalia demonstrate the difficulties in obtaining support services and the natural hustle that has allowed her to succeed:

> I was not low-income enough, even though I thought I was very low-income. I remember going to their office and asking, 'Hi, why didn't I make it? I need this program.' My advisor is there to ensure I am on track with the right classes. They are not there for me as I know a Trio program would be. I have always hustled my whole life. I will make do with what I got.

Natalia's narrative provides insight into the challenges associated with accessing support services within higher education and how her inherent resilience—cultivated through familial and community experiences—has played a crucial role in her academic journey.

This situation ties directly into aspects of the CCW model, particularly navigational and familial capital. Despite identifying as low-income, she faced barriers to accessing resources designed to assist students like her. This part of her story underscores the importance of

navigational capital, as she learns to maneuver through institutional policies and criteria that may not always align with the lived realities of students.

The resilience Natalia describes, "I have always hustled my whole life. I will make do with what I got," points to a strong familial influence on her approach to life's challenges. This statement reflects the values and survival skills passed down through family networks, often seen in communities where resources are scarce but the drive to succeed is strong. Familial capital is not only about emotional and moral support but also about the resilience and work ethic inherited from family members who have navigated similar struggles.

Although not explicitly mentioned in terms of language skills, Natalia's ability to advocate for herself by questioning the decision-making process of the support program indicates her proficiency in navigating academic and bureaucratic dialogues. This form of linguistic capital is crucial for effectively communicating one's needs and ensuring that one's voice is heard within educational institutions, particularly in advocacy situations.

Natalia's proactive stance in seeking explanations and attempting to secure necessary resources demonstrates her resourcefulness and self-advocacy, key components of navigational capital. Her ability to 'make do' with the available resources, despite the setbacks, showcases her capacity to adapt and persevere through the educational system's challenges.

Resilience Through Resistance and Adaptation

Cultural insights and resilient capital often enable students to confront systemic injustices and cultural expectations by adjusting to them and using their resilience to fight for change. The following two students discuss how their lack of parental advice in these areas has made it difficult to get financial resources and navigate higher education systems. Natalia shared how she

has used her insights and experiences to ask relevant questions to those in charge at the institution she attends on how HSI funding is being used:

> I went to a town hall meeting and asked the president, 'I know that we are an HSI institution, and on the website, you put a quote saying that we get money centered for Hispanic-identifying students. What do you do with that money?' He gave me this response, saying tutoring, but I'm like, tutoring is not catered for students, for Latino students. That is a thing that anybody can receive. What are you doing specifically for this group?

Natalia's proactive engagement at a town hall meeting exemplifies how students utilize cultural insights and resilient capital to address systemic injustices and advocate for equitable resource allocation within higher education.

Natalia's decision to question the utilization of funds designated for Hispanic-identifying students at her Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) illustrates resistant capital. By confronting the institutional leadership, Natalia uses her voice to highlight potential discrepancies in how resources intended to support specific student groups are being allocated. This action reflects a broader resistance against systemic practices that may not adequately serve the needs of minority students.

Engaging with institutional leaders about specific funding uses also demonstrates Natalia's navigational capital. Navigational capital refers to the ability to maneuver through social institutions in a way that challenges and overcomes barriers and inequities. Natalia's ability to articulate her concerns, seek accountability, and demand clarity on how educational resources are specifically benefiting Hispanic-identifying students showcases a sophisticated understanding of how to navigate and potentially reform institutional policies.

Additionally, her advocacy underscores the significance of understanding and utilizing institutional mechanisms, such as town hall meetings, to advocate for equitable treatment and resource distribution. Her pointed questions about the specificity of services provided to Latino students highlight a critical awareness of how institutions can sometimes generalize services without addressing the unique needs of specific student populations. By asking targeted questions, Natalia not only seeks to understand the allocation of resources but also to prompt institutional leaders to consider whether their practices genuinely support the inclusivity and support they claim to offer.

Similarly, Teresa shares how when she sees something is not right, she will speak up:

> You want to not necessarily prove to others that your culture or gender matters; it's just that representation matters. I try to stick to my values. If something's not right, then I'll step up to the plate if need be…like a tough bulldog. Even something like what we're doing right now today, I feel, is important. Having these kinds of conversations.

Teresa's approach to addressing issues she perceives within her educational environment exemplifies how students draw upon their cultural wealth to engage in forms of resistance and advocacy. This stance aligns closely with the CCW model, particularly the concepts of resistant and navigational capital.

Teresa's commitment to speaking up when she perceives something as unjust or misaligned with her values embodies resistant capital. Resistant capital refers to the knowledge and skills cultivated from oppositional behavior that challenges inequality. By positioning herself as someone who will "step up to the plate, if need be," Teresa utilizes her cultural insights and personal experiences to advocate for change and uphold her values. Her ability to navigate social institutions and engage in advocacy reflects her navigational capital. Her analogy of being like a

"tough bulldog" highlights her determination and strategic approach to advocacy, which is vital for effectively navigating and influencing higher education environments.

Teresa underscores the importance of representation and adhering to her cultural and personal values in her advocacy efforts. By engaging in dialogues and challenging the status quo, she contributes to a broader conversation about diversity and inclusion within her educational setting. This proactive engagement helps to ensure that her cultural identity and gender are acknowledged and respected within the academic community. She also emphasizes the significance of having conversations about cultural representation and values. By participating in and initiating these important dialogues, Teresa not only advocates for herself and others but also helps create a more inclusive and responsive educational environment.

These first-generation Latina college students' stories illustrate how their cultural wealth—which includes navigational, linguistic, familial, social, aspirational, and resistant capital—acts as a tool for navigating and getting past institutional barriers that often come with going to college.

Synthesis

This chapter explored the impact of cultural richness on the educational trajectories of first-generation Latina college students by delving into their experiences. The results highlight the critical roles that aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational, and resistance capitals play in overcoming institutional hurdles and promoting educational success. Yosso's (2005) Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) model illustrates these points.

This study revealed thirteen themes, each encapsulating different facets of the educational experiences of first-generation Latina college students.

Work Ethic and Persistence Mentality is highlighted by Adriana, who admires the prevalent "you can do it" attitude and strong work ethic in Mexican culture, emphasizing a culture of perseverance.

Adaptability and resilience are illustrated through Adriana's account of her parents' resilience and adaptability, showcasing how families navigate challenges with hard work and creativity, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Seeking Support and Advocacy is captured in Bianca's narrative, where she discusses her mother's unapologetic pursuit of available support programs, instilling the importance of advocacy and not being ashamed to seek help.

Building Bridges Between Schools and Families is evident in Lucia's critique of insufficient parental involvement in education. Advocating for workshops to help parents better understand their children's academic pathways.

Navigating Cultural, Societal, and Educational Expectations is reflected in Carmen's insights on the critical role of parental support in instilling the value of education, contrasting with peers who lack such encouragement.

Gabriela describes empowerment through *Social and Navigational Capital*. She found solidarity and support in a community of peers sharing similar backgrounds, which was instrumental in overcoming educational barriers.

Cultural Wealth and Aspirational Resilience, as personified by Gabriela, demonstrate the power of drawing strength from one's heritage to maintain presence and self-worth in unwelcoming spaces.

Linguistic and Familial Foundations are detailed by Carmen, who credits her mother's hardworking nature as a foundational influence on her work ethic and determination.

Social and Navigational Strategies are showcased through Alejandra's experience, where familial connections were leveraged to correct an out-of-state tuition issue, underscoring the importance of social networks in navigating academic challenges.

Resilience Through Resistance and Adaptation is demonstrated by Natalia's proactive engagement with institutional leadership regarding funds for Hispanic-identifying students, using advocacy to seek targeted support and accountability within educational institutions.

Collectively, these themes weave a comprehensive narrative on the resilience, adaptability, and empowerment of first-generation Latina college students, underscored by the pivotal role of familial support, community solidarity, and personal advocacy in navigating and overcoming the challenges of higher education.

One noteworthy finding was that, when it came to answering research question 2A, individuals consistently reported having no effective family interaction techniques in their school environments. This gap points to an important issue that needs further investigation and development in the context of family and educational support systems. It is essential to highlight the contrast observed between the findings related to research question 2A and those of research question 2B. While participants reported a lack of effective family engagement strategies within their school environment for research question 2A, research question 2B provided insights into significant familial contributions that facilitate success. This dichotomy underscores the effectiveness of intrinsic family values and informal engagement strategies at home, which have proven crucial in supporting the educational pursuits of first-generation Latina college students. The absence of formalized family engagement approaches in schools highlights a critical area for further investigation and development.

The study's findings among first-generation Latina college students shed light on the intricate relationship between cultural wealth and academic perseverance. Even with all the obstacles this group of students was presented with, they overcame institutional obstacles by utilizing a diverse range of resources. One area repeatedly noted by participants was the need for intervention to support systems focusing on high school-to-college and effective family engagement techniques.

Summary

The first research question highlighted that the aspirational persistence of first-generation Latina college students is significantly influenced by familial capital, which includes family values, traditions, and work ethics. The participant narratives demonstrated that cultural identity and familial support strongly influence perseverance, academic aspirations, and overcoming educational hurdles.

It is critical to investigate the striking contrast between the outcomes for research question 2A and research question 2B. When asked research question 2A, all 17 participants noted a significant lack of effective family engagement initiatives within educational institutions that may help students transition from high school to college. This gap emphasizes the critical need for improved communication between schools and families. The students interviewed proposed that schools hold workshops to better prepare families for the college preparation process. This approach highlights a larger issue: students are frequently driven to seek resources outside of the typical school system, school and college counselors, which, according to participants, did not match their college readiness needs.

On the other hand, this need emphasizes the effectiveness of intrinsic family values and informal engagement tactics at home, as indicated in research question 2B. These home-based

strategies have proven to be critical in assisting first-generation Latina college students with their academic goals. The disparity between the ineffectiveness of formal school strategies and the success of familial strategies shows an important topic for future research and growth.

Research Question 3 revealed that social and navigational resources play a significant role in helping first-generation Latina college students prepare for and transition to college through community support systems, including cultural activities and the Puente Program. Participants emphasize the benefits of participating in culturally appropriate activities and connecting with welcoming communities that value their histories, which improves mental and academic health. These capitals promote identification, belonging, and overall well-being.

Research question 4 found that first-generation Latina college students rely on their cultural riches, including aspirational, linguistic, family, social, navigational, and resistance capitals, to navigate and get past institutional hurdles in higher education. Participants emphasized the value of family-inherited resilience, the necessity of language proficiency and parental guidance, and the function of social and navigating techniques in overcoming obstacles related to schooling and finances. They also stressed the importance of resilience via resistance and adaptability to confront systemic inequities and guarantee representation and assistance within educational institutions.

Chapter 5 will expand on the understanding of these results by discussing the importance of social, navigational, and cultural riches and the insights obtained from the investigation of familial capital and interaction tactics. To better understand how these interrelated themes affect first-generation Latina college students' academic journeys and provide institutions with potential avenues for better supporting them, the next chapter will place these students' experiences within the larger context of higher education. By examining the deficiencies in

family involvement and the critical function of community support networks, this conversation will draw attention to suggestions for instructional strategies that complement first-generation Latina college students' unique requirements and assets, opening the door for more inclusive and successful educational regulations.

Implications

The study underscores the critical role of cultural wealth, including community networks and familial support, in enhancing the success and resilience of first-generation Latina college students. It supports Yosso's Community Cultural Wealth model, advocating for educational initiatives that leverage these assets to bolster student support. The findings suggest that educational institutions create initiatives that take advantage of these resources to provide these students with more significant support. Further research is recommended to explore how cultural wealth specifically impacts educational outcomes.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

Introduction

In this chapter, the results of research on first-generation Latina college students are presented, with a focus on the contributions that families and communities make to their academic endeavors. This study examines the cultural, familial, and social determinants affecting their academic perseverance and achievement using a Critical Phenomenology methodology. These students' resilience is significantly strengthened by their support systems and cultural capital, even in the face of major obstacles in higher education. Enhancing family engagement and providing navigational resources are critical, and the study highlights the inadequacies in institutional assistance. It establishes the foundation for suggestions meant to promote more inclusive educational practices and policies for first-generation Latina students.

Summary of Results

This chapter provides an overview of the research that was done on the educational paths taken by first-generation Latina college students, with an emphasis on how support from their families and communities enables them to overcome the obstacles they often encounter in higher education. Using Critical Phenomenology, this study aimed to clarify these students' complex experiences by highlighting the influence of cultural norms, beliefs, and support systems on their academic achievement and resilience.

The recognition of the significant obstacles these students encounter in higher education systems—barriers that endure despite a greater focus on diversity and inclusivity—was what made this study necessary. The research sought to provide practical insights to improve educational attainment and persistence among first-generation Latina students and communities by analyzing their cultural resources and institutional family engagement tactics.

Significant findings revealed how cultural capital, family support, and community involvement positively influenced the educational resilience of first-generation Latina students. The personal accounts from participants highlighted the crucial role of familial capital, encompassing values, customs, and work ethics, in driving their academic success. To close the resource-needs gap, this study also highlighted the deficiency of institutional support, particularly regarding facilitating the transition from high school to college. It also emphasized the need for improved communication and support systems, as well as more efficient family engagement techniques.

Furthermore, the study highlighted the critical functions that social and navigational resources—such as community support networks and culturally appropriate activities—play in helping students develop a strong sense of self, a sense of belonging, and overall academic resilience. To create more inclusive and successful educational policies and practices for first-generation Latina college students, it is critical to address family engagement gaps and make use of community support networks. Doing so will increase the academic success and perseverance of these students.

Discussion of the Results

First-generation Latina college students' aspirational persistence is greatly influenced by familial capital, which includes values, customs, and work ethics. This was revealed by the data gathered in response to Research Question 1. This supports existing literature that navigating and overcoming scholastic challenges requires a strong foundation of cultural identification and familial support. The participant narratives emphasized this, showing a clear relationship between the resilience required to pursue academic goals and the strength of familial bonds. This

is consistent with research that shows the beneficial effects of parental and familial involvement on students' aspirations (Jeynes, 2007; Ceja, 2006).

Despite initial expectations that existing family engagement strategies would facilitate the college transition, the findings from research question 2A indicated a substantial deficit in effective practices within educational institutions. This discrepancy between expected and actual outcomes highlights a critical area for improvement. The data reveal a pressing need for schools to enhance communication and support mechanisms that effectively bridge the gap between families and educational institutions. This need is further underscored by research question 2B, which illustrated how intrinsic family values and informal engagement strategies at home significantly contribute to the success of first-generation Latina college students. The contrast between the ineffectiveness of institutional strategies and the effectiveness of home-based strategies suggests that educational frameworks should integrate proven familial approaches. Such integration would not only align with the recommendations in the existing body of literature, such as the work by Kiyama & Harper (2018), but also address the crucial gaps in support that currently exist, thereby enhancing the academic outcomes for these students.

The Puente Program and other community support structures enable social and navigational capitals to play a major role in facilitating the transition to college, as the data gathered in response to research question 3 revealed. This supports the theory that students' mental and academic well-being is enhanced by community involvement and culturally appropriate activities, supporting research on the effect of group support on academic success (Arevalo & McNaughton-Cassill, 2016; Suwinyattichaiporn & Johnson, 2022).

A combination of aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational, and resistant capitals is crucial for overcoming such barriers, as suggested by the data gathered in response to

research question 4, which demonstrated how first-generation Latina college students use their cultural wealth to overcome institutional barriers. This demonstrates the power of cultural assets and aligns with the Community Cultural Wealth model, which emphasizes the distinct types of capital that underprivileged students use in learning environments (Yosso, 2005; Espino, 2014).

The findings related to research question 2A highlight a significant gap between the theoretical benefits of family involvement strategies and their practical implementation. This notable discrepancy was evident in the surprising lack of successful family engagement techniques reported by participants. These results challenge long-held assumptions about the effectiveness of existing methods and underscore the urgent need for a comprehensive reevaluation of how educational institutions engage with families to support students' transitions from high school to college. This review should aim to develop more effective communication and support systems that genuinely reflect and utilize insights from intrinsic family values and informal strategies, as demonstrated by the more positive findings of research question 2B.

This study, which makes use of the Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) model and the critical phenomenological technique, highlights institutional weaknesses in the support provided by institutions for family engagement while simultaneously confirming the crucial role that cultural, social, and navigational capitals play in educational resilience. This conversation highlights the need for educational policies and practices to adopt a more inclusive and culturally aware stance to close the gap between the support that institutions can offer first-generation Latina college students and their educational needs.

Therefore, the present study adds to the current discourse regarding the significance of cultural and familial support for the academic achievement of underrepresented communities. It highlights how important it is for academic institutions to acknowledge, and value the rich

cultural diversity of first-generation Latina college students as well as promoting practices and policies that address their specific struggles and experiences.

Conclusions Based on the Results

The synthesis and implications of the study's findings are covered in detail in Chapter 5, which also places the results in the context of the larger scholarly discourse and the theoretical frameworks that served as the study's guideline. A critical analysis of the ways in which the academic paths and lived experiences of first-generation Latina college students interact with the theoretical framework and body of prior research is made possible by the research journey's conclusion. There are two crucial subsections in this part. In the first section, *Comparison of Findings with Previous Literature*, placing the results of the study in the context of earlier studies, emphasizing similarities, differences, and the additions this study offers to the body of knowledge. Combining these comparisons not only highlights the importance of the study's contributions, but it also opens the door for further research projects, the creation of policies, and instructional strategies designed to meet the needs and overcome the obstacles faced by first-generation Latina college students in both high school and higher education. Under the second section, *Comparison of Findings with the Theoretical Framework*, the findings are evaluated in relation to the theoretical constructs that guided the research, offering valuable perspectives on the suitability and significance of these ideas in comprehending the observed results.

Comparison of the Findings with Previous Literature

To further the conversation about the critical roles that community and family play in influencing the educational paths taken by first-generation Latina college students, this section clarifies the ways in which the results of this study both complement and deviate from the body of current work. I hope that this comparative analysis will help us comprehend the wider

significance of this study's findings for the field as well as the people who are most impacted by the issues that first prompted the need for this study.

Lifelong Effects of Family Involvement

This study's findings are consistent with earlier research showing a positive relationship between parental involvement and academic success (Jeynes, 2007; Plunkett et al., 2003) and highlight the critical role that familial capital plays in the academic persistence of first-generation Latina college students. This study highlights culturally specific support forms like *consejos* and *apoyo*, (Auerbach, 2007; Contreras & Kiyama, 2022). These results highlight the complex and multidimensional character of familial assistance, which goes beyond traditional involvement to encompass emotional and moral support firmly ingrained in cultural beliefs and customs.

As with previous studies, a recurring element in this study's findings is the importance of Families in supporting the goals and achievements of first-generation Latina students. In line with Ceja (2004), the findings of this study highlight the enduring influence of parental values and experiences with hardship. In her reflection on the desire to honor her family's goals and sacrifices, Natalia expresses this sentiment:

First, I feel like because of my family, obviously I want to make sure that their sacrifices are not in vain. To see their little girl really take advantage of the support that they've given me throughout all my life. So, I really want to give back. Also, I want to give back as a student affair professional for students in general so that they won't have to go through the same things I went through.

The emphasis on creating supportive settings in schools aligns with the views of Plunkett and Bámaca-Gómez (2003), who urge greater family involvement in educational processes and

link students' self-confidence to parental supervision. The idea that parent-student ties are essential to college persistence is further supported by Bartle Haring et al. (2022), who propose that improving these relationships could greatly increase retention rates. Together, the data suggests an engagement paradigm that goes beyond typical family involvement, emphasizing the complex and culturally rooted kinds of support that are essential for Latina first-generation students.

Adriana's account vividly brings to life the critical influence of familial support on her educational aspirations and achievements. Her narrative not only reflects the broader research findings but also personalizes them, providing a concrete example of how cultural beliefs and customs inform and enhance parental support:

> They've always pushed me to go to school… 'do it, get your degree. You don't want to be how we are.' Education, I know runs in my mom's family, her aunts were teachers in Mexico, and they had an impact on her. She always wanted to be an elementary school teacher, but obviously she never could. She didn't have her papers and she didn't have the financial means to do it at the time. She didn't even have her resident card or anything. I don't even think she could have. She would always encourage me to be a teacher. I've done internships with kindergarten and fifth grade, and I like it. So that's the degree I'm majoring in.

The narrative presented by Adriana demonstrates how the educational goals of first-generation Latina students are influenced and enhanced by their cultural and familial aspirations, underscoring the richness and scope of assistance that goes beyond the classroom.

The results of this study add to the body of knowledge about the crucial role that families play in first-generation Latina students' academic achievement. They also shed light on the many

culturally rich ways that families assist one another. Through the incorporation of these customized experiences into the larger scholarly discourse, the necessity of educational frameworks that acknowledge and appreciate the various ways in which families support their children's academic achievement is highlighted, promoting engagement tactics that are as complex and culturally aware as the students they are meant to assist.

The Significance of Community and Social Support

In keeping with the conclusions of Fernandez et al. (2023) and Clayton et al. (2019), our research emphasizes the critical role that identity and community play in assisting first-generation Latina students in their pursuit of higher education. Gutierrez-Serrano et al. (2023), who highlight the positive effects of ethnic studies programs and student organizations in creating encouraging academic communities, further emphasize the need of developing a sense of belonging and recognizing students' cultural identities. These settings foster an environment that is supportive of both academic and personal development by legitimizing students' cultural backgrounds and bringing their familial capital to college.

These findings align with the participant narratives, especially when it comes to the benefits of initiatives such as the Puente Program. These tales show how important community-based support networks are for enhancing students' wellbeing and easing their transition to college. According to earlier studies (Arevalo & McNaughton-Cassill, 2016; Suwinyattichaiporn & Johnson, 2022) this is consistent with the importance of group activities in improving the academic performance, and general well-being of first-generation Latina students.

The study participants contemplated the significant impact of support services, such as the Puente Program, on the educational paths of first-generation Latina students. These programs offer access to specialized counselors and aid in the creation of comprehensive academic plans,

thereby simplifying the college application process and giving crucial assistance for academic preparation. This is particularly important for students who, because of their families limited educational experience, must navigate the journey to higher education without the usual help from their families. These programs provide students with specific help to make it easier for them to move on to four-year institutions. They focus on the importance of having the skills and knowledge to navigate the educational system to succeed academically.

The success of first-generation Latina college students depends on the creation of environments that acknowledge and celebrate cultural identity in addition to offering comprehensive navigational support, as seen reflected by the combined insights from participant narratives with the body of existing literature. Students' academic persistence and accomplishment are not only dependent on the reinforcement of their social and navigational capitals and the validation of their identities, but also on these factors. To guarantee that first-generation Latina students are not only welcomed but also receive true support throughout their journey toward higher education, educational institutions and legislators must place a high priority on the creation and growth of programs and policies that meet these requirements.

Inclusive Family and Community Engagement Practices

Contrary to previous research that expected benefits from such techniques, this data noticeably lacks effective family engagement strategies (Kiyama & Harper, 2018; Auerbach, 2007). The need for educational institutions to move past conventional approaches and adopt more inclusive, culturally aware engagement tactics is highlighted by this disparity. Institutions may better meet the specific needs and goals of first-generation Latina students by utilizing the varied resources these individuals bring to their academic endeavors.

The personal accounts provided by the participants in our study highlight the urgent need of improved communication and cooperation between educational institutions and families to enable first-generation Latina students to make a smooth transition from high school to college. As all our participants indicated, there is a clear deficiency in the strategies for family engagement that should be in place to assist students during this critical time.

The participants' detailed descriptions of the gap between school programs and family engagement highlighted how urgent it is for schools to take a more proactive, inclusive stance. All the participants came to the same conclusion: schools need to start holding workshops and give parents and students the appropriate guidance and support so they can be prepared to handle the challenging process of preparing and applying to.

For example, Lucia emphasized the low degree of parental involvement she saw at her high school and blamed this on the absence of focused outreach and engagement initiatives by the institution she attended:

> I feel like my high school lacked parent involvement. They had the PTA, but you have those moms who didn't have work. I feel like my school should have emphasized little workshops so parents can have somewhat of an idea of what their student is going to get through and the possibilities that there are for students.

Bianca's experience highlights the inadequate support provided by the institution, leading her to pursue information and preparation on her own. "I don't think that I ever found them [college counselors] helpful, but they did hire them…I feel like I looked for that outside of school and I did that myself."

These accounts highlight the participants' common belief that improved family ties are crucial to fostering an environment that is encouraging for students who are planning to transition to higher

education. The apparent lack of successful outreach and family participation, despite the availability of resources such as PTAs and college counselors, indicates that educational institutions should reconsider and reinvigorate their family engagement efforts.

The participant insights draw attention to a major void in the current framework for educational assistance, highlighting the need for schools to develop more inclusive and culturally sensitive methods in place of traditional engagement models. Teachers and counselors can better meet the special requirements of first-generation Latina students and increase their preparedness and success in postsecondary education by cultivating deep ties with families and offering customized support. Not only do these results add to the ongoing discussion regarding community and family engagement, but they also highlight the need for concrete adjustments in the way educational institutions handle transition support for first-generation students.

Community Cultural Wealth

The concept of cultural capital sheds light on how first-generation Latina students Employ community and family resources to navigate the higher education system. According to Bourdieu and Passeron (1990), cultural capital refers to the cultural knowledge and skills that are transmitted through family upbringing. Its significance lies in the difference between the cultural standards enforced by the dominant educational system and those taught within different social groups or classes. This concept aids in understanding attempts to address educational inequalities. The findings of this study align with existing research, indicating that institutional procedures must adapt to recognize and leverage the various types of cultural knowledge and skills that students from communities of color possess in their academic pursuits.

According to the study's findings, first-generation Latina college students use a wide

range of cultural resources to get around and above institutional constraints, which highlights the concrete embodiment of community cultural riches. Our research validates the crucial function of social and cultural capitals in promoting academic resilience and achievement, which is in line with the observations of Espino (2014) and Perez (2017). Important lessons about the real-world applications of mobilizing cultural capital emerge from Mariana's narrative.

> Yeah, my mom, she's a single mom and she's very hardworking and she's always telling me, 'You must push through, you must get an education to get a good job. You're doing this for you.' Whatever I do, I keep my mom in mind, she's my main inspiration…she's my major inspiration.

This narrative clearly demonstrates the significant influence of cultural capital, where the commitment and ambitions of one's family play a crucial role in motivating academic pursuit and achieving success. Similarly, Gabriela expresses the idea of familial support and ambition, emphasizing a mutual recognition of education to achieve personal satisfaction and economic security:

> My mom. She's always been supportive of us pursuing whatever it is that makes us happy and she's pretty much her entire life had financial difficulties, so that was a component as well. She would tell us that she wants us to find a career that makes us happy, but that also makes us financially secure. She said she never wants us to worry about money the way that she's had to worry about money and of course your parents want the best for you.

These testimonials clearly demonstrate the significant influence of family goals and the importance of cultural knowledge in assisting first-generation Latina students in their academic pursuits. Participants note how they utilize their cultural and familial background to successfully

overcome the obstacles of higher education. In doing so, they also uphold the aspirations and desires of their families, highlighting the complex network of support that contributes to their determination and achievements.

Comparison of the Findings with Framework

This study both confirms and expands on Yosso's Community Cultural Wealth model (2005) by highlighting the critical roles that family and community support play in first-generation Latina students' academic success. Educational institutions must actively engage with and capitalize on these cultural assets, as demonstrated by the findings and literature analysis. This active participation entails identifying chances for institutions to promote students' cultural wealth and acknowledging the complex roles played more effectively by family and navigational capital.

By incorporating these findings into the CCW framework, a better understanding of how educational institutions can change to better serve Latina and first-generation students may be achieved. Following are some recommendations that institutions should consider:

- *Strengthen community partnerships* to create support systems that speak to students' cultural and aspirational capital.
- *Acknowledge and cherish the cultural capital* that students and their families contribute to the learning environment, considering these resources as essential rather than add-ons for students' success.
- *Increase family engagement* in the educational process, specifically in grades 9-12, by providing opportunities for meaningful involvement that recognize and make use of the familial capital existing in these communities.

It is imperative to put these concepts into practice by implementing policies and initiatives.

To do this, educators and administrators must implement culturally sensitive policies that recognize and actively build upon the various forms of capital that students from diverse cultural backgrounds bring to the classroom and the larger educational community.

Rethinking the role of educational institutions in the lives of first-generation Latina college students are necessary from a practical standpoint.

- *It demands a change from conventional approaches* of interaction to methods based on the acknowledgement and amplification of the rich cultural diversity within a community.
- *A more welcoming and encouraging learning atmosphere* is made possible by this method, which also harmonizes institutional procedures with the advantages and realities of students' real-world experiences.

By building on Yosso's CCW framework, this study emphasizes how important it is that educational institutions modify their approaches and put them into practice to truly value the riches and diversity seen in first-generation Latina student communities. By utilizing these students' abundant cultural capital reserves—which, when acknowledged and utilized, can greatly improve their educational experience and results—this adaptation goes beyond simply promoting inclusion for the sake of inclusion.

Interpretation of Findings

The study's conclusions, which highlight the crucial roles that familial and navigational capitals play in first-generation Latina college students' educational journeys, are in line with Yosso's (2005) CCW model. By acknowledging the diverse types of capital that communities of color possess, including aspirational, navigational, social, linguistic, family, and resistant capital, this approach challenges conventional deficit-oriented viewpoints. Yosso's claim that these resources are frequently disregarded in educational research and practice is supported by our

study's attention on the beneficial effects of these capitals on students' academic persistence and achievement.

Through the lens of cultural transmission, it is possible to comprehend the considerable influence that familial capital—which includes values, customs, and work ethics—has on students' goals and academic persistence. According to research, values and goals are passed down through generations and have a significant impact on how well children do in school (Ceja, 2004; Plunkett & Bámaca-Gómez, 2003). Cultural values are passed down to children in a way that not only helps them feel like they belong, but also gives them the resilience they need to overcome obstacles in their educational pursuits.

First-generation Latina students bring a wealth of cultural diversity to their educational environments, but institutional recognition and support for this contribution are lacking, as evidenced by participant reports of ineffective family engagement strategies and the need for better communication between schools and families. According to Rios-Aguilar et al. (2011), this disparity reflects larger structural problems in educational institutions, which frequently overlook or undervalue the variety of capital that exists in communities of color.

The results of this study could be explained by the intersectionality between students' identities and experiences. First-generation Latina college students navigate their academic journeys at the crossroads of race, ethnicity, culture, and first-generation status. They encounter distinct difficulties and use specific forms of cultural capital to overcome the obstacles they are presented with. The CCW model offers a theoretical framework for comprehending how students' usage of cultural wealth throughout their educational journeys is influenced by these intersecting identities.

Context-specific assistance that is relevant to students' cultural backgrounds and experiences are even more important, as seen by the focus on social and navigational tools like the Puente Program and culturally appropriate activities. These results imply that promoting students' academic achievement and wellbeing requires culturally sensitive support networks and initiatives, especially in higher education institutions.

The study's findings add to the body of knowledge by presenting actual data on the ways in which first-generation Latina college students utilize and benefit from their cultural capital. This advances our understanding of the CCW model and makes it more applicable for use in a range of educational settings. These findings highlight the need for educational methods and policies that acknowledge and promote the cultural diversity of students from historically marginalized communities are crucial for the larger community, which includes educators, legislators, and families.

Finally, the results of this study provide a concrete example of how cultural capital shapes the educational experiences of first-generation Latina college students. This research broadens our understanding of how cultural assets are used and valued in educational environments while also validating preexisting theories by placing its findings within the framework of Community Cultural Wealth. Future studies should carry out an investigation into these dynamics using culturally sensitive approaches that respect and make use of each student's diverse cultural resources.

Interpreting Findings Through the Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework represents the roles of community cultural wealth and family engagement in the academic paths of first-generation Latina college students. It illustrates how six types of cultural capital enhance students' cultural identities, with family support bolstering academic persistence and institutional support facilitating these dynamics. The design highlights the fluid, interconnected nature of these elements. The framework illustrates the interconnected roles of community cultural wealth and family engagement in shaping the academic journey of first-generation Latina college students. Analyzing the key findings within this framework:

Community Cultural Wealth (CCW): The findings about aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational, and resistance capitals directly reflect the CCW's six pillars. Students utilize these forms of wealth to overcome institutional challenges, which is consistent with the CCW's model of enhancing cultural identity and contributing to academic success.

Family Engagement: The lack of effective family interaction techniques reported by participants points to a disconnection between the actual support received at home and the formalized family engagement strategies in educational institutions. This contrasts with the strong familial contributions detailed in the findings, which underpin the students' resilience and adaptability. Family engagement, as shown in the narratives, supports academic persistence, indicating its foundational role in the framework.

Cultural Identity: Students draw on their cultural heritage to maintain self-worth and presence in challenging environments, as Gabriela's example demonstrates. This aligns with the central position of cultural identity in the framework, affirming its role as a cornerstone for academic persistence and resilience.

Academic Persistence: The themes from the study reveal a culture of perseverance, adaptability in the face of adversity, and a proactive approach to seeking support and advocacy. These themes connect to the core concept of academic persistence in the framework, demonstrating how various forms of capital and family engagement contribute to this central educational journey goal.

Institutional Support: The framework's depiction of institutional support as an enabling force intersects with both family engagement and cultural identity. However, the reported need for improved family engagement strategies within schools suggests that institutional support could be more effectively leveraged to facilitate students' educational pathways.

This study underscores the importance of recognizing and nurturing the cultural wealth and familial support systems that first-generation Latina college students bring to their academic journeys, which in turn could inform more inclusive and culturally responsive educational policies and practices.

Limitations

With a special emphasis on comprehending the influence of cultural capital on their academic journeys, this study initially aimed to investigate the experiences and difficulties encountered by Latino/a college students. Though they do not lessen the significance of the results, a few research-related issues surfaced that point to areas that could be improved upon in subsequent investigations.

Participant Demographics: To obtain a complete picture of the community's educational experiences, it was first intended to include both male and female Latino/a participants. Unfortunately, recruiting male participants proved difficult, thus the study focused exclusively on Latina students. Although this choice was made to guarantee a cohesive study sample, it

restricts how broadly the results may be applied to the Latino/a community. To guarantee a more balanced representation of genders within the study population, outreach initiatives or focused recruiting tactics could prove beneficial for future research.

Exclusion of Graduated Participants: Two participants who had previously finished their college degrees were eliminated from the final analysis to keep the focus on the present struggles and experiences of Latina college students. This choice may limit understanding of the long-term effects and sustainability of cultural capital beyond graduation, even though the original goal of the decision was to restrict the study's focus to individuals actively navigating the higher education system. The opinions of those who have just graduated from college may provide insightful information about how cultural capital functions in the processes of moving from college to the workforce or back to school.

Even though the study has limitations regarding participant demographics and the exclusion of participants who have graduated, these limitations emphasize the need for more research rather than lessening the study's value. Based on this foundation, future research can expand by implementing more inclusive hiring practices and taking cultural capital's long-term effects into account. Subsequent studies can provide deeper insights into the varied experiences of the Latino/a community in higher education by broadening the scope and depth of inquiry. This will help to create a more comprehensive knowledge of how cultural assets influence academic performance and persistence. The assessment of the complex world of cultural capital among Latina college students in this study paves the way for future research and discussion, contributing to a more inclusive and equitable educational environment.

Implications

Implications for Theory and Knowledge Base

The conceptual framework of educational research is greatly enhanced by this study's examination of the educational experiences of first-generation Latina college students through the lens of the CCW model. I provide empirical evidence that aspirational, navigational, social, linguistic, family, and resistance capitals all contribute to these individuals' academic journeys. This broadens the theoretical applicability of the CCW model. In addition to supporting Yosso's (2005) claim that communities of color have strong and distinctive forms of cultural capital, the results refute prevalent deficit-oriented narratives in education.

This research contributes to a deeper understanding of how cultural capital affects learning outcomes. Examining their experiences from an asset-based perspective emphasizes how important it is to recognize the intrinsic abilities and resources that first-generation Latina students bring to the classroom. The change in viewpoint demands the reevaluation of traditional educational policies and practices as well as the development of approaches that are more inclusive of various forms of cultural capital. Following are possible recommendations for practice to strengthen community partnerships within educational institutions:

Cultural and Aspirational Support Systems: Develop partnerships with community organizations that resonate with the cultural and aspirational capital of students. These partnerships should aim to provide tailored support that acknowledges and builds on the unique backgrounds and ambitions of students.

Integrating Cultural Assets: Recognize and cherish the cultural capital that students and their families bring to the educational environment. Educational policies and practices should

consider these cultural resources as essential components for enhancing student success, integrating them deeply within the learning process.

Additionally, by drawing attention to the difficulties this group faces—such as the gap in effective family engagement strategies in high school and the need for more diverse demographic representation in research—this work highlights important topics for additional theoretical investigation and advancement. It invites scholars to explore the intersections between identity, culture, and educational success as well as to go deeper into the complexity of cultural capital in a range of educational situations, specifically in high school; enhancing family engagement in schools may include:

Engagement in Secondary Education: Increase family engagement in the educational process from grades 9-12 by creating opportunities for meaningful involvement. These opportunities should utilize and respect the familial capital present within the community, ensuring that families are integral to the educational dialogue and decision-making process.

Practical Implications for the Wider Community of Stakeholders

From a practical standpoint, a variety of stakeholders will be impacted by the insights obtained from this study. The findings recommend more culturally responsive pedagogies and support systems that recognize and enhance the cultural diversity of students from different backgrounds for educators and academic institutions. Improving student participation and academic accomplishment involves developing policies and programs that support family engagement in ways that are consistent with Latino communities' cultural practices and beliefs.

This research emphasizes for policymakers the necessity of institutional and regulatory frameworks that facilitate the integration and application of cultural capital as a vital educational resource. This could include providing funds for educational programs that are based in the

community, offering scholarships to first-generation college students, and launching campaigns to increase the number of Latino/a counselors and teachers in universities and schools. Transforming educational interactions may include the following:

Embracing Cultural Diversity: Advocate for a fundamental shift from conventional educational interactions to methods that deeply acknowledge and amplify the rich cultural diversity within communities. This transformation requires educational institutions to reevaluate and redesign their approaches to better reflect and utilize the diverse cultural backgrounds of their students.

Furthermore, this study affirms the significance of family involvement in their children's academic pursuits for first-generation college students' households. It emphasizes how important it is for families to support and encourage their children academically, considering their cultural background and career goals by creating inclusive learning environments that include:

Harmonizing Institutional Practices: Foster a more welcoming and supportive learning atmosphere that aligns school policies and practices with the advantages and real-world experiences of students and families. This approach not only enhances the educational climate but also ensures that institutional procedures are responsive to the needs and strengths of all students and families, particularly those from diverse backgrounds.

Finally, this study has implications that range from theoretical developments in our comprehension of cultural wealth in educational research to useful suggestions for improving the educational experiences of first-generation Latina college students. A more inclusive, equitable, and culturally sensitive educational environment can be achieved by the academic community and its stakeholders cooperating to connect these ideas with action. Investigating, comprehending, and utilizing the many cultural resources that every student brings to their

academic pursuits must never stop, realizing that these are essential forces behind educational innovation, creativity, and quality for all students.

Navigating Gender Norms and Community Integration

This study underscores the critical role of cultural wealth, including community networks and familial support, in enhancing the success and resilience of first-generation Latina college students. While it supports Yosso's Community Cultural Wealth model by advocating for educational initiatives that leverage these assets to bolster student support, it also reveals nuanced tensions within these support systems. The findings suggest that educational institutions should not only create initiatives that take advantage of these resources but also consider the gender-specific challenges that Latina students face when reintegrating into their family and community environments post-education.

The research highlights a potential standoffishness from family members, possibly rooted in traditional gender norms, which may affect these students' experiences and their perceived roles within their communities. This standoffishness points to a broader issue of social reintegration for educated Latinas, who may find themselves navigating altered familial expectations and relationships. The implications of this dynamic are profound, suggesting that while college education is celebrated, it also introduces complexities into traditional familial roles, sometimes positioning these students as outliers within their own communities. Institutions should consider these factors in their support programs to ensure they are addressing the holistic needs of Latina students, acknowledging the double-edged nature of educational advancement in culturally rich yet potentially conservative settings.

Recommendations for Future Research

The search for knowledge is a lifelong process that is characterized by constant investigation and discovery, particularly in the fields of cultural studies and education. This study creates new directions for future research since it focuses on the experiences of first-generation Latina college students and the critical role that cultural capital plays in their academic journey's. In this study I identified several possible improvements for further research considering these studies finding. These suggestions seek to close the knowledge gaps that this study revealed, increase the breadth of the investigation, and enhance our understanding. Future studies can further a more inclusive, and thorough understanding of the educational experiences within and outside of the Latino community by pursuing these directions.

Further Research Could Aim for More Inclusive Demographic Representation: Future research might try to incorporate a broader range of genders, ages, and educational backgrounds to achieve a more inclusive demographic representation. This could offer a more thorough comprehension of the various experiences that the Latino community has to offer.

Longitudinal Design: By taking a longitudinal approach, it may be possible to gain insight into how cultural capital changes as a person enters, leaves, and returns from college. Understanding the long-term effectiveness of different types of cultural capital in promoting academic performance may be aided by this.

Enhanced Community and Family Engagement: Although this study emphasized the value of familial and navigational capital, more in-depth community and family engagement with participants may be beneficial for future studies. To document the dynamic interactions between students, their families, and their larger communities, this may entail more direct encounters or participatory research techniques.

Gendered Experiences and Cultural Wealth: Further research is recommended to explore how gendered experiences and cultural wealth specifically impact educational outcomes for Latina students.

Comparative Studies: Research comparing first-generation Latina students' experiences to those of other racial or ethnic groups may reveal difficulties and advantages. A comparison analysis of this kind could improve our comprehension of the function of cultural capital in various demographic contexts.

In addition to building on the fundamental knowledge gained from this study, the above-mentioned research recommendations aim to expand our comprehension of cultural capital and its influence on the academic paths of first-generation Latina students. Future researchers can find new elements of student experiences through the adoption of longitudinal designs, improving family and community engagement, and undertaking comparative studies. All these strategies will help embrace a more inclusive demographic representation. There is little doubt that these initiatives will help to build more accommodating and responsive learning settings that acknowledge and value the diverse range of cultural riches that exists in our communities.

To create a future in which all student's cultural assets are recognized as essential components of their academic achievement, it is our shared duty to make sure that, moving forward, our academic endeavors are directed by the values of inclusivity, diversity, and equity.

Conclusion

With an emphasis on the impact of cultural capital on first-generation Latina college students' academic paths, this dissertation set out on an investigative mission to learn more about the complex experiences of these students. This study challenged deficit-oriented viewpoints and highlighted the strengths within Latino communities by illuminating the rich and varied types of capital that these students bring to their academic activities using Yosso's Community Cultural Wealth model as a theoretical framework.

This research showed that the hopes and academic achievement of first-generation Latina students are significantly influenced by their familial and navigational capitals. These students use their cultural riches—including aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational, and resistant capitals—to navigate and overcome institutional obstacles, even in the face of systemic barriers and a lack of effective family engagement strategies within the educational institutions they attended. The adaptation and resilience that come with their journey highlights how cultural capital may have a transforming effect on students' academic success and perseverance.

The study's outcomes highlight the need to rethink teaching strategies in order to acknowledge and capitalize on the cultural strengths of first-generation Latina college students. Educational institutions can establish environments that not only acknowledge but actively benefit from the diversity and richness of students' cultural backgrounds by moving toward more inclusive and culturally responsive pedagogies and policies. This study adds to the continuing conversation about educational equity by shedding light on how to expand and use the CCW model to better serve a diverse student body.

To support first-generation Latina students, the dissertation's findings pave the way for further investigation into the successful integration of cultural capital into educational systems.

To give a more thorough understanding of the impact of cultural capital in educational attainment, future research might broaden the demographic scope, use longitudinal designs, and encourage deeper family and community engagement. According to this study's recommendations, educators, legislators, and community leaders should work together to create plans that make the most of cultural resources to improve the educational experiences and outcomes of first-generation Latina college students.

Initiating this research journey proved to be a challenge as well as a source of personal and professional development. It increased my understanding of educational equity and allowed me to hone my skills as scholar-researcher, while at the same time strengthening my commitment to continue to advocate for the inclusion and success of underrepresented student populations. Not only has this dissertation contributed to my academic development, most importantly it has motivated me to continue to pursue research that can have a real influence on educational policies and protocols.

This dissertation serves as a testament to the tenacity, power, and unrealized potential of first-generation Latina college students. It invites politicians, academics, and educators to see cultural wealth as a real asset that, when properly embraced, has the power to completely change educational environments rather than as an abstract idea. As time goes on, let's not stop refuting the myths that hold us back and cooperate to create an inclusive, equitable, and culturally diverse learning environment.

APPENDIX

Appendix A

Interview Protocol for Student Subjects

My research explores the connection between increased family and community engagement among Latino families and persistence rates among first-generation Latina students. Through this research to highlight the methods through which these students leverage their distinctive cultural resources to achieve academic success.

—----------

I'm doing this work as part of my dissertation exploring the correlation between increased family engagement and student persistence among Latina first-generation students. As a participant in the research, you have the right to ask questions at any time, to decide if you would prefer not to answer some questions, to receive a copy of the findings, and to withdraw from the research at any time. Please note that your responses will be confidential. Before we start, I'd like to see if you have any questions about my work.

1. What is your highest degree completed?
    a. Please briefly describe your educational journey up to this point.
    b. Did you face any challenges in pursuing your education that you would like to share?
2. What is your field of study?
    a. How did you decide on your field of study, and what are your academic or career goals?
    b. Have your parents influenced your field of study in any way?

3. What motivates you to persist with your education?
    a. Can you provide specific examples of situations or factors that have motivated you throughout your educational journey?
4. What are the benefits of your parents engaging in your education?
    a. In your opinion, how has your parents' engagement impacted your academic performance or overall educational experience?
5. If you could go back to your K-12 experience, what are some things you believe your school, especially your high school, could've done to engage and educate your family in the college planning process?
6. If you could go back in time, what are some things you wish your parents would know to support you on your journey through to and through college?
7. What resources or guidance did your high school provide your parents to engage them in your education?
    a. Can you describe any specific programs or initiatives your high school had in place to involve parents in your education?
8. What role do you believe your parents have contributed to your persistence in college, regardless of your obstacles?
    a. In your view, how have your parents continued to support your education during your college experience?
9. Are there any skill sets you have used to navigate your college that you can attribute to your persistence in college?

10. What characteristics do you believe you inherited from your parents that have contributed to your persistence in college thus far?
    a. Can you pinpoint any specific traits, values, or beliefs from your parents that have positively influenced your college experience?
11. What personal qualities or strategies have you developed or inherited from your parents that have helped you succeed in college?
12. What do you consider your parents or family's role is and was in your education?
    a. Have these roles evolved or changed as you progressed through your educational journey? If so, in what way? Please explain.
13. Can you describe any cultural practices or values from your family or community that have positively influenced your educational persistence?
    a. Could you provide specific examples of cultural practices or values influencing your educational journey?
14. In what ways have you leveraged your cultural background and experiences to enhance your academic success in college as a first-generation Latino/student?
    a. Can you elaborate on specific strategies or actions you've taken to leverage your cultural background for academic success?
15. Have you encountered any institutional barriers or biases in your educational experience? How have you drawn upon your cultural wealth to address or overcome these challenges?
    a. Could you provide examples of institutional barriers or biases you've encountered during your education?

16. How do you perceive the intersectionality of your identity as a first-generation Latino/a student, and how has it shaped your experiences with family engagement and persistence in education?
    a. How do you believe this intersectionality has influenced your family engagement experiences and overall educational persistence?
17. Do you have any other questions for me or thoughts on the subject that you'd like to add or share?
    b. Is there anything else you'd like to discuss or share about your parental engagement experiences and educational journey?

References

Arevalo, So, D., & McNaughton-Cassill, M. (2016). The role of collectivism among Latino American college students. *Journal of Latinos and Education*, *15*(1), 3–11. https://doi.org/10.1080/15348431.2015.1045143

Auerbach, S. (2007). From Moral Supporters to Struggling Advocates. *Urban Education*, *42*(3), 250–283. https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085907300433

Bartle-Haring, S., Bryant, A., & Gavazzi, S. M. (2022). College student persistence: A focus on relationships with parents. *Journal of Family Issues.* https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X211068920

Baquedano-López, P., Alexander, R. A., & Hernandez, S. J. (2013). Equity issues in parental and community involvement in schools: what teacher educators need to know. *Review of Research in Education,* 37(1), 149–182. https://doi.org/10.3102/0091732X12459718

Bourdieu, P., & Passeron, J.C. (1990). *Reproduction in education, society and culture*. Sage Publications.

Bourke, B. (2014). Positionality: Reflecting on the Research Process. The Qualitative Report, 19(33),1-9. https://ezproxy.library.arizona.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/positionality-reflecting-on-research-process/docview/2486198787/se-2

Brooks, & Allen, K. R. (2016). The Influence of Fictive Kin Relationships and Religiosity on the Academic Persistence of African American College Students Attending an HBCU. *Journal of Family Issues*, *37*(6), 814–832. https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X14540160

Butler-Barnes, Varner, F., Williams, A., & Sellers, R. (2017). Academic Identity: A Longitudinal Investigation of African American Adolescents' Academic Persistence. *Journal of Black Psychology*, *43*(7), 714–739. https://doi.org/10.1177/0095798416683170

Cavusoglu, C., & Karataş, H.Ö. (2015). Academic Procrastination of Undergraduates: Self-determination Theory and Academic Motivation. *The Anthropologist, 20*, 735 - 743. https://doi.org/10.1080/09720073.2015.11891780

Ceballo, R. (2004). From barrios to Yale: The role of parenting strategies in Latino families. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, *26*(2), 171–186. https://doi.org/10.1177/0739986304264572

Ceja, M. (2004). Chicana college aspirations and the role of parents: Developing educational resiliency. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*, 3(4), 338–362. https://doi.org/10.1177/1538192704268428

Ceja, M. (2006). Understanding the role of parents and siblings as information sources in the college choice process of Chicana students. *Journal of College Student Development*, 47(1), 87-104. https://doi.org/10.1353/csd.2006.0003

Chow-Garcia, Lee, N., Svihla, V., Sohn, C., Willie, S., Holsti, M., & Wandinger-Ness, A. (2022). Cultural identity central to Native American persistence in science. *Cultural Studies of Science Education*, *17*(2), 557–588. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11422-021-10071-7

Clayton, Medina, M. C., & Wiseman, A. M. (2019). Culture and community: Perspectives from first-year, first-generation-in-college Latino students. *Journal of Latinos and Education*, *18*(2), 134–150. *https://doi.org/10.1080/15348431.2017.1386101*

College Futures Foundation. (2015, June). *Defining Persistence and Retention.* https://collegefutures.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/defining-foundation-persistence-and-retention.pdf

Collins. (2018). Confronting Color-Blind STEM Talent Development: Toward a Contextual Model for Black Student STEM Identity. *Journal of Advanced Academics*, *29*(2), 143–168. https://doi.org/10.1177/1932202X18757958

Connecticut Official State Website. (2017, August). *Full, Equal and Equitable Partnerships with Families*. https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/publications/fe_definition_and_guiding_principles_handout.pdf

Contreras, & Kiyama, J. M. (2022). "There are Obstacles... but we can do it": Latina/o/x activate community cultural wealth and funds of knowledge in the college transition. *Journal of the First-Year Experience & Students in Transition*, 34(1), 9–26. https://arizona-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/f/1h28lag/TN_cdi_ingenta_journals_ic_fyesit_15423077_v34n1_20220416_0430_default_tar_gz_s1

Covarrubias, R., Jones, J., & Johnson, R. (2020). Exploring the links between parent–student conversations about college, academic self-concepts, and grades for first-generation college students. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice*, 22(3), 464–480. https://doi.org/10.1177/1521025118770634

Creswell, J.W, & Poth, C. N. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry & research design : choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.

Delgado-Gaitan, C. (1994). “Consejos”: The power of cultural narratives. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 25(3), 298–316. https://www.jstor.org/stable/3195848

Espino. (2014). Exploring the Role of Community Cultural Wealth in Graduate School Access and Persistence for Mexican American PhDs. *American Journal of Education*, *120*(4), 545–574. https://doi.org/10.1086/676911

Fernández, Rincón, B. E., & Hinojosa, J. K. (2023). (Re)creating family and reinforcing pedagogies of the home: How familial capital manifests for Students of Color pursuing STEM majors. *Race, Ethnicity and Education*, *26*(2), 147–163. https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2021.1997971

Garriott, P. O., Navarro, R. L., & Flores, L. Y. (2017). First-generation college students.' persistence intentions in engineering majors. *Journal of Career Assessment*, *25*(1), 93–106. https://doi.org/10.1177/1069072716657533

Gutierrez-Serrano, Romo, L. F., & Chagolla, D. (2023). Latina First-Generation College Students' Motivation to Persist: An Attribution Theory and Self-determination Theory Perspective. *Journal of Latinos and Education*, *22*(5), 2164–2177. https://doi.org/10.1080/15348431.2022.2096611

Herrmann, S. D., & Varnum, M. E. W. (2018). Utilizing social class bicultural identity integration to improve outcomes for first-generation college students. *Translational Issues in Psychological Science*, *4*(2), 165–175. https://doi.org/10.1037/tps0000159

Ishitani, T. T. (2016). First-generation student's persistence at four-year institutions. *College and University, 91*(3), 22-32,34. https://ezproxy.library.arizona.edu/login

Jeynes, W. H. (2007). The relationship between parental involvement and urban secondary school student academic achievement. *Urban Education*, *42*(1), 82–110. https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085906293818

Kiyama, J.M., & Harper, C. E. (2018). Beyond Hovering: A Conceptual Argument for an Inclusive Model of Family Engagement in Higher Education. *Review of Higher Education*, *41*(3), 365–385. https://doi.org/10.1353/rhe.2018.0012

Lichtman. (2010). *Qualitative research in education : a user's guide* (2nd ed.). SAGE.

Locke, Maxwell, G., & Tello, M. (2017). "… you don't come to this school… to show off your hoodies": Latinas, community cultural wealth, and an early college high school. *Qualitative Report*, 22(9), 2404–2427. https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2017.2496

Markle, & Stelzriede, D. D. (2020). Comparing first-generation students to continuing-generation students and the impact of a first-generation learning community. *Innovative Higher Education*, *45*(4), 285–298. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10755-020-09502-0

Martin, & NetLibrary, Inc. (2000). *Mathematics success and failure among African-American youth : the roles of sociohistorical context, community forces, school influence, and individual agency*. Lawrence Erlbaum.

Matos, J.M.D. (2015). La Familia: The important ingredient for Latina/o college student engagement and persistence. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, *48*(3), 436–453. https://doi.org/10.1080/10665684.2015.1056761

Mieziene, Emeljanovas, A., Jusiene, R., Breidokiene, R., Girdzijauskiene, S., Sabaliauskas, S., Buzaityte-Kasalyniene, J., Budiene, V., Eiliakaite, I., Speicyte-Ruschhoff, E., Babkovskiene, E., Zvirdauskas, D., & Kawachi, I. (2022). Direct and Indirect Effects of Social Support and School Social Capital on the Academic Success of 11–19-Year-Old Students Using Distance Learning. Sustainability (Basel, Switzerland), 14(4), 2131. https://doi.org/10.3390/su14042131

Miller. (2007). The Association of Family History Knowledge and Cultural Change with Persistence among Undergraduate Low-Income, First-Generation College Students. *Research & Teaching in Developmental Education*, *24*(1), 29–45.

Moustakas, Clark E. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. SAGE.

Peoples, K. (2021). How to write a phenomenological dissertation: A step-by-step guide.

Perez, D. (2017). In Pursuit of Success: Latino Male College Students Exercising Academic Determination and Community Cultural Wealth. *Journal of College Student Development*, *58*(2), 123–140. https://doi.org/10.1353/csd.2017.0011

Phillips, Stephens, N. M., Townsend, S. S. M., & Goudeau, S. (2020). Access Is Not Enough: Cultural Mismatch Persists to Limit First-Generation Students' Opportunities for Achievement Throughout College. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *119*(5), 1112–1131. https://doi.org/10.1037/pspi0000234

Plunkett, S. W., & Bámaca-Gómez, M. Y. (2003). The relationship between parenting, acculturation, and adolescent academics in Mexican-origin immigrant families in Los Angeles. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, *25*(2), 222–239. https://doi.org/10.1177/0739986303025002005

Rincon, Fernandez, E., & Duenas, M. C. (2020). Anchoring comunidad: how first- and continuing-generation Latinx students in STEM engage community cultural wealth. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *33*(8), 840–854. https://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2020.1735567

Rios-Aguilar, C., Kiyama, J. M., Gravitt, M., & Moll, L. C. (2011). Funds of knowledge for the poor and forms of capital for the rich? A capital approach to examining funds of knowledge. *Theory and Research in Education*, *9*(2), 163-184. https://doi.org/10.1177/1477878511409776

Rook. (2013). LULAC: Mexican-American Adult Learning, Collectivism, and Social Movement. *Journal of Adult Education*, *42*(2), 55.

Roksa, J., & Kinsley, P. (2019). The role of family support in facilitating academic success of low-income students. *Research in Higher Education*, *60*(4), 415–436. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11162-018-9517-z

Rowan-Kenyon, Bell, A. D., & Perna, L. W. (2008). Contextual Influences on Parental Involvement in College Going: Variations by Socioeconomic Class. *The Journal of Higher Education (Columbus)*, *79*(5), 564–586. https://doi.org/10.1353/jhe.0.0020

Saunders, M., & Serna, I. (2004). Making College Happen: The College Experiences of First-Generation Latino Students. *Journal of Hispanic higher education*, *3*(2), 146–163.

Siqueiros, M., & Reddy, V. (2021). *The State of Higher Education for Latinx Californians.* The Campaign for College Opportunity. https://collegecampaign.org/wp-content/uploads/imported-files/FINAL-SHE-Latinx-web.pdf

Storlie, Mostade, S. J., & Duenyas, D. (2016). Cultural Trailblazers: Exploring the Career Development of Latina First-Generation College Students. *The Career Development Quarterly*, *64*(4), 304–317. https://doi.org/10.1002/cdq.12067

Suwinyattichaiporn, & Johnson, Z. D. (2022). The Impact of Family and Friends Social Support on Latina First-Generation College Students' Perceived Stress, Depression, and Social Isolation. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*, *21*(3), 297–314. https://doi.org/10.1177/1538192720964922\

Tsai, Estrada, S., Flores, L. Y., & Brown, C. (2023). Motivation, College Integration, and Intentions to Persist Among First-Generation College Students: A Latent Class Approach. *Journal of Career Development*, *50*(5), 1116–1136. https://doi.org/10.1177/08948453231157757

UCLA Latino Policy & Politics Institute. (2024, February 29). *Facts about Latina Educational Attainment*. https://latinodatahub.org/#/research/facts-about-latina-educational-attainment-in-the-united-states

Vansteenkiste, Lens, W., & Deci, E. L. (2006). Intrinsic Versus Extrinsic Goal Contents in Self-Determination Theory: Another Look at the Quality of Academic Motivation. *Educational Psychologist*, *41*(1), 19–31. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15326985ep4101_4

Witkowsky, Obregon, V., Bruner, B., & Alanis, J. (2020). Connecting Familismo and Higher Education: Influence of Spanish Language PFMO Programs on Latinx Family Involvement and Sense of Belonging. Journal of Hispanic Higher Education, 19(4), 354–368. https://doi.org/10.1177/1538192718810429

Yasuike. (2019). The academic success of undocumented Latino students: School programs, non-profit organizations, and social capital. *Journal of Latinos and Education*, *18*(1), 42–52. https://doi.org/10.1080/15348431.2017.1418354

Yosso. (2005). Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth. *Race, Ethnicity and Education, 8*(1), 69–91. https://doi.org/10.1080/1361332052000341006