CULTIVATING CHICANX/LATINX STUDENT SUCCESS THROUGH PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Much of the literature related to the role of parents supports the importance of parental involvement during a student’s elementary and secondary educational placement. However, very little research follows through with this parent involvement support factor at the college and university level. Often, Chicanx/Latinx students enter an unfamiliar territory, left alone to navigate the system of higher education. This study looked into Chicanx/Latinx college students’ perceptions of their parents’ involvement and engagement during their college experience in order to understand ways that they contribute to Chicanx/Latinx college student’s retention, persistence and progress towards graduation.

Through my research, students shared what I developed as core concepts in cultivating Chicanx/Latinx student success. My core concept includes naming the untapped cultural and familial assets Chicanx/Latinx parents provide, which are not being utilized by both student and the institution. Value must be placed on the shared stories of these student participants. They revealed the following core concepts:

1. *Consejos* are untapped by institution and student, as the students describe the importance of *consejos*

2. Unrecognized value of what *familias* offer to students: parental support by any means necessary
3. Unexpressed gratitude and appreciation

4. Untapped potential of parents as partners, with the students expressing desire for their parents to belong

This study sought to develop an understanding of students’ perceptions of their parent’s engagement in higher education and found that they indeed have an integral role to play in Chicanx/Latinx student success.

Recommendations are made to support Chicanx/Latinx parent programming rooted in culturally relevant efforts. Parents must be seen as partners, and institutions of higher education must begin to incorporate parent engagement early and develop pathways to engage the entire *familia* in the higher education experience. Institutional agents must begin to explicitly ask about Chicanx/Latinx student’s parents and their impact, through programming, policies, and long-term engagement using familial capital, assets, and a strengths-based approach.
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Para mi mami y mi papi.
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God is within her, she will not fall (Psalm 46:5). With God’s blessing and grace, I know that this journey was meant to be experienced exactly as it was. The joys, the heartbreaks, the good, the bad, the ugly, and the beautiful. Life is hard, but it’s also quite beautiful. I give thanks to lil Ivan for giving me the courage and heart to begin my doctorate journey. Our greatest heart’s works comes through our heartbreaks.

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paz.amor.justicia.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Latinos form the largest minority ethnic group in California (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Gándara and Contreras (2009) predicted that by 2025 one out of every four school-aged children in the United States will be Latino. In 2009, Latinos had the highest high school dropout rate compared to other racial groups, including White, Black, Asian/Pacific Islander, and American Indian/Alaska Native (National Center for Education Statistics, 2011). A Pew Hispanic Center report (Fry, 2002) found a gap between enrollment of Latino students and graduation. The retention and persistence of Latino students towards graduation is connected to the patterns of Latinos; part-time verses full-time attendance, socioeconomic status, and family and community attachment (Fry, 2002). Fry and Taylor (2013) found that “according to Census Bureau data, in March 2012, 22% of white 22- to 24-year-olds had attained at least a bachelor’s degree. Young Latinos were half as likely to have finished a four-year college degree (11%)” (p. 7). This disparity between White and Latino students may create the negative perception that Latino students cannot succeed in higher education due to the completion gap.

Contrary to the deficit thinking that exists in literature (Valencia, 2002) about Chicanx/Latinxs, the report stated, “college enrollment data reveal that Hispanic students value university education” (Fry, 2002, p. 12). Researchers
Fry and Taylor (2013) found that a “record of 69% of Hispanic high school graduates in the class of 2012 enrolled in college that fall, two percentage points higher than the rate of 67% among their white counterparts” (p. 4).

**Background of the Problem**

Chicanx/Latinx students value the education received at institutions of higher education; however, being enrolled does not automatically lead toward retention and student success, thus creating the gap. This report highlights the growing enrollment of Chicanx/Latinx students in college; however, their retention and graduation numbers are low. “Latina/o students enrolled in institutions of higher education in 2000-01 represented 9.6% of all students enrolled during that year, yet Latina/os only earned 5.9% of the bachelor's degrees” (Harvey, 2003, p. 57). The disparity exists between enrollment and degree completion (Fry, 2002). The educational pipeline showcases these dismal numbers further for Chicanx/Latinx students. Yosso (2006) highlights these number to emphasize this concern further:

Utilizing 2000 U.S. Census data and information from the National Center for Educational Statistics, we begin with 100 Chicana and Chicano students at the elementary level, noting that 56 drop out of high school and 44 continue on to graduate. Of the 44 who graduate from high school, about 26 continue on toward some form of postsecondary education. Of those 26, approximately 17 enroll in community colleges and nine enroll at a 4-year institution. Of the nine Chicanas/os attending a 4-year college and the one community college transfer student, seven will
graduate with a baccalaureate degree. Finally, two Chicana/o students will continue on to earn a graduate or professional school degree and less than one will receive a doctorate (p. 4).

**Latino Parental Involvement Examples**

**K-12 pipeline.** De Gaetano (2007) describes cultural knowledge as what Chicanx/Latinx parents informally transmit to the child at home during their K-12 experience, while formal parent participation is the engagement that occurs once the student is in the classroom. Though this study was not conducted at a college setting, it validates the impact that Chicanx/Latinx parents have on their child’s academic success. De Gaetano (2007) found that the home is the primary transmitter of culture and should be used as a powerful vehicle to engage parents in the schooling process. However, “The educational system validates and transmits the dominant culture. The ways of thinking, speaking, and behaving, as well as the language and values of the dominant group, are promoted in schools” (De Gaetano, 2007, p. 148). This is the setup found in children’s educational schooling.

**Colleges and universities.** Parental involvement is still the top factor for Chicanx/Latinx college students’ success, as asserted by Rivera (2013): “Good education for Latinos still starts with parents” (p. 1). Auerbach (2004) found that Latino parents who participated in a bilingual parent program gained knowledge and felt confident. Latino parents were able to interact with institutions of higher education as well as engage with their own children, assisting them in navigating the college experience (Auerbach, 2004). Ceballo (2004) conducted 10
interviews with Latino undergraduate students who attended Yale University and discovered the emphasis that was placed by parents on the importance of education. According to this study, “their parents consistently expressed verbal support for all educational matters (Ceballo, 2004, p. 176). The study also unveiled the concept of nonverbal support that Chicanx/Latinx parents engage in with their child in order to assist in their educational success. The Yale study concluded that all student participants’ parents had a high parental emphasis and commitment to education and saw education as the means to their son or daughter’s success (Ceballo, 2004).

Deficit Thinking

The deficit thinking model is described by Valencia (2002) as “at its core . . . an endogenous theory—positing that the student who fails in school does so because of internal deficits or deficiencies. Such deficits manifest, it is alleged, in limited intellectual abilities, linguistic shortcomings, lack of motivation to learn and immoral behavior” (p. 2). Discussions about the factors that contribute to a student’s deficits have often centered on their culture, family, and language. Often it is believed that education amongst Chicanx/Latinxs is not valued or encouraged (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991), portraying the Chicanx/Latinx community in a negative light. The dominant models that exist in schools must be challenged so that Latino students and their cultures can be considered, moving towards understanding and operationalizing their perspectives (Rios-Aguilar & Marquez-Kiyama, 2012).
Counter Stories—Not A One-Size-Fit-All Framework

Yosso (2006) refers to the power of counter stories, those stories that demystify the deficit thinking that places Latinos students and their parents’ educational aspirations in a negative light. Rodriguez (2010) describes stories and storytelling as an opportunity to develop meaningful relationships with those sharing their narrative. Stories of marginalized students can assist in addressing and disrupting the racist messages that can exist in predominately White settings (Rodriguez, 2010). It is essential to capture these counter narratives to showcase the impact of Chicanx/Latinx parent’s involvement and highlight the need to dig deeper in order to reach the academic attainment. A participant from Ceballo’s (2004) Yale University study shared the following counter narrative:

I have gotten a lot of support from my mom [like] waking me up at some ridiculous hour in the morning, like four or five, because I had to finish a project or bringing me hot chocolate late at night…She couldn’t actually help me out with my actual school work, but [she would provide] different kinds of support. (p. 181)

In a study of middle and high school students, researchers Woolley, Kol, and Bowen (2009) found that positive connections can occur if Latino parents and teachers can work together to avoid any cultural differences and misunderstandings. Latino children in this study respect both parents and teachers and view them as key adults who can counter the deficit thinking in education (Woolley et al., 2009). The primary impact made for Latino middle and high school students was the teacher–student connection, however, it is
important to include the Latino parent, creating a triangular relationship supporting academic success. The current one-size-fits all model, focuses only on the teacher–student relationship. Traditional views of parental involvement have led to the misrepresentation and marginalization of many minority families (Alfaro, O’Reilly-Diaz, & Lopez, 2014). Educational systems marginalize Latino parents due to race, class, and cultural differences. Non-Latino educators and administrators often believe that Latino parents do not care for their children’s education and attempt to address the deficit of parent’s involvement (James, 2008). However, educators and administrators often miss the opportunity to build genuine and authentic relationships by building more inclusive parent-involvement programs that embrace culture (Alfaro et al., 2014). De Gaetano (2007) describes the current model as a “one-size-fits-all framework that does not address ethnic diversity and [is] fueled by unacknowledged structural racism” (p. 146). Often the model used to involve parents is culturally insensitive and is founded in a deficit model and deficit thinking. It is important to engage parents by creating programs that are culturally relevant to Chicanx/Latinx students. A college can talk about parent involvement, however, if institutions of higher education are engaging the parents in linguistically and culturally appropriate ways, then the commitment to engaging these parents is undermined (De Gaetano, 2007). When communication and involvement are culturally accessible, both parents and students are engaged (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991). Latina/o parents often want to support the educational aspirations of their
children, but providing academic help is a very challenging task for them. Many Latina/o parents do not speak English, and many do not possess experience with the higher education system. In addition, many educators provide little guidance about higher education or show little interest in the future of the Latina/o students (Zalaquett, 2006, p. 36).

**Consejos as Cultural Involvement**

Involvement needs to be more inclusive and transcend the attendance of special events, as Delgado-Gaitan (1994) encourages in her study involving the concept of family *consejos* and cultural narratives. The term *consejos* implies “a cultural dimension of communication sparked with emotional empathy and compassion, as well as familial expectations and inspiration” (Delgado-Gaitan, 1994, p. 300). These *consejos* are a form of community cultural wealth. Yosso (2005) uses a critical lens to reexamine how assets are valued, noting that students of color bring assets that have the potential to transform the process of schooling but are often ignored. These assets create a community cultural wealth and include six forms of capital: aspirational, social, linguistic, familial, resistant, and navigational (Yosso, 2005). Researchers Luna and Martinez (2013) state that "the Community Cultural Wealth Model begins with the perspective that communities of color are places with multiple strengths, cultural assets and cultural wealth. This perspective serves as a tool to move toward social and racial justice and demonstrates the need to restructure not only education systems, but other social institutions around the community’s knowledge, skills, abilities and networks" (p. 3).
Forms of community cultural wealth and its strength-based assets are found in literature produced by many researchers (Auerbach, 2004; Delgado-Gaitan, 1994; Yosso 2006) who wish to give voice to marginalized students of color. Yosso (2005) believes “the main goals of identifying and documenting cultural wealth are to transform education and empower people of color to utilize assets already abundant in their communities” (p. 82). These assets must be valued as strengths in higher education so as to acknowledge Chicanx/Latinx students and their families (Yosso, 2005). By engaging parents in the process of higher education, we can see their impact on their child’s success in college (Auerbach, 2004). Alfaro and colleagues (2014) complemented the previous work on consejos (Delgado-Gaitan, 1994) by understanding the impact of consejos from the perspective of the students receiving them from their parents. The consejos received by students were categorized into optimism, determination, disposition, and motivation (Alfaro et al., 2014). The role parents played in the student’s success demonstrate how consejos can be internalized by the student to achieve and inspire them to reach their educational goals (Alfaro et al., 2014).

**Familia as Strength-Based**

*Familismo* is described as the influence of cultural values and the many different roles that Chicanx/Latinxs have within the family (Quijada & Alvarez, 2006). Berrios-Allison (2011) stated that *familismo* is still prevalent in the college-going Latino student and often can prioritize family responsibilities over that of persisting in education. This is not done because education is devalued,
but because of the cultural–familial standpoint that Chicanx/Latinxs have (Berrios-Allison, 2011). Berrios-Allison (2011) discusses this as cultural forces that Latino students must navigate when adapting to a campus environment. “Cultural–familial dynamics are often of continuing importance in shaping academic and career outcomes” (Berrios-Allison, 2011). Yosso (2006) defines this collectivistic approach as familial capital, “a cultural knowledge nurtured among familia (kin) that carry a sense of community history, memory and cultural intuition” (p. 48).

### Problem Statement

Parental involvement is a key factor to students’ success (Gofen, 2009; Nora & Cabrera, 1996). The emphasis of the families’ impact towards success was found in the study of first-generation college students was viewed as family capital (Gofen, 2009). The study found that there was a strong desire to please parents’ educational expectations connected to the level of respect that they had in their parent–child relationship (Gofen, 2009). “Parent encouragement is believed to create a positive influence on a student’s educational aspirations and on her or his decision to persist in college” (Nora & Cabrera, 1996, p. 123). At the K-12 level, parental involvement has correlated positively with a child’s academic performance and can assist in reducing the achievement gap (Lee & Bowen, 2006). Meaningful research and studies exist already pertaining to the academic success of Chicanx/Latinxs at the elementary and secondary educational systems and the need to involve and engage parents at that level (Auerbach, 2004; Delgado-Gaitan, 1994; Lee & Bowen, 2006). The research by
Lee and Bowen (2006) highlights the importance of parental involvement and the connection with high achievement. Parental involvement is important and should be the approach that institutions of higher education take to assist Chicanx/Latinx student’s parental involvement, modeling the research discussed in this paper found in the K-12 level.

Very little research exists regarding the importance of continuing this parental involvement and engagement at the university and college level. According to the Fry (2002) many Chicanx/Latinx students are entering colleges, but many face cultural differences that usually go unnoticed and unacknowledged by institutions of higher education (Yosso, 2006). Consejos are an example of the cultural community wealth that is ignored, though they provide intentional ways of teaching value and ethics by Latino parents that differ from the current Western concept of education (Alfaro et al., 2014).

This is a social justice issue. Systems and policies exist in our educational system that do not recognize the potential strengths and assets of Latino parents that can contribute to Latino students’ success in higher education (Yosso, 2006). Goldfarb and Grinberg (2002) define social justice “as the exercise reclaiming, appropriating, sustaining, and advancing inherent human rights of equity, equality, and fairness in social, economic, educational, and personal dimensions” (p. 162). Social justice education is defined by Adams, Bell, and Griffin (1997) as

The goal of social justice education is to enable individuals to develop the critical analytical tools necessary to understand the structural features of
oppression and their own socialization within oppressive systems. Social justice education aims to help participants develop awareness, knowledge, and processes to examine issues of justice/injustice in their personal lives, communities, institutions, and the broader society. (p. 4)

Often Latino students in college will use the community cultural wealth assets that they have received from parents to navigate towards creating social justice, overcoming obstacles to reach educational achievement (Luna & Martinez, 2013). The responsibility falls on institutions of higher education to acknowledge and operationalize the community cultural wealth model once Latino students enter college. This failure to recognize these strengths only contributes to the deficit model of Chicanx/Latinx retention and student success on the part of institutions of higher education. Colleges and universities must address the problem and begin to understand the multiple layers and the assets Chicanx/Latinx parents contribute to their children. These parents offer rich cultural and community capital that assist Chicanx/Latinx students’ experiences and are valuable factors in their educational success (Yosso, 2006).

An institution of higher education can be an unfamiliar and scary place that creates doubt and anxiety for Chicanx/Latinx students (Fernandez, 2002; Yosso, 2005). As they search for their familia, or space to call home, we must look to provide those spaces that create a sense of belonging (Patton, 2010; Yosso, 2006). Institutions of higher education are spaces that currently create social injustices when we fail to take action in being inclusive with parents even though studies have showcased that parental involvement and engagement
assist Chicanx/Latinx students towards success (Ceballo, 2004; Lee & Bowen, 2006; Luna & Martinez, 2013; Zalaquett, 2006).

Ceballo (2004) found that parental commitment to the importance of education, parental support of adolescent autonomy, and nonverbal parental expressions of support for educational goals are three of four common factors that facilitated students’ trajectory towards success in college, the fourth being faculty presence. Lee and Bowen (2006) discovered that parental involvement has a positive impact on high-achievement outcomes. Researchers Luna and Martinez (2013) found that Latino students shared the need to “use culturally or ethnically based knowledge, skills, abilities and contacts to survive macro and micro forms of aggression in school and excel academically” (p. 4). They further emphasized the need to value capital and assets while attending college and reported that these students often felt that what they bring to the educational setting goes unrecognized and undervalued by institutions of higher education (Luna & Martinez, 2013). In a study of 12 Latina/a students’ stories, it was found that la familia was central to the Latina/o student’s education and aspirations to attend college (Zalaquett, 2006). Zalaquett found that “each one of the stories analyzed in this study portrayed family support as a major factor in the student’s success, regardless of the level of information the families possessed about the educational system” (Zalaquett, 2006, p. 40).

The problem that is presented here involves the lack of true engagement on behalf of institutions of education to bring all communities to the table, creating injustices and inequities in the educational system (Fernandez, 2002).
Chicanx/Latinx students bring assets rooted in their cultural upbringing that are often ignored once they step into the dominant educational systems of higher learning, which silences and keeps them outside the discourse (Fernandez, 2002). This creates the divide. Chicanx/Latinx students’ personal stories are ignored (Solorzano & Yosso, 2001). These consejos (Auerbach, 2004; Delgado-Gaitan, 1994; Yosso 2006), which are their family’s narratives, are pushed to the back burner as they enter an unfamiliar setting, the college campus (Yosso, 2006). Many Chicanx/Latinx students then need to assimilate to the standards of institutions of higher learning, often pulling them away from their cultural roots and devaluing their parents’ ability to be involved (Darder, 2011; hooks, 1994). Social justice education is working toward actively including Chicanx/Latinx parents in policies and procedures and sharing the information in a just way (Fernandez, 2002).

There is a narrow definition of parental involvement in higher education that does not include the cultural tendencies and customs of Chicanx/Latinx families, thereby creating a barrier to the necessary engagement and involvement that can allow Chicanx/Latinx students to persist and graduate. Latino parents are not being cultivated by institutions of higher education. Educators do not understand or use Latino parents’ funds of knowledge, community cultural wealth capital, and consejos to build a collective community of support for Latino students’ success. This disconnect creates the struggle for institutions of higher education to engage Latino parents in a culturally relevant way. Institutions of higher education will need to expand beyond the dominant
norms of parental involvement understanding in order to assist in the advancement and transformation of Latino student success. Valuing community cultural wealth that is used by Latinos is key for their survival and success, despite “the institutional neglect of the U.S. public school system that has historically failed them” (Luna & Martinez, 2103). The narrow definition of involvement places Latino students and their families in a position that ignores their narratives, putting to question the commitment of colleges and universities to socially just education and student success (Fernandez, 2002). A Latina student attending Yale recalled her parents’ involvement as “different kinds of support” (Ceballo, 2004, p. 181). This “different kinds of support” or “capital” is what institutions of higher education must focus on and pay attention to in order to create a connection and a collective community of love (hooks, 1994) and cultural support for Latino students and their parents (Yosso, 2006). Limiting parental involvement to attendance at meetings or special events limits the true impact Chicanx/Latinx parents have on their children’s academic success. There is a focus on the lack of involvement of Chicanx/Latinx parents without validating the empowering messages of family and persistence that they pass on to their children. Reframing involvement is necessary so Chicanx/Latinx parents are viewed as contributing through the model of community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2006). This involvement would honor the cultures, values, and histories of Latino parents, placing value in those assets (Yosso, 2006). Viewing Chicanx/Latinx parents as assets must be normalized at institutions of higher education for the academic achievement of this growing student population.
Purpose Statement

The purposes of this study are to (a) understand the impact of parental involvement on Chicanx/Latinx students in pursuing their college education and (b) to describe the awareness needed by educators and administrators to recognize the role parents play in their students' educational success. This study will add to current studies and create understanding through the narratives of college students about ways in which their parents have influenced their college and life goals. This study will contribute to a new, more inclusive narrative addressing the impact of familial capital in higher education beyond the P-12 level. By interviewing students, this study will further research the experience of first-generation Latino college students and how their parents' involvement may contribute to unraveling the educational myths that exist regarding Chicanx/Latinx students' parents.

As a self-proclaimed research activist, I aim to use critical race theory and Latino critical theory to address the gap that is created by institutions of higher education and the lack of engagement of Chicanx/Latinx parents in order to create Latino student success. This study will contribute to creating a new more inclusive narrative, addressing the impact of familial capital in higher education, beyond the K-12 level. This study will advocate for the importance of Chicanx/Latinx parental and familial members and for cultivating them as true assets empowering Chicanx/Latinx towards student success.

Yosso (2005) describes critical race theory “as a framework that can be used to theorize, examine and challenge the ways race and racism implicitly and
explicitly impact on social structures, practices and discourses” (p. 70). In education, critical race theory counters the dominant ideology and the dominant culture privilege and allows for the experiences of people of color to be validated and heard (Yosso, 2005).

My area of focus is Latinx/Chicanx students’ lived experiences. By using Latino critical theory, I can begin to better understand its four functions of “the production of knowledge, the advancement of transformation, the expansion and connection of struggles(s), and the cultivation of community and coalition” (Fernandez, 2002; Valdes, 1998). Using Latino critical theory as a theoretical framework will assist in valuing the assets of Latino parents and the ways they benefit their child’s success in college. Using Latino critical theory will assist me in telling a story that is understood by many, not just Latinos. Fernandez (2002) states,

- narratives, storytelling, and counter-stories can be transformative and empowering for educators, students, and community members. These methods can make public what many already know but have not spoken out loud: There are futures and lives at stake in the process we call education (p. 60).

Institutions of higher education may need to consider parental involvement and engagement as a critical component to closing the educational gap amongst Chicanx/Latinx students in institutions of higher education. By placing value in the stories of Chicanx/Latinx students, institutions of higher education can begin
to discover some of the supports Chicanx/Latinx students require to reach success.

Institutions of higher education can model parent engagement and involvement by using a pedagogy introduced by Paulo Freire (1970), which allows for the learner or participant in a system to be a cocreator of knowledge. What Freire describes as the “banking” approach views students as empty vessels that need deposits from teachers (Freire, 1970). Much like the education system, this view holds that institutions of higher education are the depositors of knowledge and students have nothing to offer. Freire (1970) advocates for an approach to education that includes the entire community and their knowledge and assets, much like those found in the community cultural wealth model (Yosso, 2006). This dialogue can include all those involved in order to discuss the atmosphere in which learning happens and what role parents can play in the success of their children in a collaborative model. Often this is an intangible factor not always valued by institutions of higher education. Emotional support and unconditional love (Rivera, 2011, 2013) are common in the Chicanx/Latinx family. Rivera (2011) believes that we must think creatively to support and love our students as they enter an unfamiliar territory.

**Research Questions**

The central research questions for this qualitative study will focus on the following questions:
1. How do Chicanx/Latinx first-generation transfer students describe their parents’ involvement in their college educational success and its benefit to them?

2. How do familial capital and cultural capital assets contribute to Chicanx/Latinx first-generation transfer student academic success?

Significance of the Study

This study addresses a critical issue in higher education pertaining to Latino student success. There is a lack of understanding of the parental involvement within the Latino community. Latino parents are not being engaged in ways that can be beneficial for their children at the higher education level in order to create success. This study offers administrators, educators, and all educational leaders an insight into ways institution of higher education can create opportunities for genuine parental involvement for Latinos.

This study will also address the gap in the research that currently exists regarding higher education and Latino parental involvement. The study will focus on the assets and community cultural wealth that Latino parents have and identify opportunities for institutions of higher education to address and meet the needs of Latino students and to allow them to engage and involve their parents in a way that breaks the system of racism that can be found at institutions of higher education.
Scope of the Study

Assumptions of the Study

In this study, I will assume that all participants participating answered questions honestly and drew from their own experience. As the researcher, I assume I heard narratives that reflect the lived experiences of each individual. An assumption was also made that all students were truthful in sharing their first-generation college student experience.

Study Delimitations

There are four major delimitations to this study. First, this study does not compare Chicanx/Latinx experiences to other underrepresented students, though some similarities can be pulled for further research. Second, this study focuses on only those stories that were shared and recorded for the purpose of this study. Third, this study will only examine the experiences and perceptions of Latino students at two California State Universities; it does not capture the perspective at a community college. Fourth, this study was based in a specific area in Southern California. The rationale for the location of this study was for the ease of the researcher to be able to conduct the study.

Study Limitations

The study was limited to semi-structured interviews that may not be able to capture the entire scope of experiences of all Chicanx/Latinx transfer students in the age group of 18 to 24 years of age. The study was limited by others’ ability to become available and conflicts with time and scheduling.
Definitions of Key Terms

It is important to define the key terms found in this study. This will assist the reader in understanding the information found in this study.

*Chicanx/Latinx students.* The term is used to identify the race of the participants in this study and to include U.S.-born students of Mexican ancestry and broadly encompasses immigrant groups other than those from Mexico. I use the *x* to be inclusive of gender.

Community cultural capital. The phrase is used in reference to Tara Yosso’s (2006) concept of the different forms of assets that parents, family, and community can contribute to a student’s success. This includes aspirational capital, cultural capital, familial capital, linguistic capital, navigational capital, social capital, and resistant capital.

*Consejos.* The term references the cultural advice or narratives shared amongst Chicanx/Latinx families.

Critical race theory. Critical race theory is used to analyze the concepts and ideas based on race and inequalities that exist institutionally in our colleges and universities.

Deficit. The term refers to the dominant culture's negative language, or failure to acknowledge culturally based knowledge, stories, and traditions, in mainstream educational research and studies.

Familismo. *Familismo* includes the many roles that Chicanx/Latinxs may have within their families and the influence their cultural values has on these roles and decision making.
Ganas. Ganas describes Latino parents’ support and encouragement to their children while navigating the unknown world of academia.

Parental involvement. In this study, the term is expanded to include the various forms of impact that the participants in this study may consider as involvement and is not limited to the physical sense of being involved.

Social justice. I use the term to create awareness of the disparities that currently exist in truly assisting Chicanx/Latinxs in their educational achievement.

Student success. Student success is specifically defined as the increased retention and graduation of Chicanx/Latinx students in higher education.

Organization of the Dissertation

In closing, it is imperative for educators at institutions of higher education to understand their responsibility in creating an environment that truly fosters inclusivity in campus climate, culture, language, access, and opportunity. By using a critical race theory framework and qualitative methods, I hope to work to bring much-needed attention to the inequities that exist in higher education for Chicanx/Latinx students. I hope that this study can lead to further development of resources and services to serve Chicanx/Latinx students and their parents. There is a need to address institution’s policies and practices that negate Chicanx/Latinx student success in making it through the educational pipeline. I believe that creating a culturally inclusive environment for Chicanx/Latinx students and their parents will achieve their academic success.

The next chapter will review the current literature focused on first-generation Latino college students as it relates to parental involvement. The
literature includes the population growth of Latinos, the achievement gap, deficit thinking, and unpacking the diversity in the millennial generation as it pertains to Latino students. Later chapters of this dissertation study go into detail regarding the qualitative design method. Grounded theory will be used in order to dig deeper with the Latinx/Chicanx student participants and their experience as first-generation, college transfer students and their parents' involvement. The final chapters examine the themes that emerge from the qualitative data collection and analysis of the shared stories to create a theory regarding these students' experiences.
CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Much of the relevant literature supports the importance of parental involvement during Latino students’ elementary and secondary educational placement. However, very little research exists at the college and university level examining Latino parent involvement as a support factor. Often, Chicanx/Latinx students enter an unfamiliar territory and are left alone to navigate the system of higher education, which ignores their familial support systems. Race and racism found in our educational systems have worked against the educational success of Latino students.

The literature also reveals that Latino students are often marginalized because the funds of knowledge that Latino parents offer their children are not understood. Reviewing the community cultural wealth model in detail is an important gap in the literature that needs to be filled in order to debunk the deficit thinking. Few studies were found that offered counter narratives to what currently exists in literature around Latino student success.

At the beginning of this chapter, I will review the historical and theoretical foundations of this study. Next, I will provide an extensive review of the empirical research related to the dissertation topic. Finally, I will summarize and conclude the chapter.
Historical Foundation

Educators cannot ignore the educational inequities that have existed in the United States’ history. In California, the first federal court decision which desegregated schools was the 1947 case of *Méndez v. Westminster School District* (Quijada & Alvarez, 2006). The parents of Mexican American children fought and won the *Mendez v. Westminster* decision preceding *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) to move our educational system towards equality and further from segregation (Contreras & Valverde, 1994). Authors Quijada & Alvarez (2006) emphasize that “despite *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* laying the groundwork for school desegregation, the status of Latina/os in the educational system was not given the same emphasis or historical importance—an example of the manner in which Latina/o education is undervalued” (p. xxx)

Because our educational structures have ingrained a system of acculturation and assimilation to the dominant English-language culture, Chicanx/Latinx students can at an early age receive the message that they do not belong, that who they are and what their culture brings is invalid within the educational environment. In *Teaching to Transgress*, bell hooks (1994) discusses the “oppressor’s language” and how language or messages can dismiss and define the lived experience. Chicanx/Latinx students have received these mixed messages of not being enough, often leading towards feeling that they have no support from anyone at all.

Antonia Darder (2011, p. 132) shares of this experience in a personal poem capturing these feelings:
I am a school child,
trying too hard to learn,
to learn that English well,
for quickly I saw
that the ticket for travel
in this strange world
was the white way
of my teachers
who would smile
when I was a good girl

Institutionalized Racism

Institutionalized systems of racism and discrimination exist in the school system. This is harmful to Chicanx/Latinx students’ ability to succeed. Facing discrimination from different levels throughout their lives can be detrimental to their success and reaching educational attainment. Unacknowledged structural racism occurs in many ways throughout the educational experience for students from marginalized communities (Darder, 2011). One of those subtle forms of racism can be found through the existing parent-involvement policies that fail to meet the needs and experiences of all parents, specifically parents from marginalized communities (Auerbach, 2004; De Gaetano, 2007). Often parent involvement at the K-12 level involves minimal participation. In a four-year study examining the involvement activities with parents at a California school district, Mexican parents were asked to assist in managing field trips and raising funds
for extracurricular activities (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991). Mexican parents reported in this study that they want to do more than just be called to be fundraisers; they want to organize and advocate for their child and any educational issues that pertain to them (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991). Delgado-Gaitan (1991) found that “school activities, which have been institutionalized to involve parents, have usually ignored the needs of underrepresented groups who are unfamiliar with the school’s expectations” (p. 42). Therefore, it is the school’s responsibility to understand the nonconventional activities and assets that parents from underrepresented communities bring to the educational setting, placing value in the social and cultural experiences these parents have (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991).

Our nation will need to move towards more inclusive ways of teaching and learning for our ever-changing multicultural communities, specifically for the growing Latino population (Tornatzky, Torres, & Pachon, 2003). Parents need to be provided a comprehensive roadmap towards success for their children so that they can begin to understand the technicalities of the educational system early on (Rivera, 2011).

**The Latinx/Chicanx Educational Pipeline**

Living in California with a population of over 38 million, with 38% being Chicanx/Latinxs (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012), I began to wonder how parental involvement amongst the Chicanx/Latinx community is being constructed in a way to advance the Chicanx/Latinx community. There are minimal numbers of Chicanx/Latinxs making it through the educational pipeline. Yosso (2006)
introduced the educational pipeline for Chicanx/Latinx students with this description:

Utilizing 2000 U.S. Census data and information from the National Center for Educational Statistics, we begin with 100 Chicana and Chicano students at the elementary level, noting that 56 drop out of high school and 44 continue on to graduate. Of the 44 who graduate from high school, about 26 continue on toward some form of postsecondary education. Of those 26, approximately 17 enroll in community colleges and nine enroll at a 4-year institution. Of the nine Chicanas/os attending a 4-year college and the one community college transfer student, seven will graduate with a baccalaureate degree. Finally, two Chicana/o students will continue on to earn a graduate or professional school degree and less than one will receive a doctorate. (p. 4)

Yosso highlights the need to transform our educational system by insisting that we acknowledge the truths that currently exist and the struggles and barriers that make it almost impossible for Chicanx/Latinx students to trust the educational process. Yosso (2006) introduces the Chicana/Chicano educational pipeline, highlighting the urgency and importance in addressing the educational gap and actively working towards making it disappear for Chicanx/Latinx students. The aforementioned Latinx/Chicanx educational pipeline breaks down the dismal numbers of Chicana and Chicano students who move through the educational pipeline, decreasing in numbers at each level of this pipeline. The process of educational failure has been institutionalized for Chicanx/Latinxs as
Yosso (2006) points out in the pipeline. Moving away from deficit thinking will assist educators in shifting paradigms and engaging with the work that is required to creating educational attainment for our Chicanx/Latinx students.

**Theoretical Foundation**

**Community Cultural Wealth**

Succeeding against the odds is possible (Ceballo, 2004). Chicanx/Latinx parents have capital not usually valued in the educational system (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991, 1994). This capital has assisted their children beyond the educational challenges and norms of the dominant culture (Ceballo, 2004).

Through the use of *consejos*, cultural stories and love (Auerbach, 2004; Ceballo, 2004; Delgado-Gaitan, 1994; Fernandez, 2002; hooks, 2001; Luna & Martinez, 2013; Rivera, 2013), Latino parents have been able to provide this capital using the process of Yosso’s (2005) community cultural wealth model. These different forms of capital have nurtured and guided Latinx/Chicanx students beyond that experienced at the institution. This community cultural wealth encompasses the following: familial capital, social capital, aspirational capital, navigational capital, resistant capital, and linguistic capital (Yosso, 2005, 2006).

Familial capital refers to the connection and support from social and personal resources that have occurred before Latino/Chicano students enter a college campus. This support comes from their familial networks as well as community members (Yosso, 2005, 2006). Familial capital is not limited to the nuclear family, but includes extended family members who have provided support and guidance by means of advice, engagement, and care. Yosso (2005)
goes on to mention that aunts, uncles, grandparents, and friends who are a part of the *familia* are included in the extended family concept and help to build a community that shares their resources to assist Latinx/Chicanx students’ success.

Social capital is described as the overall network that involves students’ peers and social contacts and how students navigate these contacts during their years in college so that they may gain access to understanding the college environment. These peers and social contacts can provide students with shared information to provide further success for the collective whole.

Aspirational capital relates to the motivation students have while working towards realizing their hopes and dreams for their future as they pursue their future educational goals (Yosso, 2005). Yosso (2005) refers to creating a culture of possibility that is often related to the “*Si Se Puede*” and *ganas* concepts, which translate to “yes we can” and “give it all you got,” showcasing the resilience needed to work towards their education and future goals.

Navigational capital is the ability to navigate an educational institution and successfully maneuver new environments, often finding the spaces on campus or people who work to empower their educational journey (Yosso, 2005). Yosso (2005) states that “often educational institutions are not created with communities of color in mind” (p. 80). Students learn how to empower themselves by interacting with safe and brave spaces that they find in their institutional environment.
Resistant capital is strategic in nature, as students learn to understand the forms of resistance that they have faced throughout their lived experiences in order to continue to thrive in the many different forms of cultural capital that they have been given. This capital often helps to counter the narrative that is found in dominant culture that often requires students to forget; assimilate to dominant culture. When parents give consejos or share their lived experiences with their child, these “Parents of Color are consciously instructing their children to engage in behaviours and maintain attitudes that challenge the status quo” (Yosso, 2005, p. 81). They counter the narrative in the way they know how by sharing of themselves. Resistance capital enables Latino/Chicano students to think critically about their learning and the messages they receive throughout the educational system (Freire, 1970).

Linguistic capital captures language and communication as assets that Latino/Chicano students bring to the college environment from their homes. Storytelling is a part of Latino/Chicano students’ lived experience and they bring this skill to the academic setting. “In storytelling they have listened to and probably retold some cuentos, dichos, and oral histories of their family” (Yosso, 2006, p. 42). This capital values the communication experiences of Chicanx/Latinx students’ language and cultural experiences.

Figure 1 illustrates Yosso’s seven types of capital (Yosso, 2005, p. 50).
Parental Love

Each of the types of capital that make up Yosso’s community cultural wealth model is viewed as an asset to counter the dominant culture expectations of educational success. Yosso states that “the main goals of identifying and documenting cultural wealth are to transform education and empower People of Color to utilize assets already abundant in their communities” (Yosso, 2005, p. 82). Another asset not often described in literature but which can be viewed as an asset is love—specifically the parental love captured in familial (Yosso, 2006) capital. Hooks (2001) speaks of love knowing no boundaries and how we can become limitless when we work towards providing, giving, and teaching love.
Rivera (2013) discusses love as the top human emotion and a driving force for Chicanx/Latinx parents when providing students support. This is the exact model found in Chicanx/Latinx homes (Rivera, 2013). Parents may not know how to provide educational theory and or even provide great advice, but they know how to love (hooks, 2001), and this love has been a strong contributing factor in creating Chicanx/Latinx success stories in higher education (Rivera, 2013). Operationalizing love requires engaging those currently missing from institutions of higher education: Latino parents.

**Review of the Scholarly Empirical Literature**

In this section, I review the empirical studies that further explain the impact of parent involvement with a focus on asset-based theory, such as the concept of community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005, 2006), funds of knowledge (Marquez-Kiyama, 2010, Rios-Aguilar & Marquez-Kiyama, 2012) and consejos (Delgado-Gaitan, 1994). These studies identify the success of parental involvement found at the elementary and secondary level; however, there is a gap in continuing this involvement with Chicanx/Latinx parents once their children enter college. I will conclude by identifying the very few studies found in the literature that are specific to Chicanx/Latinx parental involvement and that showcase the success of Chicanx/Latinx students in higher education.

**Parental Involvement**

The work done in the classroom cannot rely solely on teachers in the classroom, but it must go hand in hand with parents. Teachers must require the support of parents and the community through a collaborative approach in
meeting the success of our students (National Education Association, 2013). However, the phrase “parent involvement” tends to be unclear in its definition. At the elementary and secondary level, it is often defined by the teachers and their preferences (Young, Austin, & Growe, 2013).

Parental and family involvement is one of the leading factors in the success of Chicanx/Latinx students in higher education (Ceballo, 2004; Lee & Bowen, 2006; Luna & Martinez, 2013; Young et al., 2013; Zalaquett, 2006). Most of the findings concluded that these parents did not understand the educational system, but they knew that they needed to support their children through the goal of an educational degree. In a study of school administrators’ perceptions it was stated that “parental involvement boosts a child’s perceived level of competence and autonomy, offers a sense of security and connectedness, and helps to internalize the value of an education and performance” (Young et al., 2013, p. 291). The study concluded by stating that parent involvement must be defined not just by administrators but also by including and sharing the leadership of parental involvement with parents (Young et al., 2013). This is an important finding, as Chicanx/Latinxs continue to struggle to be retained and graduate from institutions of higher education (Tornatzky et al., 2003; Fry, 2002).

**Elementary and Secondary Programs**

Much of the literature emphasizes the many studies and programs that exist at the elementary and secondary educational level and programs that aim to build bridges with parents and *familia* of Chicanx/Latinx students (Auerbach, 2004; De Gaetano, 2007 & Rivera, 2011). These studies focusing on the stories
of college-going Chicanx/Latinxs reiterate the importance of family towards reaching academic attainment.

The funds of knowledge theory are the acknowledgment of resources, knowledge, and skills that already are existing in students and their families (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992). Marquez-Kiyama (2010) uses a funds of knowledge framework in her study researching the role of educational ideologies in Mexican American families and their college aspirations. Funds of knowledge advocates believe that parents should be incorporated early and in ways that are culturally relevant to the educational process of their child (Marquez-Kiyama, 2010). Marquez-Kiyama (2010) uses the fund of knowledge framework to understand the development of aspirations, so parents can be culturally incorporated into their child’s educational journey at an earlier stage. The funds of knowledge mentality challenges deficit language found in research and current practice today regarding Chicanx/Latinxs. A Tomás Rivera Policy Institute paper addressing closing the achievement gap for Latinos recommends “significantly increasing the knowledge of Hispanic parents on how the educational system works” (Tornatzky et al., 2003, p. 36).

Literature can be found addressing the importance of school preparation and parental involvement at many levels of the K-12 educational system. The report issued by the Tomás Rivera Policy Institute found that the role of middle school preparation is to assist in the gateway to college and beyond by providing academic and social support (Tornatzky et al., 2003). The report goes on to state that by enabling and empowering Hispanic parents, you then give them the
strategies to understand how to make improvements in their child’s academic achievement. The report mentions that a key issue for preparing Latino students at the middle school level is to emphasize the importance of creating a culture of high expectations, having teachers work with parents to so that they understand the process of a college-going culture (Tornatzky et al., 2003). According to Tornatzky and colleagues, the underachievement of Latinos is a bigger concern than just for the Latino population, as it has a critical impact on the prosperity of the United States. Educators will need to embrace the parent–teacher model that welcomes the development of solutions towards closing the gap.

**First-Generation Latino College Students**

Although this literature review has focused on many studies that have occurred at the K-12 level, I found few studies that addressed the experiences of Latino students beyond their first-year experience, or studies on college-aged Latino students or any studies on the impact of Latino parental involvement and student success. I was able to find literature that has captured the experiences of first-generation Latino college students to fully understand parental involvement in the first year for first-generation students.

First-generation college students are defined as students who are the first in their family to attend college (Choy, Horn, Nuñez, & Chen, 2000). Research suggests that although first-generation students face many challenges, often it is their families who assist them in achieving their success (Gofen; 2009; Turek, 2012). In a study with 10 first-generation college students attending Yale
University, researchers found that family background characteristics were contributors to their success as they navigated the unknown (Ceballo, 2004).

In a study of millennials, Pizzolato and Hicklen (2011) found it important to examine how parent involvement can develop the millennials’ epistemological thinking. This study highlights the unique impact that a parent can have on their child in developing and formulating beliefs about success. While conducting their study on the parent–child relationships among millennial-generation college students, Pizzolato and Hicklen (2011) found that there are not enough empirical studies being conducted in the area of parental involvement and students in college. Through their exploratory study, these researchers found that over 50% of the participants involved their parents in their decision making by consulting them (Pizzolato & Hicklen, 2011). The researchers defined consultation as “the student initiat[ing] conversation with a parent to get opinions and advice but consider[ing] any received opinions part of a diverse array of possibilities,” contradicting current epistemic developmental theories (Pizzolato & Hicklen, 2011). This counters the claim that knowledge is only received from authorities, teachers, or textbooks (Pizzolato & Hicklen, 2011), placing value in such areas as funds of knowledge discussed earlier in this chapter. The way of knowing is not a black-and-white concept of knowledge and can require universities to better understand the needs of students and their involvement with parents (Pizzolato & Hicklen, 2011).

In a study of first-generation college-going Chicana students, Ceja (2004) found that Chicanas’ educational aspirations were rooted in the lived experiences
of their parents. As first-generation college students, these Chicanas interpreted and found meaning in their parents’ lived experiences, which became a form of motivation to educational attainment (Ceja, 2004). This study found that “it is through the influence of parents that Chicana individuals begin to learn and realize that they could over-come many of the exclusionary forces that have made it difficult for their own parents to succeed” (Ceja, 2004, p. 339).

**Latino Community College Transfer Students**

According to The National Center for Education Statistics (2011), “almost half (49 percent) of Hispanic college and university students attended public 2-year institutions, a higher percentage than any other race/ethnicity shown (ranging from 33 to 42 percent).” (para. 6). Latinos are accessing community colleges as their entry point to higher education (Rendón & Valadez, 1993). The role of community colleges to successfully transfer Latino students to the four-year institution is one that must be addressed and examined to assist in successfully providing resources and services to this student population.

The underrepresentation of Latinos in elite colleges and their inability to see themselves there contributes to Chicanx/Latinx students’ inability to feel like they belong on any college campus (Bensimon & Dowd, 2010). In their study, Bensimon and Dowd (2010) explored the lived experiences of five Latina and Latino students on their transfer pathways and their choices when transferring. The story shared by “Ernesto” in this study emphasized the power of his social networks’ relying on students and instructors to assist in his transfer process as a first-generation college student. However, Bensimon and Dowd found that the
stories of these five Latinos were missing the assistance of faculty members, counselors, and others key institutional agents at that particular community college.

In a study focused on the factors influencing the transfer of community college students to a four-year college, Rendón and Valadez (1993) found that out of several themes that emerged, the importance of family was at the forefront. The students’ educational decisions related to transferring and being successful included their familial customs (Rendón & Valadez, 1993). Parents in this study were viewed as playing a central role for both Latino males and females, yet they still lacked an understanding of the processes found at the community college. Many of these students in the study were recent immigrants or their families had very little navigational capital of the higher education system (Rendón & Valadez, 1993). Both the parents and the students were attempting to understand the details involved in navigating the community culture environment, but they simply “don’t understand the system” (Rendón & Valadez, 1993).

**Latino Student Success Stories**

The stories of successful Chicanx/Latinx students exist and must be shared to counter the deficit research that currently dominants education. Delgado-Bernal (2002) encourages the understanding of the unique ways that people of color bring knowledge into our institutions of higher education and refers to them as holders and creators of knowledge through which educators can learn and begin to address their success accurately. The success of our
growing Latino population is a huge investment that institutions of higher education must be willing to address and support (Berríos-Allison, 2011). The U.S. Census (2010) found more than 50% of the United States’ total population change from 2000 to 2010 was due to the growth of Hispanics in the nation. Hispanics are the majority minority and Berríos-Allison (2011) states that systems of support need to be created to foster an increase of recruitment efforts of Latinos, as well as retention that leads towards graduation and an easy transition into the job market. Institutions of higher education must move towards support of the cultural needs and Chicanx/Latinx students by incorporating and valuing their parents and families.

**University Support Services and Empowerment**

Many of the studies on this topic of parental involvement and educational attainment for Chicanx/Latinx students found that institutional support and partnerships must be clearly established with parents and family units of Chicanx/Latinx students (Luna & Martinez, 2013; Rivera, 2013). Researchers stress the need for relationships between institutions to be developed, garnering the trust of families that will then lead toward an increase in educational attainment (Auerbach, 2004; Berríos-Allison, 2011; Gildersleeve, 2013; Zalaquett, 2006). Berríos-Allison (2011) found that *familismo* is strong amongst the population of college-going Latino students, who will prioritize family duties while pursuing their education. Auerbach (2004) discovered that parents who participate in bilingual programs feel more confident and knowledgeable when they have interactions with institutions of higher education. Gildersleeve (2013)
noted that cultural connections and family involvement are ways to include the building of trust with Chicanx/Latinx families. In 1992, Delgado-Gaitan discovered three main components impacting an institution’s ability to facilitate an open exchange between the parent and family units and to build trust. The three components were physical resources, emotional climate, and interpersonal interactions (Delgado-Gaitan, 1992).

Many Chicanx/Latinx parents do not have confidence in their ability to assist their children with educational support of their studies (Ceballo, 2004). However, when an institution gives the knowledge to parents, they are more capable of assisting their children towards the process of educational attainment (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991). Zalaquett (2006) found much value in studying the stories and experiences of Chicanx/Latinx college students to better understand and support them in their efforts to overcome barriers at institutions of higher education. A student in Zalaquett’s study described the support from a variety of Latino members on their campus, more specifically the Latino program on scholarship and sponsors, as a contributor to students’ ability to academically achieve, create goals, and make it through difficulties (Zalaquett, 2006).

In order to fully engage Chicanx/Latinx students, institutions of higher education must create inclusive, welcoming material to engage Chicanx/Latinx students and their parents (Hernandez & Lopez, 2004; Savage, 2007). Culturally sensitive and bilingual parent orientation programs and materials should be created so that Chicanx/Latinx parents can be more familiar with the college culture (Hernandez & Lopez, 2004). Often college material that currently exists
creates a confusing message, telling Chicanx/Latinxs to become independent of their parents and community (Berríos-Allison, 2011). This can create a disconnect for the student as they struggle to find their place on a new campus, ultimately leading them away from the institution all together (Patton, 2010). If campuses are not communicating at the language necessary for there to be a dialogue with Chicanx/Latinx, then they are missing on the opportunity to understand the student holistically based on the notion of *familismo* (Hernandez & Lopez, 2004). Moriarty (2013) argues that parents need to be viewed as partners, and administrators need to find ways to create ways for parents to assist in cultivating student success. The literature has demonstrated the need for cultural understanding and awareness of *familismo*, Latinos’ family-oriented nature (Hernandez & Lopez, 2004), in order to help the students and parents attain success.

Successful programs will incorporate Spanish-language programs and materials for educating parents about the college experience and its expectations (Hernandez & Lopez, 2004). It is important to incorporate staff and counselors who can culturally and linguistically meet the needs of the parents of these students (Berríos-Allison, 2011; Savage, 2007). Berríos-Allison (2011) found in a study regarding career support for Latino college students that leveraging the collectivist nature of Latinos is important to assist in their understanding and building a sense of connection. By encouraging cultural sensitivity with career counselors, educators were able to help Latinos to feel supported. Furthermore, Savage (2007) heard directly from parents about the need to create a common
language for parents who are learning about the college campus life. Zarate (2007) found that language can be a barrier but also emphasized the importance for administrators to create a dialectic form of communication in order to breech the barrier. Zarate makes a strong recommendation for the need “to create organizational expectations if stakeholders are interested in increasing parental involvement” (Zarate, 2007, p. 15). This acknowledges the responsibility of the university administrator and educator to meet parents and to not allow these barriers to continue to block the potential of Latino students’ success.

The ability to overcome barriers is found in many studies and is often labeled as las gana or a “Si Se Puede” mentally carried out through the love and consejos of Chicanx/Latinx student’s parents and community (Berríos-Allison, 2011). An institution of higher education must understand the key factors connected to the overall success of Chicanx/Latinx students. Those key factors include family (Bonner, Marbley, & Howard, 2011; Gofen, 2009; Stuart, 2010), financial considerations (Bonner, et al., 2011), and post-college aspirations (Bonner et al., 2011; Gofen, 2009). Researchers Choy et al. (2000) found that high school graduates who had been at moderate-to-high risk of dropping out of high school increased their college accessibility through engagement with school, engagement of their parents in their learning, peer engagement, and college preparation activities.

**Higher Education Institutions’ Responsibility**

The value of creating safe spaces for parents and students is found in some of the literature (Auerbach, 2004 & Berríos-Allison, 2011). These safe
spaces are not always found physical in form and can be seen in ways where Latino parents can continue to trust an authority figure and their child’s growth. Berriós-Allison (2011) found that these safe spaces can be found in support groups or in career-related areas but are there “to challenge stereotypical beliefs and the notion that Latino/a students are inadequate academically” (p. 91). This often leads Chicanx/Latinx students to begin navigating the campus environment. A sense of belonging is created on a college campus once Chicanx/Latinx students witness the value of their cultural capital at an institution of higher education (Patton, 2010).

The research completed by Delgado Bernal (2002) uses critical race theory and Latino critical theory to validate the importance of these cultural and linguistic capitals, showcasing the importance of being able to rethink and debunk the traditional way of how knowledge is received. This is an important research contributing to parents’ roles in Chicanx/Latinx students and the movement that needs to happen away from dominant culture. Educators will need to critically think outside the norm and begin to engage students in a pedagogy that Freire (1970) would describe as breaking down the oppression and engaging those that have been marginalized. The literature has identified that parents have and will always have an important role to play in the Chicanx/Latinx student experience. Their involvement in campus practices can assist institutions of higher education in the right direction, as discussed below.
Demystifying Higher Education

Educators know the importance of academia and praxis. *Praxis* is a term that describes the connection of theory to practice, which helps educators use knowledge in application (Freire, 1970). However, educators are failing our largest community of students, Chicanx/Latinx students, as we see the dismal numbers in the Chicano educational pipeline (Yosso, 2006). Megan Rooney (2002) has reported that, regardless of the enrollment growth of Latinos, they still trail all other groups in earning undergraduate degrees, and she concludes that Latinos have a problem with college persistence. As Moriarty (2013) states, parents are not the enemy but, in fact, may be the answer to the leak in the pipeline (Hernandez & Lopez, 2004). University administrators must move from fear and towards using love as an action (hooks, 2001) in order to include parents as part of the process of education (Moriarty, 2013). Parent programs or family programs exist at many universities and colleges across the nation. A 2007 self-report study of parent programs at colleges and universities discovered that parents desire communication and involvement. (Savage, 2007). A South Texas college orientation program reported increased retention rates of their first-year Latino students when their parents were included. Students whose parents participated persisted at a rate of 68.5%, compared with a persistence rate of 51.3% for students whose parents did not participate (Stuart, 2010).

Many programs currently exist that are meeting the needs of parents as a whole, but we need to keep digging deeper to see how we can transform the lives of our Latino students, who are more likely to drop out of college (Alger &
Williams, 2013; Choy et al., 2000). Choy and colleagues (2000) discovered that students who were at a high risk of dropping out of high school were able to persist on campus due to parent engagement. Northeastern Illinois University has involved parents by intentionally including parents in their programming efforts throughout the year (J. M. Alger, personal communication, December 1, 2014; Alger & Williams, 2013). The University of Missouri and the University of Denver have started a dialogue around serving and orienting the parents of their students of color who are first generation and come from low-income households, recognizing that they cannot communicate with all parents the same, emphasizing specifically on the needs of these parents (C. Harper, Marquez-Kiyama, Aguayo, Ramos, & Page, 2013). Practitioners are working to make those connections in order to create benchmarks for institutions of higher educations to meet the needs of Latino students.

**Chapter Summary**

This literature review surveyed the understanding of the systematic racism that has occurred in our educational systems and the deficit research that continues to portray Chicanx/Latinx students as uninterested in going to college. The enrollment numbers of Chicanx/Latinxs are at a record high, but their graduation rate is dismal. Parents are a part of the counter story. The literature recognizes that these positive experiences of involvement and engagement can be especially true if both are unfamiliar with the campus environment, academic expectations, and the institutional language. The institution can rest assured that these families will consistently support their child by any means necessary.
Researchers must move away from the deficit language and perspective that surrounds the Chicanx/Latinx community, knowing that this form of institutional racism acts as a limiting factor in Chicanx/Latinx's educational attainment. This is further explained by the introduction of the Chicanx/Latinx educational pipeline. Yosso’s study (2006) introduced at the beginning of this research points to the dismal numbers and the fact that the Chicanx/Latinx student population is not making it through our educational systems; however, parental involvement has been studied mostly in the K-12 system.

This study was designed to capture the stories of Chicanx/Latinx college students to create narratives beyond the K-12 educational system and better understanding Chicanx/Latinx student success and their perception of their parents' involvement.
CHAPTER 3

METHOD OF INQUIRY

In higher education, educators know about the Latino achievement gap and the need to close it, however very little change has come. As the largest minority ethnic group in California (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010) there is much at risk not only for this specific community but also for the sustainability and economic growth of the United States. The gap continues to grow with the deficit thinking in our systems of higher education as referenced in this study's literature review. This study will investigate the role of parental involvement and engagement and their importance in closing the Latino achievement gap, assisting in retention efforts of Latino students, and ultimately achieving student success. The questions that this study will research are:

1. How do Chicanx/Latinx first-generation transfer students describe their parents' involvement in their college educational success and its benefit to them?

2. How do familial capital and cultural capital assets contribute to Chicanx/Latinx first-generation transfer student academic success?

In this chapter I will discuss the methodology used for the research and I will provide detailed information regarding the research design, which incorporates tenets of grounded theory. This will include examining how I gained access to the study's participants through the specified settings, as well as the
sample and form of data collection. I will describe the instrumentation and steps and procedures that occurred through this process and how the data was analyzed, guided by tenets of grounded theory methods. I will include discussion of my efforts towards ensuring validity and trustworthiness as my role as a researcher. Finally, I will conclude with a chapter summary regarding my research methodology.

**Qualitative Research**

For this study, I used a qualitative research approach to gather the narratives and stories of Chicanx/Latinx students. This method was purposefully used in order to capture the rich data from their lived experiences. A qualitative approach is necessary for the researcher to further examine an issue (Creswell, 2014). Creswell explains the approach, stating, “Qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problems” (Creswell, 2014, p. 4). Through the use of interviews, participants are able to share their stories and the researcher is able to further understand their stories using an open-ended interviewing approach (Creswell, 2014). By gathering stories as data, the qualitative approach can assist in creating new ways of seeing the world. Qualitative researchers collect data and can use comparative methods for comparing data so that similarities and differences can emerge (Charmaz, 2014). When qualitative researchers compare the data gathered, they are then able to come to new understandings of their participants’ experiences and worldviews.
Philosophical Foundations

The philosophical foundations of qualitative research approaches involve consideration and meaning of the different and unique worldviews each individual experiences (Creswell, 2014). The philosophical worldview proposed in this study was a transformative worldview with a political change agenda connected to the participants’ sharing of their lives. According to Creswell, “research contains an action agenda for reform that may change lives of the participants, the institutions in which individuals work or live, and the researcher's life” (Creswell, 2014, p. 9). My convictions regarding social issues, empowerment, inequality and inequities, and oppression fall in line with the transformative worldview. Through the exercise of this transformative worldview, I emphasized importance of the lives and experiences of the participants and focused on accessing data that had been ignored by the literature and practice in order to assist in making social change. Creswell emphasizes that “transformative research provides a voice for these participants, raising consciousness or advancing an agenda for change to improve their lives. It becomes a united voice for reform and change” (Creswell, 2014, p. 10). This transformative type of qualitative approach has a critical theory connection, making visible the issues of power, privilege, and oppression (Merriam, 2009).

Strengths and Limitations

The study of Chicanx/Latinx students’ parental involvement lends itself to the qualitative research method. Its strength lies in capturing experiences to be able to uncover and understand something that is unknown (Strauss & Corbin,
Strauss and Corbin (1990) stated that one of the vital aspects of using tenets of grounded theory is the qualitative researcher’s ability to use creativity to break through assumptions. This strength allows for the qualitative researcher to create categories and come up with comparisons that help lead to new discoveries (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Some of the limitations that are found in qualitative grounded theory involve the procedures and patience involved in the collection and analysis of rich data. In this study, I relied on the foundation of grounded theory to guide the collection of data but faced some challenges due to time constraints.

However, the use of grounded theory and its tenets, driven by the stories collected and the richness its data, along with proper coding and analysis, guided me in developing innovative new ways of thinking and creating new theories. This qualitative study was designed with flexibility and was emergent, which allowed for me to respond to changes as it was being conducted (Merriam, 2009). This provided opportunities for me as the key instrument to be reflective in the process as the study was being conducted.

By using a qualitative approach, the I was able to create a storyline regarding the current state of Chicanx/Latinx parental involvement by drawing on the lived experiences of Chicanx/Latinx students. Fernandez has found through her work that “storytelling can also be transformative and empowering. Sharing one’s stories with others raises the individual’s consciousness of common experiences and opens up the possibility for social action” (Fernandez, 2002, p. 48). According to Charmaz, “grounded theory has generated innovative ideas
since its earliest beginnings. Its concepts can travel within and beyond their
disciplinary origins” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 16). The gap I found in the literature
required the use of creative and innovative ways of thinking to counter the
narratives and inform the field about Latino parental involvement at the college
level. By collecting the words and stories of Chicanx/Latinx students and their
parents’ involvement as data, I was better informed about potential theories and
new ideas in working with this student population and their cultural and familial
capital.

**Research Design**

Grounded theory and its foundational tenets guided this study of Latino
student success and parental involvement, as I sought to develop the kinds of
innovative ideas that may be generated in constructing theory from data
collection (Charmaz, 2014). Charmaz (2014) states that “grounded theory
serves as a way to learn about the worlds we study and a method for developing
theories to understand them” (p. 17). The purpose of this study was to explore
the connection of Latino student success and their parents’ involvement through
the use of qualitative strategies that are best analyzed by grounded theory
(Charmaz, 2014).

Brown (2006) states that grounded theory researchers are required to
conceptualize from the data (Glaser, 1992). This requires a deep understanding
of the data being collected in order to create an interpretation. Charmaz (2014)
refers to it as a form of interpretive definitions of theory which emphasize the
researcher’s interpretation to create an understanding of the data or information
being shared by participants. This type of qualitative study requires researchers to immerse themselves in the data and work. Charmaz (2014) continues to state that “interpretive theories aim to understand meanings and actions and how people construct them” (p. 231). Brown (2006) states “this approach is very different from traditional qualitative methods that yield findings based on thick description of data and participant quotes” (p. 44). I was able to build trust and security as I planned out this study and collected data. As the researcher, I collected the data, thereby acting as the key instrument (Creswell, 2014). By talking to people in their natural setting, qualitative researchers create opportunities to gather rich data by actually talking directly to people (Creswell, 2014). I worked towards creating discovery and interpretations by conducting the interviews at the participants’ respective campuses.

**Research Methods**

This section of the chapter will include information regarding the grounded theory approach and describe the specific research methods that I used to implement this study. I explain the sample, setting, data collection, and data analysis, and how I ensured validity and trustworthiness in the study.

Students were purposefully selected for this proposed grounded theory study. According to Creswell (2014), “the idea behind qualitative research is to purposefully select participants or sites (or documents or visual material) that will best help the researcher understand the problem and the research question” (p. 189). I conducted interviews at each of the campus sites through face-to-face interviews with participants. If face-to-face interviews were not possible, then I
utilized technology to conduct interviews over Skype. I preferred the face-to-face interviews protocol, as it allowed me to observe the participants nonverbal cues as well as assist in creating a comfortable environment (Creswell, 2014). These interviews involved semi-structured and open-ended questions. There were a few select questions that assisted in eliciting views and opinions from the participants (Creswell, 2014).

**Setting**

This qualitative research was conducted at two California State Universities (CSU) campuses: California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, and California State University, Los Angeles (CSULA). These institutions were chosen based on the large student population of Chicanx/Latinx students at each campus. Both campuses are Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI) with diverse student populations. The HSI institutions are “defined by the Higher Education Act as degree-granting institutions with full-time equivalent undergraduate enrollments at least 25% Hispanic” according to the HACU website (https://www.hacu.net/hacu/HACU_101.asp). The CSU system was created to provide access to education for all. According to the CSU website (https://www2.calstate.edu), the university comprises 23 campuses serving an estimated 437,000 students, with 58% of those students at the CSU identifying as students of color. As the largest provider of bachelor and graduate degrees in the world, the CSU serves over 136,000 Hispanic/Latino students, approximately 65,000 Asian-identified students, and almost 21,000 African American students. The CSU has found that “one-third of CSU undergraduates are in the first
According to their informational website, Cal Poly Pomona (https://www.cpp.edu/) is nationally ranked as the fifth most diverse campus in the West (Cal Poly Pomona, n.d.). It is one of the two polytechnic universities in the state and is known for its academic excellence, hands on-learning and affordable tuition fees. The transfer characteristics at Cal Poly Pomona include a total of 2,094 students with 123 transfer units earned and a transfer GPA of 3.02.

The campus of CSULA is located 20 miles east of downtown Los Angeles. According to College Portraits, in 2013, 59% of the student population identified as of Chicanx/Latinx descent, and the school’s new undergraduate transfer population consisted of 3,264 students (College Portraits, n.d.).

Nora, Barlow and Crisp (2006) conducted a study on the assessment of Hispanic students in four-year institutions of higher education that found little longitudinal data on Hispanic students. It is evident through Nora et al.’s work that “data on Hispanic students are minimal, at best, and are almost nonexistent past their first year in college” (Nora et al., 2006). Hispanic students are not being tracked past their first year in college, therefore little data exist to inform administrators and policy makers on Hispanic students’ needs. Nora and colleague’s (2006) assessment called for assessing Hispanics beyond the transition period from high school into college and their first-year experiences, predominately at community colleges. The researchers of this assessment study found that the second year was when students experienced highly influential
experiences while adjusting to college (Nora et al., 2006). The influence this study may have at a four-year college to inform practice can benefit Latino college students. Assessing the second-year transition for Latino college students and their perceptions of their success connected to their parents’ involvement will assist in debunking the myths grounded in deficit thinking.

**Sample**

This study focused on first-generation Chicanx/Latinx transfer students who had successfully transferred to Cal Poly Pomona or CSULA with at least a 3.0 GPA. The age group consisted of students who are between the ages of 20 and 40 years of age. The participants were community college transfer students who had entered the four-year colleges and have completed a semester or quarter at their respective campus. I conducted semi-structured interviews to the point of saturation so that I may collect all necessary data. Saturation is defined as the point where the researcher has obtained as much information and data as possible from participants and cannot collect any further new information (Creswell, 2014).

The specific sample group was focused on using a grounded theory design, which includes the campuses mentioned above. I have been influenced by bell hooks and her ability to share with the world her own personal experiences and reflections. As a cultural educator, I made it a priority to break down words and stories shared by participants in this study. A cultural educator is one who is constantly engaging in critical thinking and is conscious of the marginalization of underrepresented communities. A cultural educator, as hooks
(1994) states, is an individual who works toward creating connections of identity, race, culture, and social class and helps to create understanding of how education and access are afforded or denied based on those factors.

This study and the students’ stories related herein have the potential to create significant cultural implications for higher education. I emphasized the importance of using qualitative methods by interviewing Chicanx/Latinx students at the aforementioned California state universities who have transferred from an accredited community college. This sample of students has assisted my research in understanding the counter stories that will add to the narratives of parental involvement of Chicanx/Latinx families and communities.

The literature review of this paper identified multiple studies that showcased the impact of involving parents and families and the success of students in the K-12 level. This sample of students and their storytelling has assisted in developing a new theory to influence the practice of institutions of higher education to better inform administrators and professionals in their practices with first-generation, transfer Chicanx/Latinx students in order to assist in their success and in closing the gaps in the educational pipeline.

Data Collection and Management

Data collection. Grounded theory requires 20 to 30 individuals to participate in order to truly capture narrative research (Creswell, 2014). However, the researcher may begin with 12 participants in order to capture themes and common views of experiences (Charmaz, 2014). I began by seeking six to eight participants at each institution and determined that saturation had
been met with the data collected after interviewing 12 students. I received institutional review board approval from all institutions involved in this study. Through the use of an informed consent form, I communicated to the participants the risk involved in the study, and participants were given the opportunity to acknowledge and move forward in participating in the study (Creswell, 2014).

I identified and acknowledged the gatekeepers of each campus or college site in order to secure access to the participants involved in the study. This occurred by working with campus gatekeepers to receive support for the study. Creswell (2014) defines gatekeepers as individuals at the site who provide access to the site and allow or permit research to be done (p. 188). Making contacts with these gatekeepers was essential to the success of the study. Starting with individuals that I had established relationships with at each university helped move me along to gather the data. This study aimed to look beyond “descriptive studies into the realm of explanatory theoretical frameworks” (Creswell, 2014, p. 8) in an attempt to come to a greater understanding of student success and the connection between Latinx/Chicanx college students and their parent(s).

In order to secure confidentiality, I used pseudonyms for participants’ names and secured all relevant files by using Dedoose, a cross-platform app for analyzing qualitative and mixed methods research through the use of various. By conducting semi-structured interviews, I was able to capture stories and narratives, giving voice to those who have been missing in the current research and literature.
Data management. Data was collected in the interviews through the use of voice recordings, which were uploaded and stored in Dedoose software to protect all participants and ensure confidentiality. Dedoose software guaranteed nightly back-ups to secure encryption of data. I removed the names of the participants and any other identifiers from the data collected. Each participant was assigned a pseudonym, which replaced the participant's name in transcripts, in file names, and in any published reports or presentations. The data was stored in a locked file cabinet and on a password-protected computer. Data will be kept indefinitely for future educational use, presentations, and publications.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Data analysis was comprehensive and an intensive journey for me. I worked with Cal State Fullerton's transcribing services to get the interviews transcribed for each participant's session. I also used the online transcribing services of Rev.com to complete the transcribing portion of the study. Once all participants' data and stories had been collected, I began reviewing the data and beginning to find themes. I then began the triangulation phase of the research and use of multiple interviews gathered over time. Charmaz (2014) states that coding in grounded theory is the process of defining the data collected.

Merriam (2009) explains that “a grounded theory consists of categories, properties, and hypotheses that are the conceptual links between and among the categories and properties” (p.199). Comparative methods were used to constantly compare the data while analyzing. The comparison assisted in creating the categories and themes which are then compared to each other. The
constant comparison that was made within and between the levels assisted the research in conceptualizing a theory (Merriam, 2009). Three phases of coding occurred using the grounded theory approach. Open, axial, and selective coding took place in order to analysis the data.

Opening coding involves “tagging any unit of data that might be relevant to the study” (Merriam, 2009, p. 200). By getting a sense of the information, I was able to begin reflecting on its meaning (Creswell, 2014). Once this was done, axial coding involved the process of relating the categories and properties to each other (Merriam, 2009). By creating categories, I was able to find themes within the participants’ interviews. The selective coding involved “a core category, propositions, or hypotheses” (Merriam, 2009, p. 200) being developed from the data. This selective coding allowed me to further analyze the data’s categories and begin to create new ideas or theories.

**Procedures to ensure validity and trustworthiness.** It was imperative that, as a researcher, I ensured that my design and methods are credible, reliable, and trustworthy. Creswell (2013) states that an array of validation perspectives and terms are discussed when creating validation. Alternative terms that are more naturalistic in research including credibility, authenticity, transferability, dependability, and confirmability as the equivalents for internal validation, external validation, reliability, and objectivity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 300). This kind of research is created in the study when “thick description” (Creswell, 2013, p. 246) is recorded. Thick description allows for others to understand the participants’ understanding of their social interactions related to
the research topic (Creswell, 2014). In this study, this occurred when I created an engaging interview opportunity with the participants, observing their nonverbal cues and allowing for broad cultural generalizations and interpretations to occur.

Creswell (2014) further discusses the importance of establishing both dependability and confirmability through “establishing an auditing of the research process” (p. 246). The audit occurred by having another individual transcribe the audio recordings of each of the participants. All participants were also given the opportunity to review the transcribed interviews and provide feedback on the analysis of the data. As I worked to code the data, I also conducted member checking with the participants as I sent copies of their transcripts to them for clarification and assurance of accurate data collected.

**Role of the researcher.** As a first-generation Chicana student, I continue to search for validation in the world of higher education. I personally know the true impact my parents have had on my own educational experiences, from kindergarten to my doctoral journey, their warmth and *consejos* have always given me the extra *ganas* to reach beyond myself. In this section I hope to contribute some words that build my story as well as share the *cuentos* of other first generation Latino students. Stating this, I know that I have some personal bias as I share these lived experiences with future participants. I prepared myself emotionally in advance to hear the stories of these participants’ parents. The familiarity in the research assisted me in empathizing with the participants’ stories and assisted in drawing more data and using reflexivity throughout the study. Charmaz (2014) states reflexivity occurs when the researcher is aware of
their own experiences, decisions, and interpretations, often assisting the researcher throughout the process of making interpretations. By sharing the transcripts with my participants, I focused on creating consistency and authenticity with the data collected.

**Chapter Summary**

This research study sought to provide an understanding of Chicanx/Latinx students’ parental involvement in their success in higher education. Being able to understand deeply the stories and narratives of these participants has allowed me to employ a grounded theory research design approach for creating themes and discovering new possibilities found in the data collected from the participants’ narratives.

In this chapter I provided an overview of the study’s research design, method, sample, setting, and data collection management. The qualitative research study drew from a grounded theory design using in-depth interviews. I analyzed data using Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) naturalistic approach, relying on credibility, validity, reliability, and trustworthiness to capture the stories of first-generation Latino college transfer students and their parents’ involvement in their success. I continue to reflect on biases regarding my role in this research. This reflection has assisted me in understanding my own biases and in better preparing the research findings found in this study so that I can inform the field of higher education.
CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

This chapter will present the study’s findings based on the research questions and emergent themes. The chapter begins with a summary of the methodology, which is followed by a review of the research questions and the overarching themes relating to those questions. The chapter concludes with a summary of the findings that sets the stage for discussion of their implications in Chapter 5.

Qualitative Methodology

The purpose of this grounded theory qualitative study was to understand the way parents impact the experiences of Chicanx/Latinx first-generation transfer students while pursuing their educational goals. Through the 12 semi-structured interviews, I begin to understand the different levels of support that Chicanx/Latinx parents provide to their college-aged children. The interview questions assisted me in digging deeper into the more inclusive definitions of parental involvement and engagement to form a theory. The study has provided insight into the impact of Chicanx/Latinx students’ parents’ involvement and the culturally relevant work required to meet the needs of these students as they pursue success at a college campus.

All of the participants in this study completed a semi-structured, individual interview guided by these central research questions:
1. How do Chicanx/Latinx first-generation transfer students describe their parents' involvement in their college educational success and its benefit to them?

2. How do familial capital and cultural capital assets contribute to Chicanx/Latinx first-generation transfer student success?

Twelve self-identified Chicanx/Latinx students participated in this qualitative study; each was interviewed face to face. All participants were first-generation students who transferred from local community colleges in the surrounding area. All participants successfully transferred to a four-year public institution in the California State University system, located in Southern California. The ages of the students ranged from 24 to 39 years of age. The demographics of the group included Puerto Rican, Mexican, and Central American ethnicities.

Table 1 describes the participants in this study. A pseudonym was given to each participant in the interest of confidentiality. The table includes each participant's gender, the name of the community college they transferred from, the major they are pursuing at their four-year public institution, and their ethnicity and age.
Table 1

Description of Study Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonyms</th>
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<th>Transferred from</th>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Age</th>
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</table>

Themes

The Chicanx/Latinx students interviewed in this study shared many similarities when discussing how their parents have impacted their educational
success. The feeling of support was reported by all the participants, and this support was showcased by parents in a variety of ways. The support that students felt was deeply appreciated and truly was the catalyst of their drive to further their education. All the participants shared a desire to “give back” or to acknowledge their parents’ valuable role in their journey, a college journey that seems often foreign to the student and parent alike. The following themes were found as a result of the analysis of data from the 12 semi-structured interviews: (a) gratitude and appreciation to parents, (b) consejos, (c) first-generation moments, (d) parental support by any means necessary, (e) desire for parents to belong and connect, and (f) emotions/unspoken words

Gratitude and Appreciation

All of the participants shared a deep-rooted sense of gratitude and appreciation towards their parents’ impact on their educational success. Often, the participants had moments of realization during the interview of just how much their parents have done for them in order to help them reach their educational goals. This reflection created opportunities for participants to understand their parents’ support, thereby prompting a genuine expression of gratitude and appreciation for what their parents have done for them. For example, Sandoval stated,

I deeply appreciate my parents’ support because I mean I am the person that I am because of them, but also because of the opportunity that they granted me to get my education here because that has also shaped the
person that I am. (Sandoval, Mexican male, 23 years old, Mt. San Antonio Community College, Cal Poly Pomona)

The appreciation that Sandoval expressed was rooted in an understanding of his parents’ struggles and knowing that they had done everything they could to get him to this point in his educational journey. His parents gave them the opportunity to continue the struggle but at a college setting, in a land that is often foreign to his parents. Sandoval continued to express the importance of his parents’ being a part of his educational journey:

And, I hope that one day, like, I could actually take him around a tour of the campus. Oh, maybe over the summer, hopefully, but I don’t know because I want him to be able to see, like, what I’m—the school that I’m going to because eventually it is gonna help me, like, get my bachelor’s. And then, I can use that as a launching point to actually go into a teaching, um—so I want him to see the school that helps me do that. . . . Through their help, like, that’s why we’re here. That’s how we’re here is because of them.

This expression of appreciation to his parents is rooted in knowing the struggles his parents went through. Both his parents are legally deaf, and he often spoke of his appreciation of their efforts towards his success in college.

Sandoval expressed a deep desire to have his family be a part of the journey that he is navigating as a first-generation college student. He commented on his hope to have his father come to campus so that he can see what his hard work and his father’s commitment to his education have
accomplished. Sandoval was quite emotional when expressing his thoughts on showing his father what he has done for his son to make it successfully in college, stating,

I just wanted my dad to be there because I feel like since he put so much work in trying to get me out there it’s, like, you know, he might as well—not reward him but might as well, like, come out, you know, and see what his work is helping his son do.

Students had a keen appreciation of their parents’ efforts towards creating a college-going culture within the family, as all student participants spoke of having at least one parent who motivated them to go to college. The awareness of their parents’ efforts was often what fueled the students’ drive to reach their educational goals. Rosa spoke of parallels between achieving her dreams and not wanting to disappoint her parents as part of her drive in reaching her educational goals. Rosa shared the following powerful excerpt about her parents:

I don’t want to let them down. So that’s another thing that’s like, um, has really driven, ah, me to keep going and to, to keep doing what I want to do, um, because they, you know, they—because I—my ultimate goal is I want to be a physician assistant so they’re always like oh, you know, you’re going to be a doctor and you’re going like, you know, take care of me for free and, you know, that whole thing. So it’s like, um, just not like wanting to, to disappoint them almost, um, is I feel has really affected me
personally, um, as far as my, my college career goes. (Rosa, Mexican female, 24 years old, Norco College, Cal State University, Los Angeles)

Rosa recognizes the opportunity that her parents have created for her. Her parents have given her access to education by immigrating here to the United States and giving her all that she needs to achieve her educational success. Rosa stated, “it makes me feel really grateful for my situation and, um, really grateful to have my parents there to help me with everything.”

Gratitude was also expressed in appreciation for the opportunity to get an education by Martha, who acknowledges that access isn’t always something that is a real opportunity. Neither she nor her parents had documented immigrant status until more recently, causing them to feel like they were hiding in the shadows. This feeling is what created her determination to take advantage of opportunities given to her. She knows that her parents guided her in becoming the person she is today and that she strives to become through her educational attainment. Martha asserted,

I deeply appreciate my parents’ support because I mean I am the person that I am because of them, but also because of the opportunity that they granted me to get my education here because that has also shaped the person that I am. (Martha, Guatemalan female, 23 years old, Mt. San Jacinto Community College, Cal Poly Pomona)

Edgar at first did not think about how his parents have helped him until he was asked about his parents’ financial contributions. Expressing gratitude, Edgar reported,
I didn’t think about it until right now that you were asking those questions, like, how have my parents really helped me? And, the way I look at it, it’s like they really haven’t, but then after you said thinking of all that stuff, like I told you, my parents weren’t, like—they were not financially gonna support me I probably wouldn’t be in college. (Edgar, Mexican male, 22 years old, Saddleback Community College, Cal Poly Pomona)

**Consejos**

The importance of developing this qualitative study is deeply rooted in the words shared by the participants. I began to dig deeper in understanding the *consejos* concepts that the participants in this study also shared. Delgado-Gaitan (1994) defines *consejos* as communication that holds deep cultural and emotional empathy and compassion. These *consejos* are a form of cultural and familial capital that have not been valued in traditional university settings (Yosso, 2005). The literature review in this dissertation discusses the impact of these *consejos* and the how words are collected and expressed. Participants often reported how these *consejos* gave them the courage to believe in themselves. Their parents’ sharing *consejos* of encouragement helped them believe that success in their college education was attainable.

Rosa shared how important words from her parents were to make her believe in herself and persist with the work involved in completing her education. She recognizes that her parents’ care and support comes from a place of love that has always made her feel like she could do anything. Rosa shared,
them just saying like don't worry about it like, you know, you could do this like, you know, you have—you, know, you've done all of these other things like that you know this is what you're good at like, you know, so that's really helpful, um, and so it kind of helps me, you know, keep confidence in myself.

Rosa’s parents have provided her the motivation needed to continue through her studies. Since she lives at home, they often see her when she struggles and are there to provide her with kind words to uplift her spirit as she gets back to studying long hours. Rosa continues to emphasize their motivation through the *consejos* they give her, rooted in the love they have for their daughter. Rosa shared,

 Honestly a lot of it has to do with, umm, that their encouragement and support and, um, mostly having confidence in me and, you know, knowing that I could do what I want to do because, um, you know, there are times when you kind of underestimate yourself. Rosa (Mexican female, 24 years old, Norco College, Cal State University, Los Angeles).

Rosa is definitely able to move towards succeeding because of the *consejos* that her parents give her, boosting her confidence.

Martha also shared how her parents have always encouraged and motivated her. The motivation was in the simple care that her parents took to check in with her. She shared how the simple question, “how are you doing?,” always made her feel like they knew that her education was important. Martha asserted,
the fact that they always kept me motivated and just always knew what to say in a sense, like, always encouraging, it made a huge difference. And so, it helped me, um, feel like I belong here in the states and also at school because they've always made me feel like I've belonged in, like, in school if that makes sense.

The power of their care through their words made Martha realize just how much she needed that in order to preserve. Martha shared, “in the moments I feel like I can’t—I just want to throw in the towel—they’re always there to just lift me up.” These consejos, these encouraging words, have helped Martha in celebrating the progress she has made. When school becomes overwhelming, her parents know her and know what to say and when to say it to help her push forward—a spoken form of love.

Aaron also spoke of the consejos and words of motivation that his parents have provided him during his college journey:

Anytime I ask for her opinion or stuff like that, um, she was, like—she’ll give me an insight, and I'll give her, like, the pros and cons. Okay, this is what I want to do. She was always motivating me. Um, you know, she was like, ‘You’ve got it.’ And, she knew that I could do it. (Aaron, Puerto Rican male, 35 years old, Riverside Community College, Cal Poly Pomona)

Aaron expressed how having those reminders were important and how often his mother was the light in times of darkness throughout his college experience. She
always has encouraged him to pursue his hopes and dreams, and he recognizes that it is due to her love as a parent.

Edgar related to the parental love and encouragement that he felt from his parent’s *consejos*. As a first-generation transfer student, he needed that motivation to know that he could overcome the obstacles he has faced. When asked about how it made him feel to have them share words of encouragement, Edgar stated, “Good, actually, it makes me feel great. Um, I think that she’s the one that pushes me, mainly, to do a lot of things, to go through school.”

**First-Generation Moments**

As community college transfer students, most of the participants spoke about moments that highlighted their first-generation identity and experience. This often was due to having immigrant parents who did not understand what they necessarily had to do once in college but who have always been there for their children to assist as they could. Most participants did not know how their parents’ involvement would be beneficial for them, as their parents’ involvement had never been a part of the conversation. As first-generation college students, they themselves struggled to understand how to navigate the institution and its processes.

Jessica shared how the transition into community college was an experience that was hard for her. When asked if she thought it would be beneficial to have her parents engaged during her community college, she stated,
I think so, but then again I’m the first student in my family to go to college, so my parents really had no idea neither did I, as far as what I had to do. I feel like at that time I was more scared or shy to ask for help or go and ask if there was anything that they offered. It was actually a very tough experience for me to go to community college, because we didn’t know anything. My parents didn’t know . . . I mean they rarely . . . They speak English, but they don’t know how to fill out an application. I’m the one usually that does everything. (Jessica, Guatemalan female, 25 years old, Pasadena City Community College, Cal State University, Los Angeles).

Jessica continued to share that she felt that she missed out on a lot of opportunities because she did not know about them and her parents did not have a college experience to share. Jessica shared, “Now that’s why I want to help out those who need it, because there is a lot of Latino students, and they have their parents that are in the same situation that I was or that I am. I just say always seek for help.”

As a first-generation college student, Jessica has had to learn the tough way about the opportunities that exist on campus. Her parents have supported her in her education, but they were not engaged by her community college to learn about college expectations. Jessica continued to share that her parents had to learn the difference between her community college and four-year college experience. Jessica stated,

Now they do, but before they used to think that oh if you don’t go to university right after high school that you’re not smart enough or just they
would say that, but then they had learn that or I had to let them know that I went there because I thought it was more convenient. It's actually less expensive and you can get your general requirements there and then just transfer.

Jessica talked about having to do a lot of sitting down around the kitchen table, explaining college processes that she herself was still learning. She would sit her parents down and walk them through the application process and say, “okay, we are going to apply.”

If you think about it, they don't know anything of college or universities, so I don't think they were fully aware of what the difference was, until we finally sat down and . . . Even when we attended one of the workshops here, because EOP actually has been very helpful to us. They explained how it actually . . . how we benefit from attending college, community college and then transferring to Cal State, L.A.

Jessica often shared how she was caught in between her parents and the institution, playing many roles—translator, interpreter, and knowledge holder—that often created extra stress for her, as she was responsible for creating understanding and sharing information with her parents and the institution. Since Jessica was often engaging them in the process, she did feel that they have more experience and understand some of the processes that she goes through now at the university setting.

Saul also had similar concerns about the amount of work that he had to do on top of his school work to understand the college campus. He spoke about
how his parents supported him with other areas of his college experience, but ultimately, they were never engaged in a way to understand how to be successful. He felt he often got the run around from campus agents. Saul stated,

I know, like, on my part I had to do a lot of research. Um, I had to ask, like, a lot of questions for counselors, and they all seemed to sort of say the same thing. Like, oh, if you have any questions, just talk to me, uh, or just find someone—another counselor to talk about it. But, it always seemed like I was getting a run around. (Saul, Mexican male, 25 years old, Riverside Community College, Cal State University, Los Angeles).

He expressed that he wished that his parents had been given the opportunity to be a part of the process, though he understood that he still was responsible for being an adult.

Edgar also spoke about the notion of being an adult and how the perception is that students are encouraged to have less parent involvement with issues of the university. Edgar shared, “Um, they really never contacted my parents because, I think, the idea my parents have is that once you, um—I mean because I’m an adult already, I guess.”

Sandoval’s parents did not get the feeling that they belonged or that they were even allowed to be on the campus. He expressed how his mother has fears about the campus. Sandoval stated, “I feel like they’d still be a bit nervous. Um, I know with my dad, he’s a bit more bold, so he’d be, like—he’d probably be
okay with it. But, with, like, my mom, um, I feel like she’d be scared and would feel like she doesn’t belong.”

**Parental Support by Any Means Necessary**

Participants shared stories of their parents going out of their way to assist them in reaching their educational goals. These stories of extreme and intense demonstrations of support and love illustrate the parents knowing that education is important and doing whatever was necessary for them to contribute to their child’s success. The notion of “by any means necessary” captures the depth and array of support that parents provide, whether it be sacrificing financially to help pay for books and tuition or driving extreme distances to do their part in making sure their children are successful in attaining their college education. The stories painted the parents as holders of knowledge apart from the traditional format. Often, participants shared stories of learning the everyday life skill sets, such as paying for rent through the help of their parent. In interview after interview, students shared stories of their parents’ ability to assist them, go above and beyond, guided by the motto of “by any means necessary” to give them what they could to achieve their educational goals.

Carolina shared how her parents’ support makes her everyday responsibilities easier to deal with. Their support comes in different ways, and Carolina is able to notice that. She shared,

My parents, they just make my life so much easier. It'd still be doable, but it's so much easier. In Koreatown there's no parking, so I always end up parking like very far. In the mornings before I go to work, school or
whatever, my dad actually walks to my car and has it ready for me so I can just run because I'm always running everywhere. I don't have time for anything. Yeah, they just make my life easier. (Carolina, Mexican female, 20 years old, Los Angeles City Community College, Cal Poly Pomona).

Carolina describes how she often forgets to express her gratitude for a simple, yet valuable act, of extreme support. She knows that these acts are a form of supporting her education, saving her time as she is very busy. Carolina expressed, “It’s just the little things that make my life flow easier.” This simple act of love is often lost in translation. It becomes routine, and Carolina recognizes that she is so used to it, “but he doesn’t mind. He’s really dedicated.” This dedication is a means of his support by Carolina’s father, doing whatever he can to assist his daughter. Carolina reflected on this act of support stating,

I’m sure he minds, even if he doesn’t have to wake up, he wakes up just to go get that and then goes back to sleep, but I feel like he sees that if it’s something that’s going to help me, then it’s okay.

Sandoval also shared a story of support that captured his dad’s way of supporting him by mean necessary. The support was unconventional in nature, but what was needed to assist Sandoval in valuing his education. Sandoval was able to see that his father did what he could to assist in creating a college-going ethic in him by his act of support. Sandoval shared,

I know with my dad, um, there was one time where our high school was having a field trip to, um, I think it was or, it was just for, like, a marine, uh, a marine study program because at that time I was, like, really interested
in becoming a marine biologist. Um, but they didn’t really have, uh, rides for anyone. I mean you basically had to have your parent go, and at that time, like, my parents didn’t have a car. Um, and we didn’t really know anyone that could, like, take the time to just drive me out there and then, like, drive me back. So eventually, like, we ended up calling, like, several cousins who all lived out here in because we live back in the desert, so it’s, like, a good hour and a half to two hour drive. Um, but yeah, like, they would just, you know, stay up with family and just talk to them to see, like, if anyone could help out. And, of course, like, we’d try to pay, like, for gas as best as we could. Um, eventually we did find, like, an uncle who was able to help me out, and, like, my dad came with me because I really wanted him to come because he’s like—he’s helping me out, like, just get out here. I wanted him to be able to share in the experience, too, so-um, yeah, that was a good time.

Sandoval was able to do a lot of self-reflective work as he answered many of these questions. During his sharing of this particular story, he got choked up and knew that his dad would do anything to help him reach his educational goals and dreams.

Aaron further discussed his sense of support that he has received. He was aware that his parents have believed in him and therefore have given him the feeling of being academically ready for his college experience. Aaron stated,

For me, um, it’s awesome because they show that, um, they still believe in me. They—you know, I have their support in everything I do. Um, you
know, they’re gonna be there no matter what, but I know that my mom, um—she’s been my inspiration

Martha also stated that the support that she receives from her parents is immense. She stated how they do things that only a parent would do, but also they do it because it is their way of giving their support, whichever way they can. This type of support is different but appreciated by Martha. She shares a story stating,

My dad will drive me to school, sometimes, he used to do that before when he had a chance, drive me to my school so that I could study on the way. And-um, and he does it, you know. He’s done that multiple times, and I mean that’s huge.

Martha recognized that her parents’ inability to understand the college language did not make them unable to support her. Support was given not only through academic knowledge but also through what her parents had to offer:

My parents might have not been, like, super knowledgeable what I was doing or super involved, but they were there by, like, cooking me meals or saying, “How are you doing? Are you okay, or how are finals,” or something like that.

Martha appreciated this type of support that her parents offered to her, asserting that they gave her all that she needed, and they went out of their way to support her like that.

Often participants shared that their parents supported them in more tangible ways, such as providing money for housing, food, and their tuition fees
or other needs. The participants knew that their parents offered this type of support so that they did not have to worry about these financial issues and could focus on their studies. Often, the participants shared how their parents would sacrifice to support them by any means necessary financially.

Edgar discussed how his parents would talk to him about money, and if he was ever in need, he knew that they were there to support him. Edgar shared how they always are there for him:

If you live with us, I mean, if you have money problems we can always help you. I mean you'll have a place to sleep always, so always the idea we provide support mainly.” And-um, you know, I know that if I have a problem or anything like that, they're the ones that I'm gonna fall to, yeah. He continued to share how they do what they can with what they have to offer in order to support. The concept of “by any means necessary” captures his statement when he shares that they try to support him as much as they can and sometimes they don’t have the actual type of help, but they do what they can possible to give their support of his academics. Edgar stated,

I think they support me enough in the things that they do, and I think that’s maybe all they can do. Maybe probably not, maybe they could, uh—I know that they—I know they give me—they try to support me as much as they can. And, I know when they can’t do something it’s because they really can’t.

Rosa recognized that her parents would go out of their way to make sure she did not have to think about her school-related finances. She shared how
they made her feel less pressure when they took on the burden of paying for school finances. Rosa stated,

another way is just as far as, you know, financially paying for college. They've always told me never to worry about it, um, that they would, you know, figure it out and, um, and that, you know, now that I work they, you know, they don't, they don't pressure me to try to work to help to pay for things, um, it's kind of they've always made it to where it's an option for me.

Saul described the same feeling of support. Saul viewed this as a great element in his success. To be able to not worry about the financial burden of school has allowed him to focus and spend more time on his academics. Saul stated, “so everything up until that point, like, they were basically funding everything for me. All I had to do was just show up and, you know, not fail the class.”

Sandoval knew that his parents were not going to be able to offer much, but he also knew that they offered him everything that they had. He shares in the following statement how he himself tried to “pay back” his parents by being there for them. Ultimately, the highest degree expression of “by any means necessary” included his parents’ giving him the advice to move forward, even if it meant leaving them behind. Sandoval talks about this and states,

But-um, yeah, I would say he was my rock. Uh, I mean without—I mean without him I probably wouldn’t even be here. I’d probably still be back in the desert, like, just, you know, taking care of him. But, it was because of
him, like, because when I was taking care of them I felt like, yeah, I feel like I’m giving back to the family that gave me a lot. Um, but eventually, he told me, like, “You know, it’s really—I really love what you’re doing, and you know, you’re my son and I love you, but you’re gonna—one day you’re gonna have to, like, leave to, you know, pursue a family of your own, pursue a career of your own. You can’t just stay here forever helping us out. Like, it’s okay if you leave.” And yeah, if he’d never told me that, I’d still be back out there.

**Desire for Parents to Belong/Connect**

A majority of the students shared a desire to have their parents be more connected to their college campus and their college experience. As noted earlier, the reality of being a first-generation Chicanx/Latinx transfer student creates additional stress factors. Participants expressed that they had a lot of explaining to do when it came to their college experience. Their desire for their parents to belong and connect to their college life was rooted in students’ wanting their parents to understand what they were going through. Participants also wanted to have their parents be a part of this stage of their life, noting again the feeling of appreciation for their support and wanting parents to feel that they were welcomed on their college campus. As liaisons between parents and school, students often shared that they feel a responsibility for creating a sense of belonging and understanding for their parents. Often their “sitting down to talk” with their parents was both a support and a burden when they themselves are learning the college system.
Elisa shared the desire she had for her parents to understand her transition to college, as well as the entire process. Elisa saw value in having her parents be a part of her educational goals and achievements along the journey. The following excerpt captured this point:

To help them understand what we do, what I'm trying to do, what I'm trying to achieve. Have them see the beginning, where you're starting, like the excitement of it, and then towards the middle little stages. "I completed this. Now, I just need to do this," or "I did this. I'm in this group. This is what we're doing. This is what the outcome is going to be." Then, of course at the end graduation or whatever you're working towards, have them see that as well just to see that it was worth their while and our while too. (Elisa, Mexican female, 21 years old, Rio Hondo Community College, Cal State University, Los Angeles).

She continued to express her desire for her parents to be engaged, comparing it to models that she has seen as a youth in the educational system, suggesting a form of the K-12’s Parent Teacher Association (PTA) at the college level so they can be engaged. She continued to brainstorm and share more ideas for potential long-term relationship building with parents and universities:

Maybe go to your specific house, like how they have arts and letters, sciences . . . Go to your specific and learn . . . Especially for me, being an art major, I think it's harder for them to understand what you can get out of it. Maybe have a program like that to show them that there is curators and you will find a good career. I think that would be important. Just like little
events here and there to help them get involved. Maybe form a club or something where the parents can come and be a part of campus.

Carolina also thought that there needs to be more opportunities for parents to be involved. She referenced the campus Chicanx/Latinx resource center as a unit on campus that can make parents feel more welcomed through its awareness of the cultural significance of parents. Carolina stated,

Programs like that can have parent involvement. They're all about like identity and awareness of all those things. I feel like there needs to be more of a reach out."

She herself didn’t know if there was a specific area on campus that would be responsible for creating the parent or family connection. She hasn’t seen it happen, at least not with her parents. Carolina continued to share that she would have loved to have her mom present with her during different moments in her college experience, but she didn’t see official opportunities so took it upon herself to engage her mom. Carolina did this because she wanted her mom to know what to expect, so she would talk to her about it.

This theme was one that was hard for participants to articulate. Often, they did not know themselves if it was okay to express the desire for their parents to be a part of this chapter of their educational journey. The students’ desire was expressed in the nonverbal cues that I witnessed when they would begin to mention the idea of their parent coming to campus.
Unspoken Words and Emotions

Conducting these interviews was both rewarding and emotionally draining. Often, the unspoken words were what I was able to capture from these students in my hand-written notes. Students often looked away, not knowing how to answer a question. Other times, their emotions overcame the words to speak when referencing their parents’ sacrifice and love that they have given them over the years. As a collector of stories, I quickly realized that not all stories are captured by words alone. As a qualitative researcher, I believe nonverbal communication is so important to capture. I quickly begin to notice students’ comfort as well as their discomfort in processing the interview questions in this study.

Often students would remark, “I’ve never been asked that before,” or “I never thought about that.” In qualitative research, there is significance in being able to capture these unspoken words, these forms of communication that do not always get captured in research. Students during this study became emotional about expressing their gratitude towards their parents. None of the student participants had ever been asked to consider their parents in their college experience. As Chicanx/Latinx, first-generation transfer students, they often struggled to find their voice, let alone the voice of their parents. The thought that parents could be highly engaged in their college experience was met first with shock or disbelief and then immediately with ideas of how to connect their parents to their struggles of education.
These students shared their stories as counter narratives to the current, extremely limited, parental engagement model for Chicanx/Latinx students in higher education. Participants have been made to believe that their parents do not belong in their higher educational journey, though many of them expressed that their successes come from the students’ own efforts to have them engaged so that they can understand their goals, as well as expressed deep sentiments of appreciation to their parents for the different kinds of support that they have been able to give them.

There is something to uncover in the unspoken words and emotions that have been shared by students in this study. It is as though this research study allowed them to speak out loud the truths they already knew about their parents’ engagement, involvement, support and love for them in college. I know that I, too, was often moved to tears while hearing them go through perhaps their first attempt to reflect upon the impact that their parents have had on their college success.

**Chapter Summary**

Chicanx/Latinx students shared stories about their parents’ involvement and engagement in their higher education experiences. Six themes developed from the stories that they shared about being first-generation transfer students. In theme one, students shared the gratitude and appreciation they felt once they started to hear themselves tell their own stories of their parents’ form of engagement and involvement. Often, students struggled to find the words to even be able to express their appreciation of their parents’ form of engagement.
In theme two, students spoke to the power of *consejos*, words of encouragement or constant messages of motivation found in cultural capita. These *consejos* were found to be a part of the students’ own ability to push forward in academia. Theme three highlighted the many struggles that these students faced as first-generation transfer students, often facing them with their parents. Neither students nor parents have full understanding of college policies and procedures. However, the parents and student together engage in attempting to understand in order to be successful. In theme four, tales of parental support “by any means necessary” created the understanding that Chicanx/Latinx parents expressed intense love and support towards their son or daughter’s education. Students shared stories of sacrifice and endless devotion by Chicanx/Latinx parents determined to do whatever was needed to assist their child’s educational success.

Desire for their parents to belong was theme five of this study. The students shared how their parents did not feel like they belonged on the campus, or had a part in their educational journey. They expressed a desire for their parents to be engaged and included throughout their college experience, hoping to have the institution participate in doing what they could to engage them.

Finally, the sixth theme, unspoken words and emotions, was captured in what I observed as a qualitative researcher. I often witnessed students coming to a realization of a lot of what they shared with me. They either became emotional as they shared their reflections of their parents’ support or did not have
the words yet to continue their thought process. It was a theme that I did not expect but know that there could be more to uncover for future research.
CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION

Most of the current literature related to parental involvement and engagement focuses on the elementary and secondary educational experience of the student. However, these studies of parental engagement do not continue into the students’ college and university educational experiences. This study aimed to make meaning of Chicanx/Latinx college students’ perceptions of their parents’ involvement and engagement during their college journey to understand ways that parents contribute to Chicanx/Latinx college students’ retention, persistence, and success.

This final chapter will summarize the findings of this study and will add to the current literature of work related to parental engagement in institutions of higher education. The chapter will first begin with a discussion of the Chicanx/Latinx familia model of success for first-generation transfers and the core concepts that were developed out of the findings and their connection to the research questions in this study. The model and this study’s findings will begin to reveal gaps found in the current literature. The chapter will provide a summary of future policy, practice, and research needed in the area of parent and family relations in higher education, specifically related to the largest growing student population across the nation: Chicanx/Latinx students. This chapter will conclude with recommendations for future research.
Through a grounded theory approach, two research questions were explored in interviews with 12 Chicanx/Latinx first-generation college students who had transferred from a community college into a four-year public state university.

Tenets of grounded theory were used to create an interpretative model to develop an imaginative understanding of the narratives and the phenomena of Chicanx/Latinx parental engagement as described by the students (Charmaz, 2014). The guiding research questions for this study were:

1. How do Chicanx/Latinx first-generation transfer students describe their parents' involvement in their college educational success and its benefit to them?

2. How do familial capital and cultural capital assets contribute to Chicanx/Latinx first-generation transfer student success?

Open (first read through), axial (subcoding), and selective coding techniques were used to guide the development of themes and findings of this study (Charmaz, 2014).

**Core Concepts**

My core concept involves the untapped cultural and familial assets that Chicanx/Latinx parents provide. These assets are untapped by both student and institution. In order to assist Chicanx/Latinx college-going familias, we must place value in their stories and serve the entire family when access higher education. The voices of the participants in this study revealed the following core concepts:
1. **Consejos** are untapped by institution and student, as the students described the importance of **consejos**

2. There is an unrecognized value in what **familias** offer to students

3. Some deeply felt gratitude and appreciation remains unexpressed

4. There is an untapped potential to view Chicanx/Latinx parents as partners in the students’ pursuit of higher education

**Consejos**

Students discussed the importance of the **consejos** that they receive from their parents. However, this study discovered that the students themselves did not understand the full potential and impact that their parents’ **consejos** have provided before participating in this research study. Institutions of higher education also do not have an understanding of **consejos** as a form of cultural capital that provides assistance and support for the Chicanx/Latinx student, thereby missing on the opportunity to serve the student fully.

**Unrecognized Value in Familia Support**

Students were able to share in this study that parents supported their educational journey through financial assistance that is often embedded in sacrifice, housing support through advice and prepared meals, or the personal sacrifice of time and effort. This type of support is another way in which Chicanx/Latinx parents of first-generation college students demonstrate how much they value the educational accomplishments of their sons and daughters. Institutions of higher education do not understand these different ways parents have of supporting their children, and they are often are ignored when both
student and parent need to be informed as a first-generation college-going
familia.

**Unexpressed Gratitude and Appreciation**

The gratitude and appreciation shared by students in this study has not always been shared by institutions for Chicanx/Latinx parents, which leaves the institution missing on the familial capital these parents have to offer. Often, parents are pushed aside as schools ignore the value students place on their parents and their appreciation of their parents.

**Untapped Potential of Parents as Partners**

Institutions of higher education have failed in creating a sense of belonging for Chicanx/Latinx parents. This devalues their potential as partners in the success of the student. There is a need to value the cultural and familial capital of Chicanx/Latinx parents in order to serve the entire first-generation college-going familia.

**Chicanx/Latinx Familia Model of Success for First-Generation Transfers**

These core concepts lead to the development of my model, the Chicanx/Latinx familia model of success for first-generation transfers (Appendix D). This is a model that will lead to contributing to Chicanx/Latinx student success as it considers the cultural and familial capital of Chicanx/Latinx parents and the student.

The Chicanx/Latinx familia model of success for first-generation transfers reminds us that parents are a part of the Chicanx/Latinx student experience, and we must work towards being culturally aware of the familial impact and cultural
assets that parents add to students’ college experience. Within Chicanx/Latinx communities, the importance of parental engagement is found in the collectivist and cultural upbringing of these participants. These students are first-generation college students and are navigating the system with the support of their Chicanx/Latinx parents, contrary to the deficit thinking that exists in educational systems (Valencia, 2002). However, my Chicanx/Latinx familia model of success for first-generation transfers counters that deficit thinking, empowering parental engagement that involves all parties: student, parent and institution. The current educational model fails to recognize Chicanx/Latinx parents’ many different types of support that are grounded in the cultural and familial capital that they offer to their sons and daughters, thereby failing to engage them and failing to assist the student towards academic success and graduation.

The students do not experience their first-generation transfer identity alone but share this identity with the parents. Through my findings in this research I came to understand that students and parents are attempting to navigate the complexities of higher education together because they are both entering a new educational world. For first-generation college-going familias, higher education is not as engaging as what they have experienced in their child’s K-12 years, therefore creating the perception that parents do not belong in this part of their son or daughter’s educational journey.

However, Chicanx/Latinx transfer students shared their narratives in this qualitative research study and were able to add to the counter narrative of dominant culture ideology that excludes their parents from being fully engaged in
their college experience. Students were able to describe how their parents have been involved in assisting them towards their college success and its benefits.

It is the responsibility of institutions of higher education to understand and operationalize the power of the stories captured in this study. The Chicanx/Latinx students shared some valuable insights that can help inform educators on steps to take to engage Chicanx/Latinx parents. I hope to provide some insight into some of those high-impact practices towards meeting Chicanx/Latinx success and engaging parents.

**Consejos**

This study found that the students had support in the form of *consejos*. *Consejos* are a “cultural dimension of communication sparked with emotional empathy and compassion, as well as familial expectations and inspiration” (Delgado-Gaitan, 1994, p. 300). *Consejos* are a form of cultural capital, acknowledged as an asset and used to motivate and give strength, countering the dominant cultural narrative (Yosso, 2005).

The students in this study described their first-generation moments as difficult when seeking to understand the institution’s processes, policies, and expectations. However, students shared that their parents were often the source of motivation to succeed in higher education based on the *consejos*, love, and support they provided them. The students’ narratives capture how they have experienced a first-generation college-going culture through *consejos*.

As the Chicanx/Latinx student population grows, it is imperative that institutions pay attention to the narratives of Chicanx/Latinx students in order to
integrate policies that are more inclusive of these voices. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) state “the voice of people of color is required for a complete analysis of the educational system” (p. 58). The onus is on the institutions of higher education to work towards addressing the Chicanx/Latinx educational pipeline, using the personal narratives of their students as valid forms of evidence and data to counter any disparities and inequity that exist in their institutions. Race must be considered as a factor that leads to the inequities that have been historically perpetuated in our school systems (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

As this research study revealed, Chicanx/Latinx parents are the students’ greatest supporters, indicating the significant impact they have as stakeholders and contributors to their college success. Through cultural motivational warmth, consejos, and support that had no limits, the students’ voices captured the importance of their parents on their education.

**Support by Any Means Necessary**

The Chicanx/Latinx familia model of success for first-generation transfers that I developed, as shared by students, showcases that Chicanx/Latinx parents will give their support by any means necessary to assist their child in succeeding in higher education within the context of their first-generation identity. However, as seen in the model, the first-generation moments shared by students creates a first-generation reality that captures both the student and the parent in these moments that are foreign to both. Both parents and students are attempting to understand and navigate the complexities that come with being a first-generation
college-going *familia*. Parents demonstrate the “by any means necessary” approach and attitude in service to their child’s educational dreams.

Ultimately, it is now up to the institutions to recreate Chicanx/Latinxs parents’ “by any means necessary” type of support and intense form of love in order to contribute in assisting not only the first-generation college going Chicanx/Latino student but also the parents and to value *familia* in the structure of their institution.

Parental love and support is captured in the cultural ways Latino parents showcase their intense devotion to the success of their son or daughter in attaining their educational goals. Parental support by any means necessary is a true form of love in practice for these parents and the way they contribute to their child’s college success. An ethics of love approach should be the model that institutions of higher education should emulate in order to view their students as their own, capturing a sense of love and responsibility for each student. Hooks (2001) states,

All great social movements for freedom and justice in our society have promoted a love ethic. Concern for the collective good of our nation, city, or neighbor rooted in the values of love makes us all seek to nurture and protect that good. If all public policy was created in the spirit of love, we would not have to worry about unemployment, homelessness, schools failing to teach children or addiction (p. 98).

By engaging parents and using collectivistic methods found in the Chicanx/Latinx culture and *familia* upbringing, institutions of higher education can
view parents as allies in reaching the goal of addressing the gaps in the educational pipeline for Chicanx/Latinx students.

**Gratitude and Appreciation**

The students overwhelmingly expressed gratitude and appreciation for their parents and the desire for their parents to feel like they belonged in their overall first-generation reality found in the context of their institution of higher education.

As *consejos* are given to the student, the student expresses gratitude and appreciation for their words of encouragement and love. Examples of parental support by any means necessary continue to contribute to the students’ gratitude and appreciation for their parent in their education.

The students in this research study showcased a high level of gratitude and appreciation for their familial capital and cultural capital. Marquez-Kiyama, Museus, and Vega (2015) found in their study that “the campus racial climate and campus racial culture are both significant aspects of the campus environment, and each of them is important in efforts to develop holistic understandings of the experiences of Latino/a students at PWIs” (p. 30). Addressing this with a culturally engaging philosophy on behalf of the institution will assist the student in the long run.

**Parents as Partners**

The Chicanx/Latinx *familia* model of success for first-generation transfers places importance on the collectivist nature of Chicanx/Latinx students and their narratives that capture their desire for institutions of higher education to create a
sense of belonging for their parents and entire *familia* and uses culturally relevant methods and approach to assist the two worlds in coming together. My Chicanx/Latinx *familia* model of success for first-generation transfers is one that needs to be understood through a cultural lens by institutions of higher education (see Appendix D).

From the data gathered from the narratives of the 12 Chicanx/Latinx students, and in creating this model, I postulate that in order to assist Chicanx/Latinx students in their educational success in higher education, we must understand that they come in as a first-generation college-going *familia*. As part of a first-generation college-going *familia*, Chicanx/Latinx students are operating in two separate worlds, that of the institution and that of their cultural upbringing with their parents. Institutions of higher education should seek to understand these worlds in order to cultivate Chicanx/Latinx student success.

The study findings also captured the desire for these students to truly have their parents engaged in a more meaningful way. Students wanted their parents to feel a sense of belonging on their campus. Students shared how their parents felt that they did not believe they belonged on the campus. They didn’t think that they could visit the campus, let alone attempt to navigate the systematic policies that govern the institution. Instead, parents would often shy away from the complexities of the campus due to the lack of cultural and familial elements from the institution. The students shared that their parents did not have a means to get connected, making it difficult for them as students to navigate the borderlands as a first-generation college student alone.
Implications for Policy

Implications for current policy change must take into consideration the existing state of Latinos in higher education. The Pew Hispanic Center report (Fry, 2002) found a gap between enrollment of Latino students and their actual completion towards graduation. Chicanx/Latinx students are enrolling but are being lost in the educational pipeline towards educational attainment. We must be reminded of the reality that the Chicanx/Latinx educational pipeline illustrates

Chicanx Latinx Parents - Cultural and Familial Capital

Consejos – through cultural, motivational warmth, consejos captured the importance placed y Chican@/Latin@ parents on students’ education.

By any means necessary – parental support through use of cultural capital of parents, unrecognized by institutions of higher education

Students develop Consciousness

Gratitude and appreciation – student expressed gratitude and appreciation towards their parents’ support and consejos, however, still didn’t understand their own parents’ different types of support

Parents as partners, sense of belonging – places importance on the collectivistic nature of Chicanx/Latinxs in higher education and responsibility to create belonging with parents, tapping into the cultural and familial capital they hold.

Institutions of Higher Education – Dominant Culture

Institutions of higher education have undervalued, underappreciated and unrecognized the potential to engage first generation college going familias, student and parent. This model mandates institutions to consider approaches to engage Chicanx/Latinx parents in the college process, policies, and institutionalize methods that value their cultural and familial capital.

Implications for Policy

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so educators’ can confront this dismal narrative in order to make a change for the academic success of our Chicanx/Latinx students.

However, according to The National Center for Education Statistics (2011), “Almost half (49 percent) of Hispanic college and university students attended public 2-year institutions, a higher percentage than any other race/ethnicity shown (ranging from 33 to 42 percent).” (para. 6). Latinos are accessing community colleges as their entry point to higher education (Rendón & Valadez, 1993). Yosso (2006) reminds us of these numbers so that we can move towards countering this narrative that exists today for our Chicanx/Latinx students:

Utilizing 2000 U.S. Census data and information from the National Center for Educational Statistics, we begin with 100 Chicana and Chicano students at the elementary level, noting that 56 drop out of high school and 44 continue on to graduate. Of the 44 who graduate from high school, about 26 continue on toward some form of postsecondary education. Of those 26, approximately 17 enroll in community colleges and nine enroll at a 4-year institution. Of the nine Chicanas/os attending a 4-year college and the one community college transfer student, seven will graduate with a baccalaureate degree. Finally, two Chicana/o students will continue on to earn a graduate or professional school degree and less than one will receive a doctorate (p. 4).

There are many leaks in the pipeline that are not being patched up by the administrators, leaders, or educators of our institutions of higher education. The
students in this study have assisted in pinpointing some areas where policies can be addressed to better serve not only the Chicanx/Latinx student but their parents as well.

The stories of the Chicanx/Latinx students in this study assist in countering higher education’s widespread deficit thinking that has not valued the cultural knowledge, capital, assets and strength of familial members, such as parents. This section will address implications for policies using the core concepts of the Chicanx/Latinx *familia* model of success for first-generation transfers through (a) the use of *consejos*, as cultural form of support, love, and care in policies implementation; (b) acknowledgment of existing policy practices that have not recognized parental support; (c) a focus on ways to use familial capital to express gratitude and appreciation to parents; and (d) the formulation of policies that value parents and partners in creating a sense of belonging for first-generation college-going *familias*. We must avoid alienating Chicanx/Latinx *familias* and seek to understand that the parents provide a strong support for students’ educational journey and success.

Educators must look at their current policies and move to create opportunities throughout the educational pipeline, providing early exposure to the college-going culture. College administrators must look to the K-12 policies and practices around parent involvement and set up memos of understanding or plans of action to assist in a smooth transition from the K-12 system to institutions of higher education. This transition must involve the parents and tap into their support.
It is important to review the policies and models from the K-12 system, like that of the National PTA or local unified school districts, and begin to develop and build relationships with such partners. By reviewing these policies and models, educators will able to borrow practices and cultivate the parental support that exist in those policies and models in the higher education arena. Developing parent college orientation sessions during the K-12 years assists in developing the college-going culture, particularly for first-generation Chicanx/Latinx college-going familias. The students’ desire for their parents to belong needs to be nurtured by institutions of higher education by consciously creating opportunities to value, recognize, and tap into programs and services and having access to people who are ready to create partnerships.

Create Memos of Understanding

Institutions of higher education must recognize that parental engagement in higher education is valuable for their own success. Creating community-oriented memos of understanding with local school districts will be a proactive approach to creating a bridge of knowledge sharing amongst parents and institutions of higher education. Using parents’ cultural knowledge and love that is found in the K-12 educational model of parent engagement is key. A memo of understanding could include specific programs, such as parent and family campus tour dates and parent open house opportunities, tailored to the needs of higher education by including deans of colleges and the faculty. Institutions of higher education can create these memos of understanding to assist in
countering the dominant culture’s set policies and procedures that keep Chicanx/Latinx without a seat at the table of higher education.

The memos of understanding would include structured commitments from at the university level to engage parents at the elementary, middle school, and high school levels. Working with a diverse group of partners across campus to arrange school visits with the students, as well as structured parent bilingual conferences, would be the beginnings of the partnership.

To address the entire pipeline, universities should work with their transfer centers to create memos of understanding with their local community colleges, working closely with admissions office and financial aid structures to continue the education of the college-going familia. This practice is informed by the ethics of love approach of parents, engaging all members of the family, student, parent, and institution along the entire educational journey. This research study found that Chicanx/Latinx students recognize the different ways that their parents support their educational dreams, including, financial, housing, food, and consejos.

By working to create partnerships and ties of communication early on, Chicanx/Latinx parents will be informed to assist their son or daughter through the first-generation moments that they shared in this study and the struggles that come with that identity. Parents having access to information must be a part of the policy shift.
Develop Equity Minded Policies

Reconsider Hispanic-serving vs. Hispanic-enrolling status.

Campuses can attain a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) status based on their enrollment numbers. Educators should become mindful of their campus HSI status so that they can assist in driving the campus towards providing proper budget, finances, and resources to Chicanx/Latinx students. This can be empowering to begin thinking about equity when making decisions and developing programs and services, meeting the needs of the growing Chicanx/Latinx student population and shifting the resources needed to properly engage parents in higher education. It is problematic when we do not value the high number of Chicanx/Latinx students enrolling at our institutions, and we should reconsider how we celebrate institutional diversity versus doing equity-minded work to better serve our students. Chicanx/Latinx students shared their unique needs in this study and the impact of their parents’ engagement; we must make sure we address this need of our Hispanic enrolling institutions across the nation.

Be guided by the power of storytelling and consejos. The stories gathered in this research study are rooted in culture and familia. These stories have the potential to assist in telling a more diverse and inclusive story of a marginalized community that historically has not been invited to the table. These systematic policies ignore the stories of the “other”: a Chicanx/Latinx parent who is viewed as an outsider and not having much to offer their college-going child. Growing up with these systematic policies rooted in the dominant culture,
students themselves do not fully understand the value and capital that their parents offer them through the *consejos* that they hear from them. We must take a look at policies across the institution that continue to neglect the power of *consejos* as cultural capital; we do this by pulling in *familias* as a part of the entire educational process, from admissions through transfer, orientation, writing, academic classes and teaching, and advising, leading us towards graduation and student success. The students’ voices captured in this study provide the counter story that needs to be heard to create policy that can counter the “one-size-fits-all-approach” to higher education.

**Recognize that parents have been undervalued, unrecognized, and untapped.** Recognize that higher education embodies a dominant culture and policies that hinder belonging for parents and families. Institutions of higher education were first accessible to Anglo-European male students, and their policies have always occupied the narrative of dominant culture, not allowing the occupation of the experiences of students of color. Yosso (2005) states,

Racism overtly shaped US social institutions at the beginning of the twentieth century and continues, although more subtly, to impact US institutions of socialization in the beginning of the twenty-first century. Researchers, practitioners and students are still searching for the necessary tools to effectively analyze and challenge the impact of race and racism in US society (p. 70).

We must recognize race and racism exist in the many policies that embody the existence of our institutions for higher education. Most of these
policies are inequitable. Financial aid policies are mostly only accessible in English; housing protocols around moving in may be too strict and do not recognize the need to provide options for parents who are only available to assist on weekends to move in. Universities operate in White Ivory Towers, even when the campus is an HSI. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) state “when we speak of racism we refer to Wellman’s definition of “culturally sanctioned beliefs which, regardless of the intentions involved, defend the advantages Whites have because of the subordinated positions of racial minorities” (p. 55). Too often those in positions of power are making important decisions without the stories of those it will affect.

Offer culturally relevant training and professional development for faculty and staff. Institutions of higher education must work on institutionalizing culturally relevant trainings and workshops for faculty and staff. As found in this study, neither students nor parents feel comfortable navigating the campus. One way to address this is to provide professional development for staff and faculty that can be more familia oriented to create a sense of understanding and belonging for students and their parents.

Practice an ethics of love approach in education. My research highlights the parental support by any means necessary that is rooted in love. I would encourage educators, policymakers, and stakeholders to think about how you can create more a nurturing and caring campus climate and love for the work we do with students, parents, and families. Modeling the parental love in
education means you will need to rethink the ethics of love as action in the work we do to understanding a community that is different from our own.

**Root consejos in your mentorship and peer-to-peer models, programs, and services.** Use consejos to develop mentorship and peer-to-peer programs and include the Chicanx/Latinx context in academic structures. Educators can actualize agape love in an educational setting by looking to become mentors, tapping into and adding value to Chicanx/Latinx student experiences as they navigate the campus. We can practice and operationalize consejos and student success by building community with Chicanx/Latinx students, modeling the collectivist nature of their culture and familias. By being mindful and making sure that we can develop consejos, advice rooted in love, we can then show the value of the power of these consejos that their parents have been able to share and instill in them to be able to

**Use a familial capital, assets, and strengths-based approach.** Institutional agents must make sure to talk to students about their familial capital, assets, and strengths. This can be done by using Yosso’s community cultural wealth model in student leadership training and developing a culture that recognizes the capital, assets, and strengths that students bring to the institution. By creating visibility and awareness in settings of higher education, students can continue to develop their own consciousness around their familial capital, incorporating their understanding of their parent’s support.

**Value the different ways of support.** A review of policy to create a welcoming environment must consider some of the traditional formats that
govern the access to offices and procedures on campus. Revising some office hours and dates of service for key offices like Admissions, Financial Aid, Transfer Offices, Orientations and others, will be important in creating a form of belonging for Chicanx/Latinx parents, who would like to be able to engage on campus when they have the ability to visit based on their own schedules. Current policy around hours of operation seldom take into consideration afterhours or potential weekend time frames.

**Develop a sense of belonging for students, parents, and families.**

Campuses should make culturally relevant efforts towards creating a sense of belonging, rooted in the understanding of cultural and familial capital found in the Chicanx/Latinx *familia* model of success for first-generation transfers. Institutions should create opportunities for parents to engage in the campus culture, empowered to give their input and suggestions for future parent engagement. Translators should be provided by the campus so allow for a variety of knowledge holders to be involved; bilingualism should be embraced and not forgotten as an important voice of cultural capital. Campus leaders can begin to take into consideration the Chicanx/Latinx parents’ voices to lead their campuses towards truly creating a genuine *bienvenida* of Chicanx/Latinxs parents and students.

**Create an Amigos de la Universidad advisory taskforce.** Amigos de la Universidad can be an advisory taskforce that meets once a month, on a Saturday morning, that will consider providing opportunities for Chicanx/Latinx parents to join and give their input in making change that will assist the campus
in being culturally and more *familia*-oriented in making decisions for campus-wide initiatives that can impact budget decisions and programming efforts as well as language accessibility needs. Institutions should invite the expertise of parents in their decision making regarding outreach efforts, and more specifically engage them in policies and development of more *familia*-oriented environments.

**Implications for Practice**

**Create a Parent and Families Advisory Council**

By creating an advisory board, institutions can begin to tap into parents’ cultural and familial capital as well as empower parents to get engaged and assist the university in developing opportunities to create a sense of belonging. A parent and family’s advisory council can be made up of first-generation college-going parents who can give of their time in the way that meets their time and needs. Institutions must make sure to host a space for parents that will be accessible and mindful of their time and working schedules. This may mean that higher education professionals may need to rethink hours of operation to meet the needs of parents. Effort must be made to develop a safe and empowering environment for Chicanx/Latinx parents. Campus environment and language must be considered when truly moving towards empowering parents to advise the campus and begin to tap into their potential.

**Create Awareness of Current Campus Timelines and Policies**

Our policies and timelines are confusing. Our students often do not understand them; therefore, we must think about how they may create barriers for our Chicanx/Latinx parents to engage. Universities should be openly
engaging Chicanx/Latinx parents in the policies that exist once their children enter the institution. Consistent and clear messaging should be shared with the parents, so they can continue to be a support system to the policies that exist. These policies include the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), and the Jeanne Clery Act. These policies should be understood so that the parent knows the areas in which they can assist their son or daughter. Giving parents translated information of these policies would assist in being proactive during their son or daughter's institutional stay.

**Understand Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**

The intent of this Federal law is to protect the privacy of the student as an adult; however, the perception by educators may have created more barriers to communication with Chicanx/Latinx parents. Institutions must make sure to have educational sessions to provide a clear understanding of the law so that Chicanx/Latinx parents understand their children’s privacy rights while dispelling the belief that they cannot be engaged in their son or daughter's college experience.

Education about the law would work on behalf of the parent, students, and institutions’ best interest so that communication can be delivered appropriately. Institutional agents are responsible for the actual means of notification described by the U.S. Department of Education as “special letter, inclusion in a PTA bulletin, student handbook, or newspaper article and is left at the discretion of each school” (U.S. Department of Education, 2016).
The way this policy has been implemented and understood may potentially create a barrier to Chicanx/Latinx parents’ continuing their support once their child enters college. The Federal law should be explained in a way that educates them about the students’ privacy, yet still teaching them that they can be engaged in their educational journey.

The major change that needs to occur in this policy is the translation of the Federal law from English to Spanish and explanation of how that law is interpreted, therefore meeting the cultural and familial capital needed to assist familias in continuing to support their son or daughter.

Traditional views of parental involvement have led to the misrepresentation and marginalization of many minority families (Alfaro et al., 2014). The Chicanx/Latinx familia model of success for first-generation transfers implies that Chicanx/Latinx parents are engaged with their child’s educational journey as a collective—as a first-generation college-going familia. This policy can be perceived to push parents out of engaging with their son or daughter as it is written without consideration of translation. The law also ignores cultural tendencies of Chicanx/Latinx college-going families that may perceive the law as pushing them out of their son or daughter’s educational experience.

This research study found that the first-generation moments that students faced were faced together with their parents, so clarity of how to be involved and still abide by FERPA would be needed so Chicanx/Latinx parents understand the law regarding student’s privacy and confidentiality records.
The Chicanx/Latinx *familia* model of success for first-generation transfers showcases the importance of *consejos* that Chicanx/Latinx students get from their parents; making sure to clarify this law can allow for the *consejos* that Chicanx/Latinx students hear to continue without creating a potential barrier due to the misinterpretation of FERPA. The Chicanx/Latinx *familia* model of success for first-generation transfers advises institutional agents to work with parents to assist them in understanding the law, through language translation and translation of cultural relevance.

An example to help demystify the law for Chicanx/Latinx parents is to develop access of the law in Spanish, including frequently asked questions, so parents can understand that they are still a valued part of their son or daughter’s involvement in their higher education journey. Students in this study shared the frustrations when experiencing first-generation moments with their parents, since neither knew how to navigate certain policies nor fully understand the application process of the institution. By making an intentional effort to create clarity surrounding FERPA and similar campuses policies, institutions of higher education can create support for the cultural and familial capital that Chicanx/Latinx college-going families bring to college campuses.

**Communicate Through Spanish Businesses or Organizations**

Educators should look at what exists in other industries, such as the business, media or nonprofit industry. Institutions should develop relationships with business leaders either locally or in the region to learn about creating techniques to better improve communication that places value in the language
and familiarity of the parent. This form of discourse could assist in creating more inclusive forms of policies and communication that meet the needs of the parents while creating community and unity behind student success goals.

Current leaders engaging parents holistically is being done by media business source Univision. Univision is U.S.-based Spanish-language broadcast television network. They created Contigo, Guía para Padres/ a Guide for Parents, an online education program which provides free translation, answering questions in Spanish and providing videos answering frequently asked questions regarding college access and financial aid. Their tool, Parent Communicator, provides teachers the ability to write an email to their students’ Spanish-speaking parents.

Another example institutions of higher education can collaborate with or borrow best practices from is the non-profit Parent Institute for Quality Education (http://piqe.org/). The Institute creates partnerships between parents, students, and educators to further students’ academic achievement since 1987. They have worked for years in developing tools and mechanisms to include parents in the educational journey at the K-12 level. Their programs are inclusive of the cultural and familial capital that parents bring to the educational platform. Developing a consultation for some of the work that can be recreated at the college setting would help higher education begin to address what is missing to create a connection to Chicanx/Latinx parents, as well as all parents of college-going students, helping to move our campuses to being more culturally inclusive and relevant.
Implications for Theory

Examining inequities based on race should be at the forefront of theory to create social justice. Most student development theory that exists only includes the voice of White students. Being able to recognize the knowledge held by people of color is part of the change that is needed in theory. Anzaldúa (1999) shares,

Theory, then, is a set of knowledges. Some of these knowledges have been kept from us—entry into some professions and academia denied us. Because we are not allowed to enter discourse, because we are often disqualified and excluded from it, because what passes for theory these days is forbidden territory for us, it is vital that we occupy theorizing space, that we not allow white men and women solely to occupy it. By bringing in our own approaches and methodologies, we transform that theorizing space (p. xxv).

The Chicanx/Latinx familia model of success for first-generation transfers model developed through this research challenges higher education professionals and all institutional agents to consider their engagement of Chicanx/Latinx students’ parents in all areas of higher education in order to provide them with the opportunity to be successful. The Chicanx/Latinx familia model of success for first-generation transfers demonstrates the experiences of the Chicanx/Latinx students in this study and their ability to succeed in college within the cultural and familial capital of their parents. The Chicanx/Latinx familia model of success for first-generation transfers acknowledges that the
Chicanx/Latinx parent is very much a part of the first-generation college going *familia* experience. A deeper understanding of Chicanx/Latinx and their parents’ strengths and capital can begin to be introduced to many areas of college campuses and assist in designing coursework, programs and services, giving voice and power to Chicanx/Latinx students holistic needs. Essentially, the Chicanx/Latinx *familia* model of success for first-generation transfers asks for institutional agents to adapt to the cultural and familial capital within this student population.

The Chicanx/Latinx *familia* model of success for first-generation transfers argues for institutions of higher education to place this grounded theory research and its core concepts into practical application in order to serve Chicanx/Latinx student success on their campuses. The students in this study all shared that their parents are all knowledge holders, pushing them to dream about their college career before getting there and while pursuing it against all odds. However, “the educational system validates and transmits the dominant culture. The ways of thinking, speaking, and behaving, as well as the language and values of the dominant group, are promoted in schools” (De Gaetano, 2007, p. 148). This is the narrative that must be countered by the cultural and familial capital embedded in the core concepts of the Chicanx/Latinx *familia* model of success for first-generation transfers.

Not many theories exist that have captured the richness of people of color and the capital and assets they have to offer. Theory needs to resemble and be shaped by the student populations that we serve. We must look to develop a
wide range of culturally relevant theories in order to serve the collectivist, *familia*-oriented students and their families. More theories will need to be created based on narratives of the voices that currently feel like they do not belong on a college campus, like that of Chicanx/Latinx parents. Theories are informed by data collected; we must continue to collect the data regarding Chicanx/Latinx parents and their impact on their son or daughter’s higher education success.

**Implications for Future Research**

Chicanx/Latinx parent voices have been untapped, and administrators will need to look to them through future research around these marginalized voices. Focus groups with parents should be conducted in partnership with the local K-12 school district, as well as with Chicanx/Latinx parents with college students. This will assist future researchers with up-to-date data that can inform the practice of each campus.

Campus leaders should include strategic planning that involves research of these communities by including campus departments not often considered when working with Chicanx/Latinx parents. The department of institutional research should be given the charge to review current research that exists and look to fill the gaps in order to have institutionalized support of the cultural and familial capital that is overlooked in the research and data.

Departments of information and technology are another resource that can assist in further developing methods to collect both qualitative data and quantitative data to provide further research, helping synergize the message that will move the campus to tap the Chicanx/Latinx *familia* model of success for first-
generation transfers in an on-going format. Often, institutions believe they are admitting only the student, failing to recognize that a Chicanx/Latinx student once admitted, is a representative of a collective effort; the entire familia is admitted to college as well.

**Recommendations**

The students in this study already provided many ideas on how they wanted to see their parents engaged in their educational journey. Based on their insight and their experiences, I outline the following recommendations for student affairs professionals, administrators, educators, and faculty at institutions as they pertain to the students’ relationship with their parent and with the parents’ cultural and familial capital. These recommendations are informed by this study of Chicanx/Latinx students and the core concepts of the Chicanx/Latinx familia model of success for first-generation transfers.

**Educators, Remember, Knowledge Is Power**

In your one-on-one with students, make sure to include questions about the different ways their parents have been engaged in their higher education journey. The theme of unspoken words and emotions demonstrates the need for professionals to simply engage in asking the question about their parents and their involvement. New professionals often have the most contact with students--developing students every single day. Engaging students in the practice of sharing their stories, specifically sharing about their parents, can encourage Chicanx/Latinx students to can see that their parents are indeed allowed to be a part of their higher education experience. A question like “Tell me a story about
how your parents were able to help you to get to college,” can assist a Chicanx/Latinx in seeing that their cultural and familial capital is valued and appreciated at the institution of higher learning.

**Center Parents in Higher Education**

Educators in higher education must center parents and involve them in the movement of inclusion. By centering parents and listening to their *consejos*, then we will be able to truly have a seat at the table and allow them to be a part of the narrative of their student’s success. These are first-generation college-going familias, who really do not understand the higher education system; they have not been included but instead get pushed to the margins of higher education. Actively thinking about centering parents’ *consejos* will lead to meaningful results suppoting Chicanx/Latinx student success. Developing long-term parent-engagement practices will assist in allowing parents to feel comfortable to partner with higher education institutional agents.

**Translate higher education to Chicanx/Latinx parents.** Educators must think outside the box when addressing first-generation college-going familias. Institutions of higher education can continue to fine tune and cultivate bilingual resources. The Chicanx/Latinx familia model of success for first-generation transfers encourages institutions of higher education to respond to the power of *consejos* by understanding and finding ways to translate, reach out, and provide the warmth and cultural support as an institution. When our Chicanx/Latinx students are able to share their journey with their parents through translated understanding, then we can begin to recognize their full potential.
Create parent-to-parent groups. Creating parent-to-parent groups or networking opportunities will assist institutions in developing a greater understanding of parents as partners. The group Padres Promotores (https://www.sac.edu/StudentServices/StudentOutreach/Pages/Padres-Promotories.aspx) has been in existence under the Santa Ana College Partnership since 2000. It is a Latino-centered collaborative that is dedicated to the educational pipeline and college completion in California. The Santa Ana Partnership involves parents to create a college-going culture in the city. Padre Promotores have developed an institute to teach other institutional change agents methods to partner and empower parents to understand the complexities of being in a first-generation familia alongside their first-generation college-going student. Through Padres Promotores, the Santa Ana Partnership has been able to work with parents to create Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) nights to develop greater understanding about accessing financial aid for college.

Parent college visits. Student affair professionals will need to develop relationships to work with their university leaders, campus partners, and student organizations to create connections and build bridges to students and their parents, providing tours, bilingual information, and otherwise assisting to develop the first-generation college-going familia culture early. California State University, Northridge (CSUN) has hosted a Feria de Educacion (Education Fair) through a partnership with the California State University Chancellor’s Office and Univision. This full day offers workshops on the three systems of higher education in California, transitioning from high school to college, financial aid,
scholarships, services for undocumented students, career options, admissions, and more. All these sessions provide bilingual material and are open to parents, high schools students, college students, and community members. Such a program helps to demonstrate CSUN’s commitment to honoring the cultural and familial capital that Chicanx/Latinx familias bring to systems of higher education.

**Develop a bilingual parent newsletter.** Thinking beyond the parent newsletter is important for universities, colleges, and school districts alike. This doesn’t mean that the printed format of a parent newsletter needs to stop, but in order to reach parents effectively, leaders must think about the many different forms of communication that can be used to better enhance the communication that is occurring systematically and intentionally with parents and families. Current research finds that “Latinos are among the most likely to own a smartphone, to live in a household without a landline phone where only a cellphone is available and to access the internet from a mobile device,” (Brown, Lopez, & Lopez, 2016). Institutions of higher education must be aware of how to target the communities that they serve. The Chicanx/Latinx familia model of success for first-generation transfers that I created from the stories of these students of this research allows me to postulate that the target market does not involve the enrolling only the Chicanx/Latinx college student but their entire familia as well. Developing a bilingual tool to enhance access and create a means to share information and communicate with parents through creative ways is needed.
Use technology to reach parents. These creative ways can also include the use of software and technology. Institutions of higher education can be strategic in developing or budgeting resources that can help to create opportunities for parents to engage within their first-generation context. However, this must be done in a collectivist, authentic format. By engaging parents with a smartphone app, the institution can further engage them with opportunities to create a new software tool that is bilingual and gives parents the opportunity to learn the college experience that their son or daughter will experience. Such a “parent/padres”-type app could be one way to practice engagement and a sense of understanding that can lead to a sense of belonging throughout their son or daughter’s college journey. The software might include example class schedules of students and assignments or essays students have completed so that parents can be a part of their experience. The software should be introduced to both the students and their parents through their orientation but should not stop there. The software could then allow for parents to be informed of when important dates are coming up for the student; providing alerts for midterms or finals weeks with explanations of the rigor of the class would keep the parent engaged beyond the orientation. This could be accomplished by working with the communications divisions of our community colleges and institutions of higher education to begin understanding the scope of their target market when it comes to the Chicanx/Latinx student and their parents. The campus communications divisions should work to engage both student and
parent, to increasingly demonstrate the value of the interconnectedness of the cultural and familial capital that they bring to institutions of higher education.

**Create a parent YouTube page.** By developing a parent YouTube page, you allow for parents to see the step-by-step process of higher education so that they can ask questions and assist their son or daughter. The videos can be related to areas of on-campus housing, financial aid, and university deadlines, assisting their ability to belong in the process of higher education, as well as being a partner in their children’s success.

**Engage long-term through a parent newsletter.** Develop a parent newsletter that parents can get information in English and Spanish regarding important deadlines and tips on being a college parent, as well as opportunities to come on to campus to enjoy the college campus environment. Communication is key to providing access to complement the capital and support Chicanx/Latinx parents provide for their son or daughter. Being able to communicate throughout the year with parents will assist in creating a sense of belonging for the parent and student, creating a familial campus culture.

**Host family financial aid/scholarship nights.** The offices of financial aid and scholarships should host family financial aid and scholarships nights at a local community or family center, as well as partner with the local school district. This can be done in conjunction with current parents at the elementary school sites and current first-generation parents, developing a community model of empowerment--parents sharing with parents.
This study shed light on the importance of providing spaces for Chicanx/Latinx students to include their parents in cultivating that sense of belonging. New professionals should look to create programming and events that can include parents and families of Chicanx/Latinx parents and families. This should be done as a year-long engagement piece. A “welcome” mixer with cultural relevant food, music, and activities can assist in allowing the student to see that their parent can be engaged in their experience.

**Administrative Changes**

**Precollege and college-readiness commitment plans.** College-readiness plans begin with acknowledging the K-12 parental engagement model that exists in many different school districts. Senior administrators and leaderships must connect with these precollege and college-readiness programs in order to assist in creating a opportunities for parents to be engaged with the college or university setting while their son or daughter is beginning their college education and readiness in the K-12 system.

The GO East LA: A Pathway for College and Career Success (http://goeastla.org/) initiative highlights the importance of involving the entire community and viewing parents as a key component of college preparation and academic success.

Another example of a partnership plan, started in 1983 with Santa Ana College, UC Irvine, CSU Fullerton, Santa Ana Unified School District and the City of Santa Ana, is Santa Ana's Adelante! program (http://www.sac.edu/adelante). This program is committed to providing a college degree in every home in Santa
Ana by 2020. Adelante! emphasizes the cultural and familial capital that parents bring to their son or daughter, involving them and engaging them in groups aimed to educate parents and empower them to pay it forward to future parents.

**Hire and maintain a parent program on campus.** Prioritize a parent program by hiring and maintaining a parent program through proper funding resources. By allocating resources, efforts can be created for the entire university and community at large. The work to create impact in partnerships with Chicanx/Latinx familias should not be added to another department or office. True leadership is needed to learn, develop, and maintain a parent program that is constantly working to evolve and understand the needs of the student and parents.

**Advocacy at the state level.** Administrators in higher education need to review admission options for the K-12 partnership and expectations for entry into the University system as well as advocate for the student populations that they serve to ensure that articulation agreements are created with community colleges. This requires strong partnerships and collaborations to address the educational gaps that have existed in the Chicanx/Latinx educational pipeline. By creating a college-going culture early on and including the parents, we invite the parents to be at the table and become part of the solution. Educational pipeline partnerships must keep the parents engaged throughout the pipeline, it can’t just look to engaging parents at the K-12 level. Chicanx/Latinx students are the majority in California public university system, and the growing numbers of
Chicanx/Latinx students that make up our institutions of higher education only make it more important for advocacy to happen at the state level.

**Dismantle deficit thinking regarding Chicanx/Latinx parents.** The California Community College Chancellor's Office and the California State University system will need to dismantle the perception and deficit thinking that exists around Chicanx/Latinx parents by developing a systematic policy that highlights the appreciation and gratitude that their students have towards their parents' support. These two systems enroll high numbers of Chicanx/Latinx students and are therefore responsible in creating new systems and policies that push campuses to begin to include Chicanx/Latinx parents as important contributors to the success of their Hispanic enrolling institutions so that they can actually earn the HSI status that many campuses claim.

**Staff training and professional development.** Institutions of higher education must provide proper training to understand Chicanx/Latinx students and their identity as first-generation college-going *familias*. This way members of the institution can act accordingly to meet the needs of this student population and their families. The training can include an understanding of the student population at your institution and a dialogue that can address the findings, developing methods for Chicanx/Latinx students to see their parents as part of their journey, as well as opportunities to engage them in their college setting through events that are rooted in cultural relevance. The institution must change to serve the student, not the students to serve the institution.
**Graduate level.** The Chicanx/Latinx *familia* model of success for first-generation transfers theory should be incorporated to graduate level understanding and teaching. Educators should look to include the findings of this study in their classroom to create more awareness around parental engagement with Chicanx/Latinx students and their success.

**Professional associations, organizations and conferences.**

Presentations at professional associations and conferences would assist in making sure that the information is spread widely, specifically working with NASPA’s Parent and Family Relations Knowledge Community as well ACPA’s Latinx Network and developing knowledge sharing with the organizations such as Collegiate Parents, College Parents and the Association of Higher Education Parent/Family Program Professionals.

In summary, Table 2 aligns several recommended high-impact practices with the core concepts in which they are grounded.

**Summary of the Dissertation**

This study was a qualitative grounded theory study which collected the stories of Chicanx/Latinx transfer students and their perceptions of their parents’ engagement during their college experience. Participants shared their narratives demonstrating the impact of their parents’ support, which was characterized in the intense form of *by any means* necessary, countering the deficit thinking when it comes to Chicanx/Latinx parents and education. Students shared the immense gratitude and appreciation that they have for their parents’ support and their desire to have their parents feel they belong, based on the support that they have
received. The first-generation moments that they have experienced were tied to how they experience them, with or without their parents, insisting that whether their parents understood or not, they were still a part of navigating the two different worlds of institutional academia and their culture and familia.

Table 2

*High-Impact Practices to Cultivate Chicanx/Latinx Parental Engagement*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core concept</th>
<th>Practices</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Consejos</strong></td>
<td>Precollege parent education programs</td>
<td>• K-20 Commitment Plans with local school district and community college partners</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Parent college visits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Including parents in the first-generation services being provided to the student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Integrating parents in the orientation and beyond orientation services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Parent to Parent support programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unexpressed gratitude and appreciation</td>
<td>First-generation familia</td>
<td>• Parent academies throughout the year, informing parents about FERPA, academic resources, studying habits and faculty connections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unrecognized familia support</td>
<td>Academic support</td>
<td>• Bilingual material and access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familial assets untapped by institutions</td>
<td>Culturally relevant support</td>
<td>• Cultural programming and services, meeting the needs of Chicanx/Latinx parents</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

My Chicanx/Latinx *familia* model of success for first-generation transfers was developed out of this research to demand that institutions of higher education pay attention to the voices of Chicanx/Latinx students and their strong support networks and systems, as well as give voice to assets that these students bring from their collectivist families.
As the researcher, I observed the Chicanx/Latinx students as they shared their stories, and I often witnessed deep emotions and perceived unspoken thoughts and feelings through their difficulty in being able to see that their parents are valued by an institution of higher education. The longing to have them be connected was expressed only to the level of their current experience. That is why the Chicanx/Latinx *familia* model of success for first-generation transfers is important to place into action, to give power to the voice of these students who have shared the impact their parents have had on their success in college.
REFERENCES


Fry, R. (2002). *Latinos in higher education: Many enroll, too few graduate*. Retrieved from Pew Hispanic Center website:


Dissertation


LETTER OF INVITATION

Hello ______,

My name is Lorena Márquez. I am a doctoral student in the Educational Leadership Program at California State University, Fullerton (CSUF) and I am also the Coordinator of the César E. Chávez Center for Higher Education, the Chicano/Latino Resource Center at Cal Poly Pomona. I am conducting a research study that explores the life experiences of Latino students and their perception of their parents’ involvement toward success in higher education.

The primary purposes of my study are to (a) explore the impact of parental involvement on Chicano/Latino students as they pursue their college education and (b) describe the awareness needed by educators and administrators to recognize the role parents play in their students’ educational success. To add to our knowledge, I will gather narratives of college students about ways in which their parents have influenced their college and life goals.

I am a first generation Chicana who works in higher education. My story and the stories of many Latinos are not properly captured in the theory, research, and professional knowledge of individuals in higher education and student affairs. I want to change that. My research aims to make a change—to place value on your narratives to make a positive difference for students in the future. This dissertation is a labor of love. I hope that people in higher education circles will learn from your stories and experiences.

I’m looking for one interview with you on-campus that can range from 45-60 minutes. I will be asking for your permission to audio-record the interview as well as providing your complete confidentiality of your identity and information. Each participant will receive a $20 gift certificate.

The participants for this study must fit in all of the following categories:

- students who identify as Latino
- first generation college students
- grade point average of at least 3.0
- community college transfer students at either Cal Poly Pomona or CSULA
- willing to discuss experiences related to college education, parents’ involvement, and successes

If you are interested in participating in my study, please contact me at Marquez@csu.fullerton.edu. I will send you additional information that outlines the interview process and expectations. If you have any questions, please contact me at (626) 290-4400.
Good luck in your academic endeavors and thank you for participating.

Lorena Márquez
Doctoral Candidate
Cal State University, Fullerton

IRB approval has been obtained from Cal Poly Pomona (IRB 16-74) & Cal State Fullerton (No. HSR-16-0004)
APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Introduction

Thank you for participating in this interview. My name is Lorena Márquez, and I will be facilitating this interview. I am an Ed.D student at California State University, Fullerton. The purpose of this interview is to understand your experiences as it pertains to your parents’ involvement and engagement during your college experiences. As a result of this interview, staff, faculty and future transfer students will have valuable information pertaining to Latino student success and the ways in which parents have influence in their college and life goals.

This dissertation is a labor of love and I hope to gather narratives to describe the awareness needed by educators and administrators to recognize the role parents play in their students’ educational success.

Your identity will be kept confidential during this entire process. I will not disclose your identity, which includes your name and personal characteristics. For your protection, I ask that you do not refer to any classmates or professors by name. This provides you with the opportunity to be honest and candid about your overall experiences during college. All information shared during this interview will be kept confidential and will only be reviewed by me.

At any time if you feel uncomfortable with any of the questions, please feel free to let me know and you are not obligated to respond. I will be audio recording the interview and
will also take handwritten notes. Please feel free to stop me at any time if you have any questions. Do you have any questions about what I just explained?

Great! This is the consent form which has all the information that I just reviewed with you. Please feel to review the form, and sign and date it if you feel comfortable with all the terms involved.

I have created the interview questions in a way for you to be able to be honest and open in answering them. I may have some follow up questions to ensure clarity and accuracy in understanding your responses. Before I begin the interview, I would like to learn more about you. Please share your most memorable childhood experience that relates to your parents!

Thank you for sharing, that’s very helpful to get to know you and your experiences better. Are you ready to begin the interview questions now?

Great, let’s begin! I’m going to start the recorder now.

Today is ____(month/day)__ 2016 and I’m interviewing ____(name)____ here at ____(location)__. 

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What are your parents’ names?

2. How did your parents contribute to your educational success?

   a. How did they contribute to your success in college?

3. Please tell me a story about a time your parents contributed to your success.
4. In what ways did your community college involve your parents? How did your community college take initiative engaging your parents during your educational journey?

5. If they did not, what do you think could have been done to involve them?

6. How did your four year university take initiative engaging your parents during your educational journey?
   a. If they did not, what do you think could have been done to involve them?

7. In what specific ways have your parents supported you?
   a. At home? And how?
   b. At school? And how?
   c. Have your parents visited your campus(es)?
   d. Have they attended any workshops or parent informational sessions? Or any parent orientations?

8. Did your parents understand the differences between community college and a 4 year college?

9. Can you describe your interactions with your parents during your college transfer process?
   a. What parts of the process would you say your parents were most involved in?
b. Did that involvement help you?

c. How?

10. Was their involvement different while you were in community college from when you were in a four year college?

a. How was it different?

b. How do you feel about those differences?

c. Did they attend orientation?

d. Do they know your major or if you've declared a major?

e. Do they offer support with homework or how do they offer support?

11. What was missing when it comes to parent engagement in your college experience?

12. What would you have wished your community college would have provided to better engage your parents?

13. What would you have wished your university would have provided to better engage your parents when you transferred?

14. What valuable information or program would you like to see at college campuses to engage your parents in the process and journey?

15. Is there anything else you think is important to share to add to your narrative and experience in this area?
Closing

Thank you so much for your time and for participating in this interview. If you have any additional questions or concerns later, or if something comes to mind that you wished you shared, please do not hesitate to call or contact me directly. Also, please remember that all of your information will remain confidential. Do you have any questions before we conclude? Thank you for your time.
APPENDIX C

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

My name is Lorena Márquez. I am a graduate student under the direction of Dr. Carol Lundberg at California State University, Fullerton (CSUF) in the doctoral program in Community College Educational Leadership. I am conducting a study on cultivating Latino student success through parental involvement in higher education. The purposes of this study are to (a) explore the impact of parental involvement on Chicano/Latino students in pursuing their college education and (b) help educators and administrators recognize the role parents play in their students’ educational success.

As a community college transfer student attending Cal Poly Pomona or Cal State Los Angeles, you are eligible to participate in this study. You will have the opportunity to answer questions and share information about your higher education experiences and parent and/or family involvement. Please note that your participation will contribute to our knowledge and understanding of the perspectives of transfer students.

Your participation will involve one on-campus face-to-face interview that will take approximately 45 to 60 minutes. The interview will be audio-recorded with your permission. If you choose not to be recorded, I will take notes during the interview. You will receive a $20 gift card at your interview.

During the interview, you do not have to answer any questions that make you uncomfortable. If you choose not to answer, there will be no consequence and you will still remain a part of the study. The only identifiable risk to you as a participant in this study is that you may recall personal and academic obstacles you had to overcome in your college experience.

Research records will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by law. I am the only person who will know your name. The responses you provide will not be connected with your name in any way, as participants will be referred to only by pseudonym (alias). Interview transcripts and other study information will be stored in a locked cabinet and on a password-protected computer. Data will be kept indefinitely for future publication or presentation.

Your participation is voluntary and you are free to withdraw from participation at any time without suffering penalty or loss of benefits or services to which you may otherwise be entitled.

If you have additional questions please contact me at Marquez@csu.fullerton.edu. My dissertation committee chair, Dr. Lundberg, is also available to discuss any issues that may arise from this study. Contact Dr. Lundberg by calling (657) 278-8742 or by emailing to clundberg@fullerton.edu. If you have questions about the rights of human research participants, contact the CSUF Institutional Review Board (IRB) Office at (657) 278-7640 or irb@fullerton.edu. Approved by Cal Poly Pomona IRB Cal Poly IRB-16-74.

I have no conflict of interest relating to this study, financial or otherwise.

Thank you, Lorena Márquez, CSUF Graduate Student
I have carefully read and/or have had the terms used in this consent form and their significance explained to me. By signing below, I agree that I am at least 18 years of age and agree to participate in this project. I have also been given a copy of this form.

________________________________ ______________________________ ________
Printed Name      Signature        Date

I agree to be audio-recorded for the purposes of this research study only.

________________________________ ______________________________ ________
Printed Name     Signature        Date

All California State University employees are mandated reporters under California's Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act ("CANRA"). Whenever a CSU employee, in his/her professional capacity or within the scope of his/her employment, has knowledge of or observes a person under the age of 18 years whom the employee knows, or reasonably suspects, to have been the victim of child abuse or neglect, the employee must report the incident to the appropriate authorities.

Researcher’s Signature______________________________________  Date __________


APPENDIX D

CHICANX/LATINX FAMILIA MODEL OF SUCCESS FOR FIRST-GENERATION TRANSFERS
Chicanx Latinx Parents - Cultural and Familial Capital

Consejos – through cultural, motivational warmth, consejos captured the importance placed by Chican@/Latin@ parents on students’ education.

By any means necessary – parental support through use of cultural capital of parents, unrecognized by institutions of higher education.

Students develop Consciousness

Gratitude and appreciation – student expressed gratitude and appreciation towards their parents’ support and consejos, however, still didn’t understand their own parents’ different types of support.

Parents as partners, sense of belonging – places importance on the collectivistic nature of Chicanx/Latinxs in higher education and responsibility to create belonging with parents, tapping into the cultural and familial capital they hold.

Institutions of Higher Education – Dominant Culture

Institutions of higher education have undervalued, underappreciated and unrecognized the potential to engage first-generation college going familias, student and parent. This model mandates institutions to consider approaches to engage Chicanx/Latinx parents in the college process, policies, and institutionalize methods that value their cultural and familial capital.