

Background

- Role of Latinx families in their adolescent's educational journey is critical for youth's development and achievement in school (Jabbar et al., 2019).
- Familial support is salient to cultivating Latinx students' academic interest and success despite being vulnerable to systemic barriers (Harper et al., 2020; Kiyama, 2010; Kiyama & Rios-Aguilar, 2017).
- **Gap:** Limited scholarship on the engagement of Latinx parents in higher education.

Purpose: As Latinx families experience different challenges (i.e., low SES, language barriers, documentation status), research that examines the varied ways Latinx parents perceive education and model adaptive coping processes to support their adolescents academically is necessary.

Research Questions:

- 1) How do Latinx families perceive higher education?
- 2) In what ways do Latinx families support their adolescent's academic achievement?

Theoretical Frameworks

Funds of Knowledge (Fok): Experiences, knowledge, and resources acquired at home and passed down from family members can be valuable if applied in educational settings (Moll et al., 1992; Velez-Ibanez & Greenberg, 1992).

Phenomenological Ecological Systems Value Theory (PVEST): Integration of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems model, with a specific emphasis on acknowledging the varying ways learning is experienced through cultural contexts and as a phenomenon (i.e., individual's meaning making of experiences; Spencer, 1995; Spencer et al., 1997).

Methodology

- **Site.** Data derived from the *College Academy for Parents (CAP)* program, which is aimed at providing parents with the knowledge and resources to support their children's education to attend college.
- **Participants and Criteria**
 - 20 families residing in Southwest region of US and who had participated in CAP
 - 35 parents/guardians, seven adolescents
 - Most families were Spanish-speaking (70%), identified as Mexican-origin (90%), and resided in a lower working-poor to lower-middle class area
 - Families had at least one adolescent in high school or college
- **Procedure and Analysis**
 - Embedded Case Study Approach (Yin, 2003)
 - Family cluster semi-structured interviews ranging from 30-90 minutes in English and Spanish
 - Analysis
 - A priori codes, axial coding, Dedoose

Context: Southwest region of the U.S.

Case: College Academy for Parents

Unit of Analysis: 20 families

Findings

Preliminary Analysis - Three Broader Themes Emerged:

Theme 1: Parental Socialization in Valuing Education

Parents socialized their children to value education through messages of upward mobility (e.g., obtaining a higher paying job). Specifically, parents drew from their own personal and financial challenges and used them as examples to instill in youth the value of obtaining a college degree.

"Education. We have always told them, 'we cannot leave you a better inheritance than an education. It is essential because if you don't study, all of a sudden you will be working, and it is necessary, in any job, if you have a high school degree, university degree, it is important. If you don't have a degree, the jobs are very low wage."

"There is no doubt about it. And it's mainly because I didn't go to college right after high school, that I know the downfall of that. So, she's definitely going to college after high school..."

Theme 2: Parents Modeling Resourcefulness to Support Youth's Education

Parents modeled resourcefulness in support their youth's education by utilizing their cultural and social assets to mitigate financial hardships. Parents accessed community resources (i.e., teachers, school staff, neighbors, friends) to strategize paying for their adolescent's education (i.e., financial aid, scholarships).

"The fact of looking for scholarships, grants all that, did help us a lot... We lost a little bit of the fear of the word 'college' and became more involved with that, yes. For me it was super important. I did not want my children to be a statistic...I wanted them to have the opportunity, but I knew that college was very expensive...financial means were not going to prevent [her from going to college]."

Theme 3: Parents Cultivating Youth's Self-Efficacy

Youth's self-efficacy was cultivated through their parents. Parents promoted life skills (e.g., cooking, doing their own laundry, problem-solving), which resulted in youth actively finding ways to position themselves for survival (e.g., knowing how to live far away from home) and as self-sufficient.

"And now that she went to college, she goes, 'You know what? I'm so thankful.' And I'm like, 'Why?' She goes, 'Because there are so many of these people that are juniors and seniors in college, and they don't know how to do laundry. They have to keep asking me, 'Can I put this with this?' I've been doing my own laundry since I was a fourth grader.' And they're like, 'Why? Is your mom lazy?' She goes, 'No, my mom's smart. She taught me how to stand up on my own two feet.'"

"We've taught them that in order to succeed they have to be self-motivated. They have to be independent, do it on their own. Because mom's not gonna always be there or do everything for them. You can always get an answer from someone if you ask. If you never ask, you'll never find that answer..."

Discussion & Implications

- Latinx families' meaning making of higher education is positive and a perception they actively transfer to youth.
- Provide educationally enriching environments for youth in multiple ways to mitigate financial hardships.
- Showcase their resiliency through resourcefulness modeling as well as instilling self-efficacy.
- Future studies could incorporate a mixed-methods approach by adding a quantitative and a longitudinal design to gain a more in depth understanding of the role of Latinx families in promoting adaptive coping mechanisms.
- More investment towards culturally responsive programming that builds on Latinx families' cultural and social strengths by tailoring recruitment, curriculum, and relationship-building to the needs of Latinx families.

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