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Eductional Persistence In Latino Male Students Attending University: Their experiences and identity development

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EDUCATIONAL PERSISTENCE IN LATINO MALE STUDENTS ATTENDING UNIVERSITY: THEIR EXPERIENCES AND IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

EDUCATIONAL PERSISTENCE IN LATINO MALE STUDENTS ATTENDING UNIVERSITY: THEIR EXPERIENCES AND IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT

by Michelle A. Swartz

Because Latino male students have lower graduation rates from high school and postsecondary institutions than other demographic groups have, this qualitative research study examined the psychosocial experiences that influence the development of educational persistence. To this end, eight Latino male undergraduate students, who are also low-income and first-generation students at San José State University, participated in semi-structured interviews in which they discussed their identities and school experiences. An analysis of the eight interviews shows how these students made meaning of their education, gender identity, and ethnicity. The constant comparative method for analyzing interview transcripts revealed the following themes: (a) the role of *familismo,* or familism, which is incorporated into Latino values to support education; (b) the role of extracurricular activities; (c) the role of school personnel, specifically teachers and school counselors; and (d) the role of racism when becoming aware of one's Latino identity. Emphasizing the social context of identity development through the lens of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory enables researchers to see an individual's constructed meaning and to identify from which constructs educational persistence became enmeshed in a student's identity.

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Introduction

Latinos are the fastest-growing ethnic minority in the U.S., and Latino students are attending two- and four-year postsecondary colleges and universities at increasing rates thus far in the 21st century (Crisp, Taggart, & Nora, 2015). Although Latino students make up 17% of the people aged 18–22 years in the U.S., only nine percent of Latino students are earning postsecondary degrees; this lower graduation rate is despite the fact that Latinos constitute 25% of community college students and 13% of students at universities (Fry & Lopez, 2012).

Just like the general population of postsecondary degree recipients, Latina female students earn significantly more degrees than their Latino student counterparts; only 38% of all the postsecondary degrees awarded to Hispanics are earned by Latino male students (National Center for Education Statistics, 2010). Although across all ethnicities women earn more postsecondary degrees than men, the gender disparity is much smaller among Asian and white students; 45% of postsecondary degrees awarded to Asians are earned by Asian men, and 42% of postsecondary degrees awarded to whites are earned by white men (National Center for Education Statistics, 2010).

The lower graduation rate of Latino males from postsecondary institutions highlights the need to understand gender differences that affect internalizing educational norms in the Latino population. For institutions and educators, this difference highlights the need to address educational equity.

Background

The largest group of Latinos in the U.S. hails from Mexico; 33 million U.S. citizens self-identify as Mexican (Motel & Patten, 2012). In California, 83% of Latinos are of Mexican descent (Brown & Lopez, 2013). Latinos living in California make up just over one quarter (27.7%) of the total Latino population in the U.S. as well as just over one third (38%) of California's total population, making Latinos the largest ethnic group in the State (Pew Research Center, 2014).

Californian Latinos are economically representative of Latinos at the national level. In the U.S., 55% of Latino families are low income. In California, 54% of Latino families are low income (Povich, Roberts, & Mather, 2014). One reason that Latinos are disproportionately at low-income levels may be because 52% of low-income Latino families have at least one parent without a high school diploma compared to only 16% of white, low-income families. Specifically, "Latino men, in particular, often have low levels of education that limit their access to jobs with decent wages" (Povich, Roberts, & Mather 2014, p. 6).

Low incomes and educational persistence are linked because lack of education keeps people in lower paying jobs (Povich, et al., 2014; Schneider & Yin, 2012), and low-income status positively correlates with lack of educational persistence (Elliott, 2013; Posselt, Jaquette, Bielby & Bastedo, 2012). To end this cycle of low-income status and lack of education, some sort of intervention is required.

San José State University (SJSU) has a student body in which 42% of the students come from low-income families (College Portrait, 2015). Latinos make up 25.7% of the

SJSU undergraduate student body (Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, 2016). Because of these student demographics, SJSU is a relevant place to research the educational persistence of Latino male undergraduate students. The Latino male students attending SJSU are demonstrating effective educational persistence. It would be useful to educators and counselors to know which factors these Latino male undergraduates attribute to their educational success thus far.

Problem Statement

As a consequence of the low graduation and matriculation rates for Latino male undergraduate students, the research question investigated is: how does the internalization of masculinity norms affect the meaning that lower socioeconomic status, Latino males, ages 18–22 years, referred to as emerging adults (Arnett, 2000), ascribe to their education?

Statement of Purpose

The Literature Review discusses psychosocial identity development (Erikson, 1959) applied to career identity (Marcia, 1966), gender, and ethnic identity (Phinney, 1993). Focusing more on the social part of psychosocial identity, there is a review of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (2005) to highlight the role of the environment in identity development. The Literature Review concludes with a discussion of documented educational persistence factors for Latino students as well as a discussion about the effect of gender differences and academic motivation on educational persistence.

To gain a better understanding of how lower socioeconomic status, Latino male students ascribe meaning to their education, eight individual interviews were conducted with Latino male undergraduate students attending SJSU during the Fall 2016 semester. These interview participants were between the ages of 18–20 years and they were all in academic good standing, on track to graduate.

This research study explored and provided an analysis of how these students made meaning of their education, gender identity, and ethnicity, and whether there is a connection in their views and experiences. The information was gathered through semi-structured, one-on-one interviews with each of the eight study participants. A qualitative analysis was done to determine salient themes that emerged as the students talked about their identity and their school experiences.

Research Questions

The following research questions were explored in this study:

1. How does a Latino male student's life story affect his educational persistence?
2. Which established educational persistence factor(s) are most salient to lower socioeconomic status, Latino male students' K–12 experiences?
3. How do class and cultural norms/expectations within a Latino male's identity influence educational persistence?

Definition of Terms

The following definitions are used in this study:

- Educational persistence. Educational persistence is the opposite of dropping out. Educational persistence equates to enrolling in courses each year and all the

behaviors required to stay enrolled and complete a degree (Moreira, Dias, Vaz, & Vaz, 2013).

- Latino/a. Latino/a is a pan-ethnic label that encompasses many cultures and nationalities (Pew Research Center, 2014)). Latinos are people whose family originates in former colonies of Spain, Portugal, and Mexico in the Western Hemisphere and who spoke Spanish or Portuguese as a first language at some time in its generational history (Guardia & Evans, 2008). The term Latino was chosen to describe the ethnicity of people interviewed for this research study because it is the descriptive label preferred by many with this heritage who are living in the U.S., and it excludes people from the Iberian Peninsula with more European ancestry (Avalos, 2013).
- Low income. Low income is a federal classification for a family of four with two children under the age of 18 whose income is less than one and a half times (i.e., 150%) the Federal poverty level. In 2016 An income of less than $36,450 per year rendered a family of this size as low income. Low-income classification varies based on family size and is determined by a family's gross income, not including food stamps or other noncash benefits (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). In this paper, the terms low income and low socioeconomic status are used interchangeably.

Assumption

For the purpose of this study, it was assumed that the participants shared accurate details about their life events.

Limitations

There were two limitations of this study. First participants' perceptions of events might, or might not, match their teachers, peers, and family members' perceptions. Second, although study participants were contacted via either email or text messaging to review interpretations and conclusions drawn from the data to ensure accuracy, none of the students responded to this request for member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Delimitations

The study design specified that participants had to self-identify as Latino, which imposes a delimitation because Latino is a broad term, describing many diverse backgrounds. For instance, some Latinos come from families that have been in California since California was a Spanish colony while other Latinos are themselves undocumented immigrants or have undocumented family members. Latinos live in both urban and rural communities that either are predominantly Latino or ethnically diverse. The multiplicity of demographic Latino factors was not controlled for in this research.

Theoretical Framework

The underlying theoretical perspective of this paper is Erikson's theory of psychosocial development viewed through the lens of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems theory. On the most fundamental level identity is the result of individual dynamic processes, which culminate in an individual ascribing meaning to events, and other people, then comparing those ascribed meanings to oneself and deciding, "I am like this, but not like that" (Erikson, 1994). Connolly's (2002) definition of identity emphasizes how societal differences shape how we see ourselves:

> An identity is established in relation to a series of differences that have become socially recognized. These differences are essential to its being…Identity requires difference in order to be, and converts difference into otherness in order to secure its own self-certainty. (p. 64)

Students, aged 18–22 years try to figure out who they are in the larger context of college and work. Ego identity development comes from within and is based on genetic preferences and one's disposition to interpret meaning for oneself from social stimuli. The meaning derived from social stimuli is determined by comparing oneself and others to a cultural ideal (Bronfenbrenner, 2005; Erikson, 1994).

Consequently, intrapsychic meaning-making occurs in a social context, so that a researcher must look at the context that the individual lives— "no man is an island" (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). Some aspects of identity are derived more from our culture than from our genetics; whether one chooses to garden may be an innate personal intrapsychic choice, but what one chooses to garden, roses or vegetables, depends on one's social context.

Phinney (1993) applied Marcia's (1966) model of career identity commitment to describe ethnic identity development. When Latino students realize that they are Latino and not something else, they each must decide what it means to be Latino for themselves as individuals. We define ourselves, or construct our identities, through our self-perceived interactions with other people.

Listening to the experience of someone else provides the listener with a new perspective and thus new knowledge. As individuals our experiences are varied, even gestating identical twins have different experiences because one is on the mother's left

side and the other is on her right, but as a species, we share a common humanity and the same needs for belonging and purpose.

Significance Statement

The information obtained from this study is useful to those working with low-income, first-generation, and other at-risk populations. Educators, administrators, counselors, and teachers, may be able to use these findings to ensure that the U.S. education system, from the interactions at school to the policies that influence those interactions, is equitable to all students.

Literature Review

Educators must deepen their understanding of lower socioeconomic status, Latino male undergraduates who identify with the masculine gender to help them continue to grow and value education instead of perpetuating practices that make these students feel isolated or threatened. To gain a better understanding of how lower socioeconomic status, Latino male students ascribe meaning to their education, this Literature Review focuses on the factors that influence educational persistence and identity development, that is, how education and ethnicity are internalized into a meaningful part of masculine identities.

The Literature Review first discusses psychosocial identity development theories that apply to all students regardless of ethnicity, focusing on the development of career commitment, because career commitment is a critical aspect of educational persistence. The second section discusses masculine gender identity, specifically examining how masculine gender identity differentiated itself as masculine and masculine perceptions of help-seeking behavior. The third section of this Literature Review looks at Latino ethnic identity development because ethnic perceptions affect one's personal expectations. Finally, the last two sections of this Literature Review analyze educational persistence first through the lens of Latino ethnicity and then through the lens of the masculine gender.

Know Thyself: Identity Development and Career Commitment

People must know who they are—be conscious of their identities—and what they want because this self-knowledge is critical for goal setting and subsequently educational

persistence. Emerging adults, people aged 18–25 years, who have a diffused or confused identity and who consequently do not know what they want regarding a career, are more likely to drop out of college. If emerging adults have a specific goal so that they know why they are giving up free time and going into debt to go to college, their career goal via delayed gratification keeps them going when things inevitably get tough. Studies about educational persistence have found that career decidedness and self-efficacy are positively related to student stick-to-itiveness to graduate from college (Barclay, 2013; Suarez, 2003). If an emerging adult does not have a definite goal, then it is easier to seek instant gratification and spend time working at unskilled jobs to buy clothes or video games. Many people have only a vague idea that a postsecondary education is worth the effort because with a college degree, a person generally can get a higher paying job (Schneider & Yin, 2012). Consequently, when inevitable hurdles arise in college life, such as too much debt, poor grades, etc., the vague notion of someday making more money is not enough to keep emerging adults in school because the immediate negatives outweigh the vaguely understood benefits.

Psychosocial identity development and career commitment. Many emerging adults in college who have no idea about which career to pursue have not resolved Erikson's fifth ego-identity crisis, identity cohesion versus confusion, in adolescence. One reason why many emerging adults have failed to resolve Erikson's fifth ego-identity crisis is that they have failed to successfully resolve earlier ego-identity crises, especially the fourth crisis, industry versus inferiority, in their K–12 education. Failure to resolve earlier ego identity crises decreases the likelihood of resolving later ego-identity crises

successfully (Schultz & Schultz, 2003, p. 215). Consequently, emerging adults may have a lot of identity confusion about their role in college because they have low self-efficacy for academics. "Nearly 60% of first-year college students discover that, despite being fully eligible to attend college, they are not ready for postsecondary studies" (National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education and The Southern…, 2010, p. 1). A significant percentage of emerging adults who do not know what they want to do have not had positive academic experiences; therefore, they are not sure what they actually can accomplish in college. In a longitudinal study that followed adolescents from 10–12th grade, identity confusion was associated with more conflict with parents and peers as well as avoidant behavior (Reis & Youniss, 2004). It follows that if an emerging adult struggled academically, then that emerging adult is less likely to have had positive relationships with educators as well.

Arnett (2000) has proposed a new developmental stage in Erikson's eight psychosocial Life Stages.[1] Between adolescence and young adulthood, Erikson's fifth and sixth ego identity crises, Arnett (2000) describes a distinct stage called "emerging adulthood." Emerging adulthood is characterized by instability because people are often changing jobs, romantic partners, and their majors. It is also characterized by optimism because emerging adults "are likely to believe that regardless of what is happening now,

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[1] Erikson's Psychosocial Development outlined eight ego-identity crises: (1) Trust vs. Mistrust, (2) Autonomy vs. Shame, (3) Initiative vs. Guilt, (4) Industry vs. Inferiority, (5a) Identity Cohesion vs. Confusion, (5b) Arnett's Emerging Adulthood, (6) Intimacy vs. Isolation, (7) Generativity vs. Stagnation, and (8) Integrity vs. Despair.

their lives will get better" (Sharf, 2013, p. 244). They aren't yet bitter people in their geriatric years failing Erikson's final ego-identity crisis, integrity versus despair.

Emerging adulthood is also characterized by feeling "in-between" because emerging adults are not biologically children anymore, but they are not yet culturally adults because someone else is primarily supporting them (Arnett, 2000). Consequently, emerging adulthood may be more of a cultural phase than a biological phase like adolescence. In developing countries, people do not have the luxury of someone else supporting them to go through this phase of instability; in countries like India or Brazil, what people study is more likely to be prescribed by their parents, and if emerging adults are not in university, they are expected to work and get married; there is less choice. Regardless of whether it is cultural or biological, in more developed countries most people go through emerging adulthood, so educators, administrators, and counselors need to be aware of this stage.

Erikson described identity development as a binary state of either having a cohesive identity or being confused about what to do because individuals do not understand who they are. Marcia (1966) explains Erikson's identity development as a continuum by outlining how one goes from identity confusion, or diffusion, to identity cohesion. Individuals possessing identity cohesion have synthesized parts of themselves into an ideal in at least one area of life. Career identity cohesion means that individuals are committed to pursuing a goal as part of their overall identity.

The process one goes through before making any identity commitment and setting a career goal is exploration. While exploring career options, an individual is in a state of

moratorium, which Schwartz, Zamboanga, Wang, and Olthuis (2009) report as being stressful. In this same study, Schwartz et al. found that inventories measuring Marcia's Identity Statuses correlated with Erikson's inventory for measuring Identity Achievement.[2] The only status that did not correlate was Marcia's concept of Identity Foreclosure; consequently, researchers wonder whether a career commitment made without any exploration produces any identity synthesis (Schwartz et al., 2009).

Erikson and Marcia differ on how they view identity confusion, or as Marcia calls it identity diffusion. Marcia recognizes "some degree of identity confusion is adaptive in emerging adults" (Schwartz et al., 2009, p. 152) because this allows for more exploration and flexibility. Erikson described failing to resolve the fifth identity crisis as potentially resulting in attitudes and behavior reflecting "repudiation or fanaticism" (Schultz & Schultz, 2003 p. 222). Marcia described being in a state of identity diffusion as just living in the moment; for example, someone who has a goal (e.g., moving into my own apartment), but does not have a plan to earn rent money is in a state of identity diffusion.

A Narrative Constructivist intervention to foster identity development. To help emerging adults start thinking about their identities, it is useful to question them about their lives—Narrative constructivist therapy. Narrative constructivist theorists believe that people construct their cognitions through the stories they tell themselves about their lives—the past interactions they have had with others. Narrative constructivist therapy conceptualizes Erikson's concept of identity as a "life story" (McAdams & Olson, 2010).

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[2] Marcia–based inventories, the Extended Objective Measure for Ego Status and the Ego Identity Process Questionnaire, correlate with the Erikson Psychosocial Stage Inventory.

Vocational commitment can be equated to "implementing one's self-concept" (Super, 1994), and to know one's self-concept, people must "put their perceptions of themselves into words" (Barclay, 2013, p. 6).

Savickas' Career Story (CSI) helps clients put their self-perceptions into words. The CSI consists of seven questions.[3] The first three questions about childhood (role models, school subjects, and early memories) reflect the Narrative constructivism's emphasis on Adlerian theory, which states that early recollections indicate a person's style of life[4]. Research has found a correlation between early recollections and adult attitudes/behavior (Schlutz & Schlutz, 2003). For example, Hankoff (1987) found that adult criminals had early memories about aggressive interactions with other people and contained more unpleasant events than the recollections of the control group. Because they sometimes correlate with adult behavior/activities, early memories are valid for a career counselor to investigate.

Some emerging adults cannot articulate what they are interested in. Savickas (1998) believes that a way to stimulate a client's interests is to explain how different occupations let the client express their own thoughts by relating themes in the client's story to different occupations. For this reason, Savickas emphasizes the importance of the verbs

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[3] (1) Whom did you admire growing up? Who do you want to pattern your life after? How are you like them? How are you different?
(2) Which magazines and TV shows do you look at regularly? What do you like about them?
(3) Tell me about your favorite book/movie?
(4) What do you do in your free time? What do you like about your hobbies?
(5) Do you have a favorite saying or motto?
(6) What were your favorite/least favorite subjects in school? Why?
(7) Tell me about your earliest memories when you were between age 3–6 yrs.

[4] Adler's Styles of Life: (a) Dominant, (b) Getting, (c) Avoiding, and (d) Socially Useful

that clients use because verbs show how clients act and, therefore, reveal their values. When a counselor relates a client's life stories to occupations via the verbs that the client used, a client may be stimulated to realize an interest, and "the development of an interest can lead to a resolution of career choice issues" (Sharf, 2013, p. 313).

Narrative constructivist therapy relates clients' life stories to possible interests. A client's interests can be assessed with the Strong Interest Inventory, which measures Holland's General Occupational Themes, also known as RIASEC codes[5] (Barclay, 2013). To empirically validate the Narrative constructivist approach, Barclay (2013) hypothesized that narrative answers to the first three questions on the CSI could predict someone's top three Holland general occupational themes; however, no significant positive correlation between the CSI first three questions and someone's RAISEC code was found.

Barclay explained that the low correlation between the first three CSI questions and the RIASEC results was because the CSI interview has to be taken as a whole and important context is lost if the interview is not. Context is critical because any event can have multiple interpretations. An individual's interpretation depends on that person's "triadic reciprocal interaction system"[6] (Bandura, 1986); individualized triadic interactions between (a) the environment, (b) personal factors such as genetics, memories,

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[5] RIASEC codes describe six personality types that correspond to general occupational themes measured by the Strong Interest Inventory. People's first three personality types compromise their RAISEC code. Holland's six personality types are (a) Realistic, (b) Investigative, (c) Artistic, (d) Social, (e) Enterprising, and (f) Conventional.

[6] Triadic interactions in meaning making consist of interactions between (a) the environment; (b) personal characteristics including genetics, preferences, beliefs, and memories; and (c) actual behavior.

beliefs, and perceptions, and (c) actual behavior together produce different interpretations of what something in a life story means to the client.

Masculine Gender Identity

The largest prominent identity differentiator is gender and the subsequent gender norms that individuals subscribe to. Studies have found that women consistently seek help at higher rates than men when they have "comparable emotional problems," regardless of age, ethnicity or social background (Addis & Mahalik, 2003, p. 6). Self-efficacy and its corollary help-seeking behavior are linked to persistence in education.

While at university, men are more likely to be involved in disciplinary situations (Laker, 2013). Perhaps, this in part explains why men drop out at higher rates—they become frustrated with the university system. Men may also be involved in more disciplinary situations because men report higher rates of substance abuse. Men also report more psychosocial problems resulting from substance abuse, but men are less likely to seek help for substance abuse than women are (Addis & Mahalik, 2003; Berger, Addis, Green, Mackowiak & Goldberg, 2012).

Masculine identity differentiated from feminine identity. The most basic reason that men do not seek help as often as women do is their belief that seeking help is not masculine. Gender norms include differences in communication preferences, emotional expressiveness, and help-seeking behavior, and they impact one's overall sense of well-being because the better one feels the better one functions.

Researchers have theorized that what is perceived to be masculine or feminine behavior is really just an attempt to differentiate oneself from the opposite sex (Dubois &

Marino, 1987; Sax, 2005). Hence “men don’t ask for directions” because women do; it’s not masculine to spend a lot of time studying because that’s what girls do. The context in which one distinguishes his masculine gender identity is key, and feminine gender norms provide the bulk of the context.

Communication preferences. Men and boys spend more time working side-by-side on some type of group activity, for example, fixing something or barbecuing, while women spend more time in one-on-one, “dyadic interaction” (Kiselica & Englar-Carlson, 2010). However, men also enjoy the more expressive verbal communication that happens in one-on-one situations, reporting that communicating with another man one on one is easier than communicating in a group (Davis, 2002). Davis’s (2002) research also supported the side-by-side masculine communication preference that Kiselica and Englar-Carlson (2010) reported. When male college students talked about their relationships and verbal sharing, they always did so in the context of an activity where they were in a “side by side as opposed to face-to-face manner” (Davis, 2002, p. 515). Examples that Davis (2002) cited of side-by-side activities where male bonding occurred were on road trips with the driver and passenger in the front seat talking while looking at the road ahead and playing video games, both looking at the screen. Men sit side by side at a bar; women face each other at a café table.

Men and women’s paralinguistics also differ; normal eye contact reduces self-disclosure in men whereas avoiding eye contact reduces self-disclosure in women (Siegman & Reynolds, 1983). This is important to remember because self-disclosure is initially one of the things that educators want students to do. However, “Reduced visual

feedback is also associated with information [cognitive] processing [in both males and females]" (Siegman & Reynolds, 1983, p. 453).

Emotional expressiveness. Many researchers have posited that men view their identity through the lens autonomy—how autonomous a man perceives himself to be—and women view their identity through the lens of connection—the quantity and quality of her relationships (Carlson, 1987; Sax, 2005). Identifying one's self through connectedness or autonomy starts at a very early age in the mother-child relationship. Mothers see their daughters as like themselves, and their relationship remains physically and emotionally close whereas sons are perceived as different; consequently, when boys are around age six, the mother (or the boy himself becoming aware of societal norms) pushes the son away physically and emotionally (Carlson, 1987). Because men are not socialized to deal with emotions, they often are emotionally unavailable to help children work through emotions; specifically, "Men stimulate little boys to anger by sparring physically or verbally with them, then redirect their anger into [generalized or displaced] aggression by refusing to let it be expressed directly at themselves by punishing it if that occurs" (Carlson, 1987, p. 41). Punishment does not help a person recognize or label his/her emotions.

If people are not allowed to express their emotions directly, they will internalize the need for emotional control, and that makes it harder for people to admit when they have a problem. Thus, men's gender identity may become threatened by intimate self-disclosure, because self-disclosure may show some vulnerable trait and thus mean they are not self-reliant (Carlson, 1987; Heppner & Gonzales, 1987).

The need for self-reliance and subsequently emotional control can become so great that some people cannot label their emotions as they inevitably occur, and thus cannot express them. Heppner and Gonzales (1987) describe a counseling session when a man recalled the sorrow he felt after killing a gopher for the first time and seeing its "lifeless, bloody body"; his male companion at the time seeing his emotional distress told him, "just don't think about it." If this is the way males are expected/taught to deal with emotions, it is not surprising that sometimes men suppress their feelings "beyond the point of consciousness" (Heppner & Gonzales, 1987). Seeking help involves talking about one's emotions and admitting that one has a problem. These are not activities that masculine gender socialization encourages.

Perceptions of help seeking. But, men (and women who have internalized at least a few masculine gender norms) sometimes do seek help. Addis and Mahalik (2003) describe two criteria, that if met, increase the likelihood of seeking help: (a) if the problem is viewed as a normal, that is, a problem that a significant percentage of people have; and (b) if there is an opportunity to reciprocate—to pay back the person who helps.

Someone with internalized masculine gender norms will not seek help if the problem is "ego central", that is, affecting one's identity, for example, a "smart" person failing a class, or people believing they will lose status or control by asking for help (Addis & Mahalik, 2003). African-American men are less likely to seek help if told to do so by their doctors and more likely to ask for help if asked to do so by their spouse (Berger et al., 2012). W.A.S.P. men are the opposite—they are less apt to seek help if encouraged to do so by a romantic partner and more likely to seek counseling if encouraged by another

professional (Addis & Mahalik, 2003). Both white and African-American men are reluctant to seek help because they are afraid of losing their autonomy, but to whom they are concerned about giving up control differs by culture.

Men strongly adhering to masculine gender identity will think they will lose status if they do something "feminine." Accordingly, Addis and Mahalik (2003) report that males who held more strongly to their masculine gender identity "preferred a counseling brochure describing self-help, competence and achievement" over one describing expressions of personal feelings (p. 9).

Quinn and Chan (2009) surveyed 1,000 students, aged 13–15 years, to see what their preferences for counseling were. A majority of students (52.2%) preferred to see a female counselor. The preference for a female counselor was stronger in girls (62.3%), but over a third of the males (37.7%) also said they preferred to see a female counselor. Surveyed students who reported preferring a male counselor equaled 7.2%, with males (10%) showing a stronger preference for a male counselor than females (4%). The remaining 40.6% of the students surveyed said they would see either a male or a female counselor. Other peer-reviewed studies have found similar gender preferences among students (Quinn & Chan, 2009). Heppner and Gonzales (1987) explain the male preference for a female counselor as follows:

> It is not uncommon for male clients to seek female therapists because men perceive women as more nurturing. Male clients working with male therapists may feel ashamed and embarrassed, and be hesitant to disclose their inner world, especially their insecurities and doubts to another man. (p. 31)

Chan and Quinn (2012) asked a different sample of students with the same demographics why they would not seek counseling. The main reason students would not seek out counseling was that they were concerned about confidentiality. They were most concerned that teachers would find out that they were seeking counseling, followed by family members, and finally friends who might tease them about seeing a counselor. The second most reported reason that students would not seek help from a school counselor was that they would rather talk to someone they knew, and students reported that they did not want to talk to a stranger that is, the counselor. Chan and Quinn (2012) did find a significant gender difference in secondary reasons students avoid counseling. Females reported it would be more helpful to talk to a peer, thus supporting the feminine gender identity component of connectedness. Males reported that "it is weak to need counseling," thus supporting the masculine gender identity of autonomy.

But, what do men and women think about counseling when they actually do seek it? A cross-cultural study of university students in Ireland and Georgia found that females on both sides of the Atlantic found counseling to be more "potent", i.e., helpful, than males did (O'Leary, Page, & Kaczmarek, 2000). This study also found that overall the Irish students viewed counseling as more potent than the American students. Previous studies have found that American students viewed counseling as more potent than Chinese and Thai students (O'Leary et al., 2000). O'Leary et al. attributed the differences between genders and between ethnicities to emotional expressiveness; the Irish are more emotionally expressive than Americans, American culture is more emotionally expressive

than Asian cultures, and women are more emotionally expressive than men (O'Leary et al., 2000).

The conclusion that emotional expressiveness in the counseling session creates a perception of counseling's potency naturally leads to the question about what type of therapy is most helpful for women and men. Owen, Wong, and Rodolfa (2010) found that clients who identified with the traditional masculine gender norms of self-reliance and emotional control (regardless of sex) reported more potency in counseling when the therapist used a client-centered, relational therapeutic approach. This is possibly because "clients perceived therapists' actions that encouraged their conformity of masculine norms as helpful in therapy" (Owen et al., 2010, p. 75).

Ethnicity: Latino Identity Development

Narrowing down identity to further describe an individual, the next major differentiating category after gender is ethnicity. Ethnicity can be defined as "the distinguishing differences" between groups of people that result from national, geographical, or cultural characteristics such as language, food, behavioral norms, and religion (Phinney, 1993). Forming an ethnic identity results from seeing oneself as a part of an ethnic group (Torres, 2003). It is important to consider ethnic identity when working with diverse student populations because positive ethnic identities have been linked to greater self-esteem and more satisfaction with relationships and social networks, such as school (Alvarado & Ricard, 2013; Wiley, Lawrence, Figueroa, & Percontino, 2013). When developmental assets were removed from the quantitative analysis, positive

ethnic identity was second only to the variable of having an "overall purpose" in predicting a student's overall success (Alvarado & Ricard, 2013).

Individuals who have a positive ethnic identity, handle negative stereotypes and prejudice more effectively than individuals with less positive ethnic identities who are experiencing "acculturative stress" due to learning new cultural mores, and possibly a new language (Alvarado & Ricard, 2013). During adolescence, acculturative stress in school has been linked to poorer academic performance and less pro-social behavior (Alvarado & Ricard, 2013) while acculturative stress in Mexican American college students has been linked to more depression and anxiety (Crockett, Iturbide, Torres Stone, McGinley, Raffaelli, & Carlo, 2007).

Theoretical frameworks for Latino identity development. Like one's individualized identity development, one's ethnic identity development has been described as a series of three consecutive psychosocial stages: (1) unexamined identity, (2) ethnic identity moratorium in which a situation creates enough cognitive dissonance that an individual starts to search for an individualized ethnic identity, and (3) ethnic identity achievement, that is, having a "clear, confident sense of one's identity" (Phinney, 1993). Phinney's construct of ethnic identity development mirrors Marcia's (1966) stages of identity development as applied to career commitment and was validated with many different groups of ethnic students (Phinney, 1993; Torres, 1999, 2003). Torres (2003) used Phinney's Psychosocial Ethnic Identity framework (1993) in a longitudinal qualitative study with Latino college students and found that as students passed through

Phinney's stage of constructing an individualized ethnic identity, their cognitive and interpersonal ways of thinking were enhanced.

Although a psychosocial framework of ethnic identity development has been useful to highlight intrapsychic meaning-making that individuals extrapolate, the Ecological Systems model emphasizes how meaning making is an ongoing process throughout the individual's lifetime and highlights the role of the environment. Highlighting an individual's environment is critical because it allows non-Latinos insight into the issues and experiences from which Latino students derive personal meanings about their identities (Torres, 2003). Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory of Human Development consists of five levels,[7] or systems, to describe the different types of interactions between an individual and his/her environment. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems can be used as categories to classify dissonance that individuals often experience during an identity moratorium. This classification process is what Torres (2003) refers to as "situating identity."

Types of dissonance prompting an identity moratorium. There are two predominant sources of dissonance amongst Latino college students, which may prompt

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[7] Bronfenbrenner's five Ecological Systems:
(1) Microsystem: face-to-face interactions (e.g., family, school, neighborhood).
(2) Mesosystem: a system of microsystems and the languages used therein, such as school and family interactions (e.g., parent-teacher conferences where at home Spanish may be spoken, but in school English is used and in the neighborhood Spanglish, Spanish-English code switching (Martínez, 2010).
(3) Exosystem: the settings that influence an individual's development (e.g., school funding, immigration status).
(4) Macrosystem: the subculture replete with its belief systems, life course options, resources and patterns of communication (e.g., gender).
(5) Chronosystem: past events.

them to explore their ethnic identity: (1) discrimination based on ethnicity and (2) lack of community (Classic and Contemporary Theories of Latino Identity Development, 2013).

Racism that creates enough cognitive dissonance to generate an identity moratorium usually occurs in a microsystem, and in the U.S. for most people that discrimination, albeit in a form of microaggression, is first perceived at school although perhaps not until college (Ortiz & Santos, 2009; Torres, 2003). Learning to deal effectively with discrimination is critical because discriminatory encounters generate stress that can distract students from achieving other goals (Ortiz & Santos, 2009).

In addition to the potential for ethnic discrimination, attending college is often the first time that Latino students experience a lack of community because they are separated due to either lack of time or great distance from *familismo*, a Latino term for the cultural value of closeness, loyalty, and mutual support of one's nuclear family, extended family and kinship networks (Ayón, Marsiglia, & Bermudez-Parsai, 2010). *Familismo* is considered by researchers to be a protective factor for Latinos; for example, the degree to which a person identifies with *familismo* has been linked to lower levels of substance use (Gil, Wagner & Vega, 2000). The fear of distancing oneself from one's *familismo* as a reference group can cause added anxiety about the prospect of adjusting to college (Torres, 2003).

Educational Persistence Factors: Latino Students

Since the modern era, education in Western civilization has been the primary culturally accepted way for individuals in less restrictive stratified societies to pursue social mobility and culturally perceived positive life outcomes. In a systematic review of

63 published research studies, both qualitative and quantitative, focusing on Latino students and educational persistence in both K–12 and higher educational settings, Crisp, Taggart, and Nora (2015, p. 255) identified nine factors that influence Latino undergraduate academic outcomes: (a) sociocultural characteristics, (b) academic self-confidence and coping strategies, (c) K–12 academic experiences, (d) ethnic identity development, (e) college experiences, (f) internal motivation, (g) interactions with supportive individuals, (h) perception of university environment, and (i) the type of postsecondary institution (i.e., two-year colleges versus four-year colleges).

As with other ethnic groups in the U.S., the biggest sociocultural variable for academic persistence was gender. Latinas have more positive academic outcomes than Latinos (Crisp et al., 2015). The only explanation for the Latino/a gender differences in educational persistence that Crisp et al. (2015) could find in their review was from a 1995 study (i.e., Lopez, 1995) in which Latino male students were found to experience more conflict about education because of expectations about financial responsibilities at home and more discrimination from financial-aid staffers than their Latina student peers; however, Latina female students reported more conflict with family members about continuing their education. Despite these gender differences in cultural conflict about one's education, the disparity based on gender between postsecondary degrees earned is greater for Latino students than it is for white and Asian students. White women receive only 56% of the degrees awarded to all Whites whereas Latinas received 61% of the postsecondary degrees awarded to all Hispanic students; American Indians and Native Alaskans also had the same gender disparity for postsecondary degrees awarded as

Hispanic students, but the gender disparity for black students was greater—only 34% of postsecondary degrees awarded to blacks are earned by black male students (National Center for Education Statistics, 2010). Significantly for this thesis, Crisp et al. (2015, p. 255) found no qualitative studies that looked at masculine gender identities to explain the gender differences in educational persistency for Latino students.

The second most influential sociocultural variable that correlated with educational persistence was the educational level that a student's parents attained (Crisp et al., 2015). This positive correlation between one's parents' education and one's own educational persistence is true across cultures worldwide, and amongst different Latino cultures. In the U.S., 32% of students from Columbian and Peruvian families earn postsecondary degrees whereas only 17% of students from Salvadoran and Mexicans families earn postsecondary degrees (Motel & Patten, 2012). These differences are largely because Peruvians and Columbians living in the U.S. are not the first generation of college students in their families.

Parental education also positively correlated with Latino students' GPAs (Crisp & Nora, 2010). This correlation, at least in part, is because higher levels of education positively correlate with higher income levels (Schneider & Yin, 2012), and higher income levels correlate with educational persistence. Grade point averages (GPAs) also positively correlate with academic self-confidence. Academic self-confidence describes students' perceptions of how they viewed the world (positively or negatively) and their perceived level of academic self-efficacy (Crisp et al., 2015).

A lack of academic self-confidence often accompanies "stereotype vulnerability—unusually self-conscious of teachers and expressing reservations about academic abilities" (Crisp et al, 2015, p. 256). Stereotype vulnerability has been linked to a greater probability of course failure (Massey, Charles, Lundy & Fischer, 2011). A student's coping style as well as a student's self-perceptions together influence academic self-confidence. Consequently, Crisp et al. found in their 2015 literature review that coping style correlated with educational persistence. Specifically, positive reinterpretations, which focused on personal growth, and students' planning skills, were positively correlated with educational persistence. Alcohol and drug use were negatively correlated with educational persistence.

Both academic self-confidence and healthy coping style are cross-culture factors, not unique to Latino students. Precollege academic experiences are another cross-cultural factor that affects educational persistence. Latino students who did well academically in high school were more likely to do well in college regardless of whether one was a first-generation student, or attending a two- or four-year institution (Fischer, 2007), but performance on college entrance exams, such as the SAT and ACT, did not predict educational success (Bordes-Edgar, Arredondo, Kurpius, & Rund, 2011). There was one factor that was predictive for Latino male students; high school success in math and science correlated positively with college GPAs (Strayhorn, 2010).

Ethnic identity is a culturally unique factor, but even this has a cross-cultural aspect because a person has to feel good about one's ethnicity to believe in one's own self-efficacy. For Latino students with low socioeconomic status, a positive ethnic identity has

been found to be a protective factor, predictive of better grades for Latino students (Ong, Phinney & Dennis, 2006), and for first-generation Latino students, a positive ethnic identity was linked to educational persistence (Castillo, Conoley, Choi-Pearson, Archuleta, Phoummarath, & Van Landingham, 2006). In Alvarado and Ricard's (2013) quantitative study about what predicts Latino adolescents' ability to thrive, a strong ethnic identity was the second most significant factor.

The most significant factor of the nine factors identified by Crisp et al., (2015) for predicting educational persistence for Latino students was internal motivation, which mitigated the other sociocultural variables (Alvarado & Ricard, 2013; Crisp et al., 2015). To measure internal motivation for academics, Próspero, Russell, and Vohra-Gupta (2012) used the Academic Motivation Scale, and they found that first-generation Latino students' internal motivation strongly correlated with their GPAs. Career commitment has also been used to measure internal motivation and correlates positively with transferring from a two-year college to a four-year college (Suarez, 2003). Another measure of internal motivation is asking students how strongly they identified with the statement "college is right for me" (Torres, 2006).

The way Latino students experience college plays a significant role in whether they feel that "college is right for them." Attending a selective four-year institution and living in the dorms is a very different college experience from living at home, working, and attending a two-year institution part time. Taking a gap year for financial reasons between high school and college or attending a two-year college were negatively correlated with educational persistence (Crisp et al., 2015). Another aspect of the college

experience that is different for Latino college students than for many students in the majority culture is that at least 40% of Latino freshmen take remedial classes (Aud, Fox & KewalRamani, 2010). The research findings are unclear about how taking remedial classes affects education persistence; Crisp and Nora (2010) found that taking remedial classes at a two-year community college positively correlated with Latino students' education persistence while Alfonso (2006) found the opposite to be true.

However, the most significant aspect of one's college experience that correlated with educational persistence was whether Latino students had to work; not working was predictive of better academic outcomes. Accordingly, the amount of financial aid a student received was predictive of academic persistence so that if Latino students received enough financial aid to attend college full time, they were more likely to graduate (Crisp & Nora, 2010; Gross, 2011). Not working and simply being a full-time student increases internal motivation to do well in school and earn a degree in two ways. First, not working correlates with higher GPAs (Crisp & Nora, 2010) because students do not have to juggle work and school schedules (Arana, Castañeda-Sound, Blanchard, & Aguilar, 2011). Second, not working also allowed Latino students to potentially have time to become emotionally connected with their academic institution by participating in extracurricular campus activities (e.g., fraternities, political organization, intramural sports) with the result that Latino students strongly agreed with the statement that "College is right for me" (Torres, 2006).

Identifying with the statement "college is right for me" is dependent on many factors, not just participation in extracurricular activities. In keeping with Bronfenbrenner's

Ecological Systems Theory, the direct interactions at the postsecondary institution, which students with different ethnic identities have, influence these students' internal motivation to persist in their education. Support from friends and mentoring relationships with professors at the microsystem level in Ecological Systems Theory correlated positively with Latino students feeling that "College is right for me." (Bordes-Edgar, Arredondo, Kurpius & Rund, 2011; Fischer, 2007; Gross, 2011).

Although all students regardless of ethnic identity need supportive relationships at their college or university, one specific ethnic finding was that Latino students at a primarily white institution who joined a Latino community on campus coped more effectively with the college environment and consequently wanted to stay in school (Crisp et al., 2015). Also, the interactions within a Latino student's many microsystems differ by gender. Latino male students report more negative interactions with financial aid staff while Latina students report less support from their families with regard to earning a college degree (Crisp et al, 2015).

Extending Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory from the personal interactions that comprise the various collegiate microsystem to the academic institution's mesosystem shows how students often ascribe meaning to their education. What happens in students' microsystems affects how a student feels about the education mesoystem, and student perceptions of the campus affect educational persistence. In a national sample of Latino students, those who had positive perceptions of their college/university and its racial climate, as measured by the University Environment Scales, which assesses minority students' feeling of belonging on campus, were more

likely to stay in school and earn a degree (Gloria, Castellanos, Lopez, & Rosales, 2005; Museus, Nichols & Lambert, 2008). In conjunction with this finding, qualitative research has also found the converse effect to be true; negative perception of a school's racial climate negatively correlates with school persistence (Fischer, 2007).

Educational Persistence: The Gender Divide

Of the nine factors listed in the previous section, "Educational Persistence Factors: Latino Students", three of the variables correlate with educational persistence, independent of ethnicity: (a) educational level that a student's parents attained, (b) socioeconomic status, and (c) gender (Crisp et al, 2015). If a student's parents are college graduates, it is more likely that the student will persist in his/her education (Motel & Patten, 2012). If a student has a higher socioeconomic status, so that there is no urgent necessity for the student to work, it is more likely that the student will persist in his/her education (Elliott. 2013; Posselt et al. 2012; Schneider & Yin, 2012). But the strongest predictor of educational persistence is gender—if a student is a girl, it is more likely that she will persist in her education (Crisp et al., 2015; National Center for Education Statistics, 2010; Sax, 2005)

The reason that males with masculine gender identities have less educational persistence than females is not because of less cognitive ability (Huyge, Van Maele, & Van Houtte, 2015). There is no gender difference on I.Q. tests (Neisser et al., 1996). Boys score higher on the SAT, ACT, and AP high school exams than girls do, and the difference between boys' and girls' scores is greater when the test is more complex (American Association of University Women…, 1998). Despite outperforming girls on

complex standardized tests, boys have lower GPAs than girls do (Duckworth & Seligman, 2006; Huyge et al., 2015).

This male-student dichotomy between cognitive ability as measured on high-level standardized tests and grades has been theorized to result from motivational differences between the genders. Internal motivation was the one educational persistence factor of the nine for Latino students that had the most mitigating effect on sociocultural variables, like gender and low socioeconomic status (Alvarado & Ricard, 2013; Crisp et al., 2015). The surface assumption is the cliché "if you really want it [a college education], you will get it." Primary and secondary schoolteachers report that girls are more motivated than boys are, meaning that girls focus more intently on what the teacher is saying and complete more assignments (Duckworth, Shulman, Mastronarde, Patrick, Zhang, & Druckman, 2015). This leads to the assumption that girls just are more motivated and want an education/college degree more than boys do.

Theoretical model for motivation: the stages of change. Motivation does not only involve the strength of a wish, although that is the first step. Once a person decides that they really want something, they need to be able to plan and strategize about which behaviors they need to realize the goal. Psychologists now hypothesize that changing behavior occurs in a series of four intrapsychic stages. The Stages of Change that a person goes through when making a change consist of: (1) Precontemplation, when people are not motivated to work at all towards a goal; (2) Contemplation, when people are thinking about changing their behavior; (3) Preparation, when people make plans to change their behavior; and (4) Action, when people change their behavior as part of

working towards a goal (Diclemente & Velazquez, 2002). Teachers only see students' behavior when it is in the Action stage; they do not see the intrapsychic Contemplation and Preparation stages leading up to the Action stage, so they assume that students who are not actively working towards a goal are simply in the Precontemplation stage and are not motivated enough to plan, or anticipate, a change.

For someone to get to the Action Stage of working towards a goal, a person must determine the goal to be desirable and achievable (Diclemente & Velazquez, 2002; Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). So, the motivation for educational persistence is in part linked to one of the nine educational persistence factors identified by Crisp et al., (2015): academic self-confidence ("Yes, I can do this!"). It is logical to hypothesize that boys have less motivation to do well in school because they have less academic self-confidence so that the goal of education seems unattainable. But Huang (2013) in conducting a meta-analysis on the findings of 76 research studies about students' academic self-confidence found that boys had more academic self-confidence than girls and the difference between boys' and girls' academic self-confidence increases with age. Boys believe they are capable of doing well in academics. To assess the other dimension of motivation—whether a goal is desirable, Duckworth et al. (2015) gave 164 eighth graders an inventory that measured their level of intrinsic interest in academic subjects and whether they felt that what they were learning was useful. There was no gender difference in attitudes about academics, both boys and girls showed the same level of enthusiasm for academic material.

Although boys appear to have the same intrapsychic motivation as girls for academics and the same cognitive abilities, they do not act on their motivation as well. Girls participate more in class and spend more time completing assignments than boys do (Willingham, Pollack, & Lewis, 2002), and this difference results in higher GPAs for girls. Researchers have investigated at least two possible explanations to explain gender differences in academic effort, specifically, paying attention in class and completing assignments successfully.

Motivated but lacking self-control. To explain why boys are outperformed by girls in school, even though they find academics to be just as interesting and useful as girls do and are confident about their academic abilities, Duckworth and Seligman (2006) proposed that self-control was the mediating factor for students' grades—girls earn higher GPAs because they have more self-control than boys have. Self-control was defined as "the ability to suppress proponent responses in the service of a higher goal when such a choice is not automatic but rather requires conscious effort" (Duckworth & Seligman, 2006, p. 199).

Whether the test instrument was self-report ratings, teacher/parent ratings or performance tasks, girls have been found to have more self-discipline than boys throughout adolescence (Duckworth et al., 2015). Furthermore, Kling, Noftle, and Robins (2012) found that greater conscientiousness on the part of women was the mediating variable between women's lower SAT scores and their higher G.P.As. Whether gender differences in self-control continue into adulthood is unknown. Silverman (2003) performed a meta-analysis of 33 studies and found that women had only slightly more

self-control than men, but Tangney, Baumeister, and Boone (2004) found no gender difference in self-control even though they did find that greater self-control correlated with higher GPAs. If it is not lack of motivation but rather lack of self-control that causes boys' inattention in class and poor assignment completion, then Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) interventions such as daily scheduling and strategizing about how to handle setbacks would be particularly helpful to boys.

In 2006, Duckworth and Seligman performed another longitudinal investigation with 198 eighth graders to see if self-discipline, gender, and GPA were connected. Parents and teachers rated each student's self-control, and students rated their own self-discipline. The boys reported that the girls had more self-discipline than they did, foreshadowing the study's conclusion that gender predicted self-control, and self-control predicted overall G.P.A. (Duckworth & Seligman, 2006, p. 202). Duckworth replicated the initial 2006 study in 2015 with the same results: "What boys lack, relative to girls of comparative intelligence, is self-control." (Duckworth, Shulman, Mastronarde, Patrick, Zhang, & Druckman, p. 21).

Unmotivated: school is not the right environmental fit for boys. Another possible reason that boys are outperformed by girls in school is that the culture of school does not match the nature of what it means to be masculine. Crisp et al., (2015) found that perceptions of the university environment and K–12 experiences influence educational persistence. Boys do feel less accepted and supported at school than girls do (Huyge et al., 2015; Wang, Willett, & Eccles, 2011) because, regardless of whether it is in a K–12 or postsecondary setting, boys are more disruptive and experience more disciplinary

actions (Laker, 2013; Vansteenkiste, Sierens, Soenens, Luyckx, & Lens, 2009). Disciplinary sanctions do not promote feelings of belonging, and feeling alienated in a setting decreases motivation to be in that setting.

Consequently, the question for educators is why are boys more disruptive in class and fail to complete as many assignments successfully than girls do? According to a Social constructivist view of masculine gender identity theory, boys act differently in school than girls do to "differentiate" themselves from the girls (Dubois & Marino, 1987; Sax, 2005). Because girls listen and spend time completing assignments, boys don't, so that they will not be seen as being feminine. Because most teachers are female in the K–12 grades, boys view school as feminine (Martino, 2008). Consequently, high grades enhance girls' popularity but not boys' popularity (Jackson, 2002).

However, the process of differentiating oneself to be closer to a socially constructed ideal of masculinity, or femininity, is fluid, constantly being reinforced or overridden by social interactions. Social constructivism uses Ecological System models to account for the environmental impact on one's identity. School culture refers to the shared assumptions and beliefs among students in a school (Huyge et al., 2015). Especially because the desire for peer approval increases during adolescence, a school's culture can have an aggregate effect on how students see themselves (Bronfenbrenner, 2005).

Huyge et al. (2015) hypothesized that students who held more traditional gender role ideologies would feel less connected to their schools than those students with more gender-neutral ideologies. In keeping with the Ecological Systems Theory, Huyge et al. (2015) also hypothesized that students who went to schools with a more "macho" school

culture—more traditional gender norm expectations—would feel less connected to their schools than students who went to schools with more gender-neutral cultures. Huyge et al. (2015) surveyed adolescents and principals at 59 middle schools, and both hypotheses proved to be valid. Also, girls felt more connected to their schools than boys did, but this could be because more boys held traditional gender role ideologies than girls.

Summary

This Literature Review described current theories about identity development and educational persistence that are predicted to apply to lower socioeconomic status, Latino male students. To gain a better understanding of how these students internalize masculinity norms, which affect the meaning that they ascribe to their education, eight lower socioeconomic status, Latino male undergraduate students were interviewed at San José State University.

Methodology

The purpose of this study was to provide an analysis of how lower socioeconomic status, Latino male students internalize education into a meaningful part of their masculine identities by uncovering the salient factors that Latino male students themselves perceive as being critical to their education persistence, specifically staying in school as opposed to dropping out. Information was gathered through semi-structured, one-on-one interviews with each of the eight study participants. A qualitative analysis has been done to determine salient themes that emerged as the students talked about their identity and their school experiences.

Qualitative Research: Phenomenological Social Constructivism

Social constructivism strives to understand how individuals make meaning from the social contexts in which they live. Based on the work of Piaget (1954), Social constructivists posit that knowledge in and of itself cannot generate a representation of an independent reality, but rather that knowledge is rooted in the perspective of the knower. Consequently, one's identity development is the result of social learning, or constructivism, and one's own interpreted meaning, that is, phenomenology.

Qualitative research via an interview can produce a depth of understanding about a topic or experience that shows how the interviewees view themselves and others, showing how an individual makes meaning (Davis, 2002). The interview relies on phenomenology to explicitly draw out a new perspective through social interactions (Davis, 2002). Phenomenology views experience from the perspective of the individual, and in so doing tries to understand how that individual interprets meaning.

To ensure that researchers' findings are transferable to other individuals with the same demographics, the context of the interviews is described for the reviewers employing "thick descriptions" (Patton, 1990) about interviewees' characteristics and direct verbatim quotes. Open-ended questioning during an interview reduces the predetermined responses and, by extension, researcher interpretations when gathering data (Patton, 1990, p. 295).

To avoid being anecdotal, qualitative research relies on hermeneutics, the science of interpretation. Through introspection, hermeneutic phenomenology brings "explicitness out of implicitness to unveil the essence of the lived experience of the few, which [then] allows for insight into the possible lived experience of others" (van Manen, 1990, p. 316). Therefore, to understand something, researchers must be aware of their own perspectives and be willing to take on new perspectives. By emphasizing the social context of identity development, which educators can influence (i.e., school is a social place), an interview allows a researcher to examine an individual's constructed meaning of "person, events, organizations, feelings, and motivations" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 268).

Positionality: "Any Oppression, Any Injustice, Any Hatred is a Wedge Designed to Attack Civilization" (Roosevelt, F. D., 1940)

In the United States, studies about ethnicity are often carried out by researchers who have an ethnic affiliation with the group they are studying. I am an older white, woman of Northern European descent researching Latino male undergraduate students. Demographically we are different, so questions arise about how my identity will influence my interactions with participants during interviews, and as I analyze the

provided information in an accurate and sensitive way that preserves participants' intended meaning.

Because of the Constructivist orientation of this research, determining how my identity affected the interviews and data analysis is not readily obvious. However, in the Results section of this study, the students described events that for the most part were congruous one to another, so it can be inferred that our demographic differences did not constrain the credibility of the information I collected.

The personal lens through which I analyzed the information provided by the interview participants is ideologically egalitarian because of my Judea-Christian upbringing. From this upbringing, I value all individuals and their freedom of choice. Although raised as a *sola-scriptura* protestant, I converted to Roman Catholicism because of its emphasis on social justice to promote political, racial, and economic egalitarianism. It is because I value individuals that I decided to talk to people individually instead of giving a group a quantifiable survey.

With this project, I sought to better understand the experiences of people who are demographically different from myself, and for this reason, it is incumbent that I, as a person who wants to change the status quo, do the following two things. First, because I grew up in the dominant white U.S. culture, I must acknowledge that I have benefited by internalizing values that white U.S. culture expects to be shared universally. White America does not question its dominance or assumptions; therefore, I also have been acculturated to view other cultures through a prescriptive lens (Delpit, 1988). As a qualitative researcher, I have to be very aware of my tendency to be prescriptive, so I do

not assume that my way of doing things is the healthiest way. Second, as a member of a culture that values individualism, I must actively practice Scholte's Six Transcultural Principles[8] when reflecting on what the students tell me. Hearing how collectivist cultural values have positively affected the students I interviewed has been enlightening.

Procedures

Individual interviews were held with eight SJSU undergraduate, Latino male students in staff offices on campus. Interviews on average lasted an hour. The shortest interview was 48 minutes. The longest interview was one hour and 17 minutes. Participants were emailed a consent form (see Appendix A) before the interview, which was discussed and signed with me before the interview began. At the conclusion of every interview, participants were given a list of counseling resources (Appendix B).

To ensure confidentiality, each participant specified a pseudonym, and these pseudonyms were used throughout this study in field notes and transcriptions. Institutional review board (IRB) approval for this study was granted before recruitment began.

Recruitment. Participants were recruited from the six EDCO 4 sections in the College of Education and also from the Honors Humanities program at SJSU. To

[8] Scholte's Six Transcultural Principles: (1) critical self-reflect by questioning one's own ideas and practices; (2) recognize the (anthropological) complexity by exploring why different cultures evolve the way they do; (3) assess power dynamics overtly and implicitly with clients; (4) promote cultural pluralism by allowing for opportunities to develop new insights and discover alternate answers; (5) accept the need for humility in order to be open to the sheer scope of human experience and creativity; and (6) practice deep listening to respond to the truths of diverse others (West-Olatunji, Yang, Wolfgang, Henesy, & Yoon, 2017).

incentivize students to volunteer to participate, a $25 Target gift card was given to each participant who met the research criteria and completed an interview.

Purposive sampling and convenience sampling were used to select participants who orally answered brief questions about their demographics to indicate that they were willing to participate. Purposive sampling means participants are chosen because they are the most representative of the phenomena under study, and convenience sampling means that researchers have access to these participants, who are the most representative participants available (Koch, Niesz, & McCarthy. 2014).

Ethics and protection of human subjects. All participants were given a consent form (see Appendix A). Safeguards to protect the anonymity and rights of participants were disclosed as part of the interview protocol (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Throughout the data gathering phase of this study, all identifying information was promptly removed from all interview data and field notes, and pseudonyms were used.

Equipment. A password-protected iPad was used to record each interview. The file was later moved to a password-protected desktop computer at a transcription service bureau. After the contents of each interview were transcribed into a MS Word file and printed, the audio files were deleted from both the iPad and the desktop computer.

Instruments

Semi-structured interview questions. The questions used to interview participants highlight each student's environment, allowing non-Latinos insight into the issues and experiences from which Latino male students derive personal meanings about their identities (Torres, 2003). To describe the different types of interactions between an

individual and his/her environment, Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems were used as categories to classify these interactions and is what Torres (2003) refers to as "situating identity." Situating identity uncovers critical factors that lead to overall identity development, and educational persistence is a result of how one sees oneself.

Interview questions were grouped in the following four categories:

Category A. Latino identity

1. Tell me about your background? Your home and family?
2. Talk about how you first realized your Latino heritage.

   How old were you who and what event caused you to think about it?
3. What does being Latino mean to you?

Category B. K–12 education

4. How has your K–12 education influenced how you see yourself?
5. What significant events have been most meaningful in your education?
6. What did you like and dislike the most about school in the K–12 grades?

Category C. University-student identity

7. When did you decide to go to college?
8. What's your greatest strength as a student? Your greatest weakness?
9. What is it like to be a college student at San José State?
10. Have you declared a major?
11. What is your sense of how your friends view college? Your family?

Category D. University experiences

12. What's the best thing that has happened to you on campus?
13. What's been the hardest thing that you have done or experienced so far here?
14. Now that you are in college, what does college mean to you?

The above interview questions were not asked verbatim but rather were used to guide the interview. Because participants freely answered questions, the context of the interview was conversational.

Internal and external validity. The goal of conducting interviews was to capture the voices of the student participants and their experiences within the educational system accurately. To ensure the reliability, all interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. To improve accuracy and validity, I restated or summarized the information, then questioned the participants for accuracy. Also, participants were contacted via email or a text message to give them the opportunity to review the transcription from their interview and resulting analysis, but none responded to my request for member checking. Internal validity was addressed by coding the transcripts for themes to find commonalities among participants (Bogdan & Biklin, 2007).

Participants

Eight students were interviewed for this study. Eight interviews were completed because this was the "saturation" point, meaning that researchers begin to duplicate their data, that is, hearing similar stories in an interview (Koch et al., 2014).

The eight students were all first-generation college students. All of them started at SJSU as freshmen. They all responded in the affirmative when asked if they considered

themselves to be low-income students, because they are all attending school on Cal Grants. They were between the ages of 18–20 years; three were freshmen, age 18 years, three were sophomores, age 19 years, and two were juniors, age 20 years. All of them were in academic good standing, although three of them had been on academic probation and had to retake classes. Three of the students were local and lived at home with their families. Three of the students lived on campus in residence halls, the remaining two students lived with roommates on or near the SJSU campus.

For the measure of ethnicity, seven of the participants had Mexican fathers, and one father was from Puerto Rico. The ethnicity of their mothers was more varied. Two students had Portuguese mothers, and one had a Guatemalan mother, and the remaining five students' mothers were from Mexico. One of the participants was born in Mexico while the rest were born in the United States. Six of the eight had at least one parent who had immigrated to the United States as adults and, consequently, had not attended any school in U.S. The other two had grandparents who had immigrated from Mexico and the Azores.

Language also influences identity and not being fluent or proficient in the dominant culture's language impacts educational performance and persistency. All of the students interviewed were in English Language Development (ELD) classes because they spoke Spanish at home as children to caregivers, their grandmothers. Five of them still spoke Spanish to their parents. Four of them took Advanced Placement Spanish and passed the test earning college credit. A summary of each student's demographic information can be found in Appendix C.

Data Analysis

The method of constant comparison was used to determine salient themes amongst the interviews. First, I used open coding to divide data into segments to be analyzed. Open coding involves comparing the narratives to reveal similarities and differences between participants (Boeije, 2002). After interview data were divided, a cross-analysis was performed in which each transcription was scanned for recurring terms. Results of selective coding showed recurring terms such as “teachers” and “ELD” (English language development) classes. I then analyzed the context in which each of these keywords was used to codify the results, which are presented in the next section, Results.

Results

The purpose of this study was to understand how lower socioeconomic status, Latino male students internalized education into a meaningful part of their masculine identities by uncovering the salient factors that Latino male students themselves perceive as being critical to their education persistence. This study was performed using qualitative methods because a student's knowledge in and of itself can generate a representation of an independent reality, and that knowledge is rooted in the perspective of the knower, or student (Piaget, 1959). Consequently, one's identity development is the result of social learning and interpreted meaning, and a quantifiable survey cannot capture how this learning, or meaning making, occurs.

The themes that emerged from the eight interviews showed that participants' life experiences corroborated with the research presented in the Literature Review, thereby supporting the credibility[9] of the information provided by students. Because the eight students interviewed gave congruous information, many times giving identical answers, the information elicited is dependable (i.e., interviewing more students would continue to elicit similar information). The personal communications from teachers about the themes that emerged from the data support the fact that the knowledge uncovered through this study is transferable to other contexts with similar demographic features (i.e., first-

[9] Qualitative data is evaluated by the following four criteria, which correspond roughly to the criteria used to evaluate quantitative data: (a) credibility corresponds to internal validity; (b) dependability corresponds to reliability; (c) transferability corresponds to external validity; and (d) confirmability corresponds to objectivity, as much as anything observed cannot be affected by the observer (Trochim, 2006).

generation Latino male students). Finally, because requests for member checking were not responded to, there is an element of confirmability lacking. However, direct quotes transcribed from the audio recordings of the interviews enhance confirmability because the information analyzed does not rely solely on field notes or memory.

There were five consistently repeated themes described in the eight interviews: (a) the role of family, (b) the role of school personnel, specifically teachers and school counselors, (c) the role of extracurricular activities, (d) the role of racism when becoming aware of one's Latino identity, and (e) incorporating Latino values to support education. All of the quotes from student interviews are attributed to pseudonyms that interviewees chose for themselves. See Appendix C for a summary of each student's demographic information.

How Does a Latino Student's Life Story Affect his Educational Persistence?

All eight of the Latino students I interviewed were in university, exhibiting educational persistence, because of personal long-term relationships as opposed to being motivated by the message from school curricula. Aside from their demographic similarities (lower socioeconomic status, first-generation university students, aged 18–20 years) their life stories were diverse. The diversity consists in the different relationships these students have; for example, one student was "the youngest" child in his family, two students were "the oldest" children in their families, and three students were raised by single mothers (see Appendix C). It is through our interpersonal interactions at the microsystem level as defined by Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory of Human

Development (Bronfenbrenner, 2005) that we understand or "situate identity" (Torres, 2003), for example, "I have a younger sister and two older brothers."

Family expectations. Crisp et al. (2015), in their systematic review of 63 published research studies, both qualitative and quantitative, found that Latino students' educational persistence can be predicted by the value that their parents placed on education. For two students, John and Jacob, attending university was something that they were always expected to do.

John, an 18-year-old freshman, grew up speaking Portuguese at home in a small rural town as an only child living with his mother, grandmother, and great grandma. Jacob, a 20-year-old junior, grew up in a very urban area as the third of four children with his still intact nuclear family living in a one-bedroom apartment where everyone in the complex spoke Spanish. Despite their different demographics, they both agreed with my interrogative statement "going to college was part of the culture of your family?" John said that even when he was a little kid, people would often ask him where he was going to go to college, and he would reply with the name of a local CSU that his mother had planned to attend because it was the only college he knew about. Jacob added to his assent explaining that going to college was "a duty to my parents because they came to this country to give us a better life."

John and Jacob's experience supports Crisp et al.'s (2015) finding that Latino students' educational persistence can be predicted by the value that their parents placed on education. Generally, researchers link the value of education with the level of education attained by a person's parents because educational level is quantifiable.

However, Jacob's parents crossed over the border in their late teens, and John's mother had to drop out of college and go to work when she and John's father divorced. What is noteworthy about John and Jacob's experience is that both parents instilled the value of education even though they had not been able to go to college themselves because of the necessity of working.

School personnel. The other six students I interviewed said that their families did not expect, or assume, that they would go to college.

Teachers. When I asked David if "going to college was something his family assumed he would do because his parents made that expectation clear to him," he replied that it wasn't his parents, but rather it was his high school where "its whole mission was to get you to college." David, an 18-year-old freshman living locally with his parents and commuting to SJSU, went to a public charter high school with a student body of 400 where students are assigned a mentor with whom they meet daily. Because David was diagnosed with an autistic spectrum disorder, "Asperger's," in 5th grade, he also met individually with a resource teacher twice daily. David became "really close" to each of his resource teachers "to the point that [he] could call them friends." David credits these teachers with inspiring to go to college.

In addition to David, four other students mentioned relationships with their teachers as inspiring them to work hard so that they could go directly to a four-year university after high school. All of the teachers specifically mentioned and enthusiastically praised were men. I only know this because of the pronouns the students used when telling me about them.

Jack, a 19-year-old sophomore who also lives locally with his single mom and siblings and commutes to SJSU. credited "all of his teachers" because they were "always there for [him] even though they had 60 other seniors trying to talk to them," but he only specifically mentioned his A.P. history teacher.

Three students, Bob, Jacob and John, talked at length about their algebra teachers. These three descriptions about the importance of algebra teachers align with the positive correlation between high school success in math and Latino male students' college GPAs (Strayhorn, 2010).

Communication styles. The fact that three of the students interviewed specifically mentioned their math teachers is noteworthy because communication norms in a math class are more likely to be closer to what researchers have found to be masculine gender communication preferences. Men solving math equations is akin to making something work in a more mechanical context, which supports Kiselica and Englar-Carlson (2010) finding that men and boys spend more time in coordinated activities such as "fixing something." Davis's (2002) research supported the side-by-side masculine communication preference because when male college students talked about their relationships and verbal sharing, they always did so in the context of an activity where they were in a "side-by-side as opposed to face-to-face manner" (p. 515). Two examples that Davis (2002) cited of male-bonding, side-by-side activities are on road trips with the driver and passenger in the front seat talking while looking at the road ahead and playing video games with both players looking at the screen. Side-by-side communication is not conducive to direct eye contact, which aligns with Siegman and Reynolds (1983) finding

that lack of direct eye contact during counseling sessions increases self-disclosure in men. The men who participated in Davis's (2002) study also said that they found it easier to express themselves with just one other man as opposed to a group of men, which in this study exemplifies one-on-one tutoring with a math teacher. When a student and a teacher are solving an equation, they are not making eye contact because they are both looking at the equation while sitting or standing side by side.

To see which high school classes had more side-by-side communication versus face-to-face communication, I conducted 20-minute phone interviews with five high school teachers and one middle school teacher; three are STEM teachers[10], two are social studies teachers[11], and; one teaches both math and history[12]. Their descriptions of how they structure class activities and tutoring sessions are congruent with the supposition that the communication style in a math class is likely to have more elements of masculine gender preferred communication styles than in a history class has. In the non-STEM classes, the

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[10] Dixon, S. (personal communication, April 7, 2017). Chemistry teacher: Lincoln High School, Lincoln, CA.

Highbaugh, D. (personal communication, April 8, 2017). Algebra 2 (Math 3) teacher: Selma High School, Selma, CA.

Mosley, J. (personal communication, April 6, 2017). Algebra teacher: T.H. Bell Junior High, Layton, UT.

[11] Goodman, J. (personal communication, April 8, 2017). Government teacher: Perry High School, Perry, OH.

Judge, G. (personal communication, April 8, 2017). History teacher [retired 2014]: Valley Christian High School, San José, CA.

[12] Oxford, E. (personal communication, April 8, 2017). History and Algebra teacher: Granite Bay High School, Granite Bay, CA.

social studies teachers said that they use "Socratic questioning"[13] while maintaining direct eye contact to help students discover the significance of whatever point they are making, whereas in STEM classes teachers present mini-lectures and then give the students hands-on manipulatives, like shapes to cut out, while they circulate around the classroom asking students questions individually when they come alongside their desk.

Tutoring practices are also different between the STEM and non-STEM classes. All three of the teachers who taught social studies courses said that they stand in the front of the classroom while a student who needs extra help sits in the front row so that tutoring in social studies takes the form of a face-to-face discussion. Math teachers described different norms for tutoring. One math teacher has a table next to her desk where students sit when they come in for after-school help while another teacher has a table he uses in the back of the class for tutoring. Two of the math teachers move student desks closer to sit alongside students. The math teachers said that math tutoring involved looking at something together, not a face-to-face discussion. The six teachers' descriptions of how they structure their classes shows a congruency between the masculine gender preferred communication style with reduced eye contact and the math classroom norms. At the end of each interview, I explained that I was asking these questions because researchers know that men disclose more in one-on-one situations with reduced eye contact (Siegman & Reynolds, 1983).

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[13] Socratic questioning is a systematic method of questioning to uncovering assumptions and demonstrate the logical outcome of a course of reasoning as we explore complex ideas (Elder, & Paul, 2006).

Encouragement. The teacher who taught both math and history responded that he believed the most significant difference between STEM and non-STEM classes was that when helping students who are having difficulty with math, teachers are instructed to be very encouraging, for example, "Lots of students struggle with this, so it's normal, and I know you can do it!" (Oxford, E. personal communication,
April 8, 2017).

John, one of the three students who talked at length about how great his math teacher was, did not have a father figure in his home. His math teacher might have been the first male in John's life to show him unconditional positive regard about his academic abilities. Although Bob and Jacob came from fully intact nuclear families, they are both first-generation college students, so Bob and Jacob's math teachers may have been the first men with university diplomas who encouraged them to pursue higher-level academics. Jack's experience with his A.P. history teacher, who was also the AVID teacher at his high school, explicitly highlights how students react positively to adults who show positive regard through praise because Jack said that before he joined AVID, his teachers just thought he was "not working to his full potential."

Gender. In addition to communication preferences, researchers also theorize that what is perceived to be masculine or feminine gender behavior is an attempt to differentiate oneself from the opposite sex (Dubois & Marino, 1987; Sax, 2005) because "an identity is established in relation to a series of differences that have become socially recognized... Identity converts differences into otherness in order to secure its own self-certainty" (Connolly, 2002, p. 64). If gender identities are learned through social interactions via

comparisons in the form of "Person x is like me, and he does y, and person z is not like me, and he does…," then Bandura's Social Learning theory (1986) can be used to describe how individuals make meaning from their interactions and thus form an identity. Social learning theory posits that people determine how situations apply to themselves through the interaction with the environment, their own behavior, and their personal beliefs and characteristics (Bandura, 1986).

The triadic interaction for the four students who remarked about an individual teacher's influence consists of the following

(a) Environment: a class with an encouraging, accessible male teacher.

(b) Students' personal beliefs: "This guy succeeded academically, and he thinks I can succeed at school, too."

(c) Students' behavior: they try harder to succeed at school academically.

None of the students in any way asserted that the gender of the teachers they described was significant to them; I ascertained the teachers' gender by the students' use of pronouns during the interviews. A debate about gender and pedagogic effectiveness is beyond the scope of this paper, but I would be remiss if I failed to report that the four students who talked about a specific teacher in this study all talked about male teachers.

Counselors. In addition to teachers, three of students specifically brought up their relationship with their high school counselors as being instrumental in their decision to go to college. Jacob was a student assistant for his high school counselor, and he was impressed with how hard she worked to ensure that everyone in his graduating class "was on task," filling out FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) applications and

scholarship applications. Jacob attended a low-performing, inner-city high school, and his high school counselor won an award at his commencement ceremony for helping 90% of his class graduate and 78% of his graduating class enroll in college.

Chad, a 20-year-old junior who "crossed over" from Mexico to reunite with his parents and older siblings in the Bay Area when he was 14, said his high school counselor was someone whom he could "always talk to about what he was going through." She even helped him with homework in her office during her lunch break.

Finn, whose younger brother was violent as the consequence of a clinical brain disorder, often went directly to his school counselor to talk about his home life instead of going to his first-period class. Talking to the counselor served as an emotional debriefing enabling Finn to focus on his academics during the rest of the day. Finn's first-period teacher and counselor were acting on research findings showing that people who have undergone a traumatic experience cannot focus, or pay attention until they have in some way expressed their feeling about what happened to them (Banks, 2006; Dufur, Hoffmann, Braudt, Parcel, & Spence, 2015).

Peers: familial and at school. In addition to relationships with school personnel, interactions with peers, or "supportive friends," also positively correlate with educational persistence (Crisp, et al., 2015, p. 259). This is because as a person enters adolescence friendships with peers play a significant role in shaping one's identity (LaFontana & Cillessen, 2010). In his Psychosocial Development theory Erikson (1994) theorizes that this value shift occurs because the adolescent is starting to prepare for an identity that is independent from the family unit.

In addition to relationships with school faculty, Bob and Jack, both 19-year-old sophomores but with very different backgrounds, also talked about how new friendships with fellow students who were working towards being accepted into specific universities motivated them to "try for a four-year university." Bob grew up in a rural area as the oldest of three children living with his still-intact nuclear family whereas Jack grew up in a very urbanized area as the middle child of three living with their single mother.

Both Bob and Jack described their high schools as being self-segregated where people primarily hung out with their ethnic groups. In 11th grade Jack got a new girlfriend who was very motivated to go to college and so were her friends with whom he started hanging out. As a result of hanging out with people who studied together, Jack studied more. Jack and his girlfriend are no longer a couple, but Jack is now a 19-year-old sophomore living locally with his mom and two siblings. Love, the most profound foundation for a significant relationship, is a powerful motivator.

Bob was looking for people to hang out with at the end of 10th grade because his best friend since kindergarten had dropped out of school. So, in an effort to make new friends with kids in his advanced math class, he did an internet search to learn about university so that he would have "something to talk to them about" because they were always talking about "going to a four-year [university]." Through his internet search, Bob learned that one could go directly to a four-year university after graduating from high school. He had assumed high school grades were unimportant because everyone just went to the local community college after high school.

Again, from different family backgrounds, both Val and Finn were motivated by a specific relationship with a family member who was a peer-mentor. Val is a 19-year-old sophomore, who grew up in a nuclear family as the youngest of three children. Finn is an 18-year-old freshman who grew up as the oldest child with one younger brother and a single mother.

Val said that his parents did not motivate him to go to college but rather he credited his brother:

> Val: I was not really motivated to go to college, but my brother went to UC… when I was in 10th grade, and he'd call me up and say "Hey, you have to do your FAFSA by the end of the month, and you have to do this other [thing]," and so I just did what he said.

To explain how the instrumental instruction from Val's brother provided enough motivation to dispel Val's ambivalence, Marcia's (1966) more detailed description of Erikson's fifth psychosocial ego identity crisis is useful. Val was not motivated to go to college because he was, and still is, unsure about exactly what he wants to do. According to Marcia (1966), the process one goes through before making an identity commitment is exploration. While exploring career options, an individual is in a state of moratorium, which Schwartz et al. (2009) report as being stressful. Stress can cause some people to emotionally shut down and simply do as they are directed. Marcia refers to shutting down and not making a choice for oneself at all as a state of identity foreclosure because ultimately one has to choose one's career identity saying, "yes, this or that is what I want for myself" (Marcia, 1966; Schwartz et al, 2009). Val confirmed that he was in a state of identity foreclosure when he disclosed

> Val: I still really didn't care about school, but I'm starting to care more, because ever since last semester, the end of my Freshman year, I finished with four Cs, and that was really like am I really going to graduate with a-- or have this GPA of a 2.0? So, I'm trying to do better this semester. So, I guess this is why I'm starting to care now. Yeah.

However, Val also said he realized he was Latino when his parents were discussing whether his older sister should register for the DREAM (Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors) Act. His sister went directly to work after high school. The fact that discussions about the DREAM Act in Val's family occurred to such an extent that Val, as a sixth grader, was aware of them indicates that his parents somewhat valued education. Val and his brother were born in the U.S., so they could apply directly for financial aid. But the salient point for this qualitative study is that Val credits his brother with motivating him to do what he needed to do to attend university because, in this qualitative study, I want to find out how Val made meaning for his own identity from his social context.

Like Val, Finn also was motivated by an older male family member, his cousin with quadriplegia because:

> Finn: He is the smartest person I know and whenever I'd see him at like Thanksgiving he would make up these games for us to play, like board games and role-playing games, and he had to remember everything in the game that he told us each to do.

Finn's cousin went to a prestigious UC, so Finn wanted to go to college just like his cousin whom Finn admired because his cousin paid attention to him.

Synthesis: at least one key motivating relationship. In keeping with Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, the direct interactions in a school or in a

family microsystem enhance the way a student sees himself by confirming or changing one's self-perceptions. A student's self-perceptions, the building blocks of identity, affect a student's internal motivation to persist in his education (Bordes-Edgar, Arredondo, Kurpius & Rund, 2011; Gross, 2011). All eight of the students interviewed successfully pursued attending university because it was important to people with whom these students had emotionally significant relationships whether it was with family members, peers, teachers, or school counselors.

These relationships were emotionally significant to the students interviewed because the people mentioned in the above sections conveyed their belief that the eight students were capable of going to college.

- Because John and Jacobs' family members asked them which college they were planning on attending, John and Jacob knew that their family thought they could go to college.
- When Val's brother called him up to remind him about what he needed to do that month regarding college applications, he was implicitly letting Val know that he believed Val could handle college life.
- When Jack's new girlfriend and Bob's new peer group started spending time with them, both Bob and Jack assumed that their new friends thought they were capable of going to college because friends have similar interests.
- When the math teachers helped students after school, the students knew the math teacher thought they were college material.

- When counselors discussed how to navigate the bureaucracy to attend university, students got the message that the counselor thought that they were capable of going to college.

Using both Marcia's (1966) description of how Erikson's (1994) identity development unfolds in stages and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (2005) to describe how identity is created based on the meaning that people give to their interpersonal interactions, I hypothesize that at least on a subconscious level these eight students' motivational process was "I respect this teacher or friend or parent, and he/she respects college education; therefore, I should emulate his/her values." The respect the student feels comes from positive interactions, and the desire to emulate that respected person's values comes from one's Adlerian psychosocial desire to grow and be an equal member of the relationship, as opposed to being "inferior" (Adler, 1965). One student, Jack, initially majored in history because he wanted "to help people the way his history teacher was always there [for him]."

In the postmodern U.S., the key-motivating relationships are expected to come from within the family unit, but for a variety of both psychosocial and socioeconomic reasons sometimes families of origin cannot provide that motivation, in which case the schools are expected to provide the motivation. Schools can do this as was evidenced through the data collected in these eight interviews, but the motivating mechanism is still the relationship, not the curriculum, and these relationships take time from teachers and counselors working hours to listen to students. In addition to time, school personnel need

to authentically convey the belief to each of their students individually that they are capable of going to college.

The importance of emotionally supportive relationships was also confirmed by answers to the question "What did you like best about school?" Five of the students mentioned teachers in general: "teachers who cared" (Jack). Jacob placed his hands over his heart when he replied "teachers." Val replied that the best part of school was his "friends and clubs." John mentioned all the opportunities to "network" because he was involved in so many extracurricular activities. The students interviewed told me about people in their lives, for example, the math teacher, not the math class.

Which Educational Persistence Factors Are Most Salient to Latino Male Students' K–12 Experiences?

Crisp et al. found in their 2015 systematic review of 63 peer-reviewed studies about Latinos and educational persistence that K–12 school experiences and subsequent coping styles, specifically believing in one's own ability to change a situation, correlated with educational persistence. To assess this variable in this research, I asked three questions: (1) What significant events have been most meaningful in your education? (2) "What did most like about school?" and (3) What did you "most dislike about school?"

The phrase "most meaningful" was meant to elicit both positive and negative memories, but everyone answered this question by sharing positive experiences about extracurricular activities. When asked, "What did you like most about school?" all eight students described emotionally supportive relationships at school. See the section "Synthesis: at least one key motivating relationship". However, when I asked about what they "disliked most about school," their answers were more varied. Table 1 shows the

activities that they described while talking about what was most meaningful (question 1 above) and what was most disliked (question 3 above). These activities and their relationship to identity development are then discussed.

Table 1

K–12 Extracurricular Activities Named by the Eight Students

School Activity [a]	Most Meaningful	Most Disliked
"Homework"		2
"Waking up early"		2
ELD classes		1
Peer group problems		3
Extra-Curricular Activities	8	
"Leadership" [b]	4	
Technology Clubs [c]	2	
College Prep [d]	1	
Homework Center	1	

[a] Activities in quotes are what participants actually said.
[b] When students were asked what they meant by "leadership" students named the Junior ROTC, Future Farmers of America (FFA), Linked Crew, Student 2 Student, and sports.
[c] MESA and a video club.
[d] AVID, EOP, and GEAR UP.

Extracurricular activities: staying after school. The finding that was true for all of the eight students interviewed was that they all spent significant amounts of time at school when they were not in class either before or after school. Seven of the students were involved in extracurricular activities, and one student, David, chose habitually to

stay after school for help with homework. John said he would arrive at school between 7-7:30 a.m. and stay at school until 6:30 p.m. John's regular school days were 11 hours long. The other six students did not mention going to school early, but they said they regularly stayed at school until at least 5 p.m. turning a six-and-a-half-hour school day into an eight-hour workday.

Sports. Three of the students lettered in sports. Finn and John, both 18-year-old first-semester freshmen, living in SJSU residence halls, were both on the swim and water polo teams all four years of high school. This may seem surprising at first, but water sports reflect where these two students lived; it's hot for much of the school year in the agricultural regions of California, and they both said that they were overweight in middle school, so they both wanted to work out and slim down. Jacob was the other student who participated in sports, but he lettered only in one sport, cross-country.

Val, Jack, Bob, and Chad did not participate in after-school sports. Val was not in any organized sports, but like John and Finn, he wanted to slim down when he started high school, so he joined a community program where the local library gave out passes to the local gym if kids spent an hour studying there after school. Val went to the library every free day after school and then to the gym to work out. Jack wanted to participate in high school sports, but he was prohibited from doing so because of his low GPA.

Clubs. Of seven students who participated in school-sponsored clubs, four said they participated in "Leadership" during high school. Chad and Bob said they "took Leadership" as a course elective, and that these "Leadership" course required a lot of

extra time after school and on weekends. John and Finn said they were "in leadership" and described being leaders in the sports and clubs they participated in.

Both John and Finn participated in FFA (Future Farmers of America) chapters at their high schools. This second shared activity also can be explained by the fact that they grew up in agricultural regions of California. Neither of them wanted to join FFA as 9th graders because neither of them wanted to be farmers, but they were both appreciative of the "leadership and public speaking" opportunities that FFA provided.

John's high school is near a military base, and the other two clubs John participated in also reflected the demographics of the area. John participated in Junior ROTC (Reserve Officer Training Corp) and was the highest ranked 10th-grade cadet at his school. John was also in his school's chapter of Student 2 Student, a military-sponsored organization to help children of military families settle in at new schools when their families are transferred to a different base. Finn's high school was not near any military bases, so instead of doing ROTC, he chose to participate in theater in addition to after-school sports and FFA. Finn was involved in the theater program at his high school and at the local community theater where he worked on sets and had small parts on stage.

In the same way that the Student 2 Student club that John participated in helped military kids settle into a new high school, the Leadership classes that Chad, Bob, and Val were in focused on older students helping younger students to integrate into the school community. When I asked Bob, "Which significant events in your K–12 time were the most meaningful to you?" Bob described his Leadership class, called "Linked Crew."

> Bob: I was basically given a group of freshman that were new to the school. So, I would guide them, ask them how they're doing, and keep up on them and make sure they wouldn't fall through the cracks, like I did my first two years of high school. And that was really cool. That's where I really learned, like, it's important to have someone guiding you, 'cause a lot of people don't know what they don't know.

Bob's leadership class was one of the ways he learned that he could he could positively affect others' high school experience. Believing in one's own ability to change a situation is the coping style that correlated with educational persistence,

and K–12 school experiences influence a student's subsequent coping style (Crisp et al., 2015).

Chad's high school leadership class was structured just like Bob's, except instead of reaching out to new students or younger students, Chad's class decided to buddy up with the English learners. Because Chad had spent 9th and 10th grade learning English, he could relate to the frustrations the English learners were having. But, Chad's leadership class helped him in another more tangible way.

> Chad: This class they taught me how to do, like, presentations. Like, they encouraged me to talk to people. Like, there were some friends that they were talking to me, like, "Oh, this is how the culture works. This is some of the things that we don't say." It kind of helped me a lot, because sometimes, like, <laughs> I avoid, like, conversations with other people, and with this class also we did, like, volunteer services. Like, we went to help children that were sleeping, like, on the streets and homeless people. And we also did, like, car wash things, like, to raise money, and that's where I met, like, lot of friends, like, from different backgrounds. And now I had my social circle. And I was proud, because, like, in my mind I was like, "Yes. I'm the only Mexican that they know."

Through the leadership class Chad not only was able to practice speaking publically, like John and Finn did in their FFA chapters, but he also integrated into the school culture,

rather than only knowing other Spanish speakers who also were learning English. This supports Torres (2006) finding that having a positive emotional connection to a school institution results in Latino students strongly agreeing with the statement "College is right for me."

Jacob, Jack, and Val described being in other types of clubs that kept them busy after school and on weekends. In addition to lettering in cross country, Jacob also participated in the MESA (Math, Engineering, Science Achievement) club at his school where students design and build robots and cars and then compete with other MESA clubs to see whose works best. Jacob's car powered by a mousetrap won first place in regional heats. Winning made Jacob conceive of himself as an engineer shown by Jacob's comment "I was actually good at that stuff. Now, I have an engineering interest in me a lot." Consequently, Jacob, a 20-year-old junior, is majoring in aerospace engineering. Working towards a career goal is a significant factor positively affecting educational persistence (Barclay, 2013; Suarez, 2003). The MESA club faculty advisor and the cross-country coach were the same person—his Algebra teach, whom Jacob described as being "like part of the family." Although Jacob directly credited his family culture with inspiring his educational persistence, this teacher reinforced the importance of college as a shared cultural value outside the family unit.

In addition to participating in MESA during middle school and high school, Jacob was also in EOP (Educational Opportunity Program). Jack also participated in EOP at his high school, but neither of them is involved in EOP at San José State because Jacob did

not turn in his application on time, and Jack did not maintain the required GPA one semester.

In addition to being involved in EOP in high school, Jack was also involved with the AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) program at his high school as well as the SJSU grant-funded GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs). Both of these programs are designed to help low-income students close the traditional academic achievement gap between high and low socioeconomic status students by preparing lower socioeconomic status students to earn four-year, college degrees. AVID is a teacher led-program where students attend smaller AVID classes in academic subjects on their high school campus. Jack's AVID teacher was his history teacher, and as a consequence, Jack started out as a history major at SJSU, because he enjoyed his AVID class. GEAR UP is a club that met after school and on weekends in which students took field trips to different places including local university campuses.

Jack credits AVID and GEAR UP with helping him with the FAFSA paperwork and various scholarship applications from which he was awarded four. These clubs succeeded in their mutual mission to close the socioeconomic education gap because they increased Jack's academic self-confidence by giving him the information and positive reinforcement, the "atta boys," to have a can-do coping style, and persist through the financial and academic bureaucracy required to study at a university. Looking at Jack through the lens of Adler's (1965) psychosocial theory of Individual Psychology (1965), Jack was driven by the need to be seen as "superior" or significant because he wanted to

be accepted as an equal member in his relationships with the AVID and GEAR UP leaders. Organizations like AVID and GEAR UP exist because the research has found that increasing a student's academic self-confidence increases educational persistence (Crisp, et al., 2015), and Jack's experiences with these organizations support this finding.

The majority of Val's extracurricular experiences were different from the other six students', even though Val was involved in "leadership," too. At Val's high school "leadership" meant an after-school club that planned school events and organized fundraisers, like "car washes," to finance them. Val's leadership club organized a snowboarding weekend, in which Val participated and attended. Val also took a video-production class that required regular group work after school. In the video production class students took turns producing a daily video in lieu of the morning announcement over the loudspeaker. As the producer of the morning announcement video, a student had to find other students to be in the video and work with fellow classmates to write scripts, film, and edit the videos. Val said he enjoyed having access to all the high-tech equipment.

Synthesizing meaning from these after school activities. Lerner, Dowling and Anderson (2003) identified connectedness and developing self-confidence as critical attributes for successful after-school programs. All of these various activities described by the eight students fostered self-confidence and connectedness (feelings of belonging) to their schools.

- David connected with his resource teachers and gained academic confidence by successfully completing his homework.

- John connected with many of people because he said the best part of high school was "networking." Through this "networking" John felt like he was interacting with people in a more Adlerian psychosocial "superior" as opposed to "inferior" way (Adler, 1965) as demonstrated by John's comment about his FFA advisor:

  > John: In high school, I was very busy and my FFA advisor always loved calling on me because I'd tell them I was the polo team captain, I was a four-year student in FFA, I was a four-year ROTC cadet, I was the president of Student 2 Student. So, I had all these different very leadership positions. So, he always loved picking on me.

- Finn and John gained confidence through the public speaking activities that they did through their FFA chapters at their schools.
- Through the MESA competitions, Jacob gained confidence in his ability to develop engineering skills and one day become an engineer.
- Bob gained self-confidence through guiding 9th and 10th graders:

  > Bob: I would guide them, ask them how they're doing, and keep up on them and make sure they wouldn't fall through the cracks…*And that was really cool* [emphasis added]. That's where I really learned, like, it's important to have someone guiding you.

- Through participating in a Leadership club, Chad gained cross-culture confidence knowing that people who were not Latino had accepted him.

  > Chad: That's where I met, like, lot of friends, like, from different backgrounds. And now I had my social circle. And I was proud, because, like, in my mind I was like, "Yes. I'm the only Mexican that they know."

- Through AVID and GEAR UP, Jack connected with college-focused peers and mentors and gained confidence in his academic abilities.

- Val described the process of creating videos for daily announcements in detail. He said he liked it a lot and that he missed it. Although Val said he "really didn't care about school," he definitely was animated when talking about the extracurricular video class.

By participating in these clubs, students had more opportunities to talk to teachers. A lack of academic self-confidence, or "unusually self-conscious of teachers and expressing reservations about academic abilities," has been linked to a greater probability of failing a class (Massey, et al., 2011).

Identity development. In addition to increasing the students' academic self-confidence, these various extracurricular activities provided two benefits. First, all of the students interviewed chose to engage with after-school resources, sports, clubs, elective courses, and a homework center. Research has found that students do better when they have control over their own activities (Gestsdottir, Bowers, von Eye, Napolitano & Lerner, 2010; Urban, Lewin-Bizan, & Lerner, 2010).

Second, these extracurricular activities differ from listening to a lecture, reading a book, and writing an essay, which are antithetical to the way most students say that they prefer to learn. Students want relevant "autonomy-supporting" projects that encourage them to think for themselves (Belesky, 2013, p. 284). Vygotsky's cultural-historical psychological theory emphasizes that learning takes place in a social context because learning that constitutes maturity, and not just skill acquisition, occurs in a social context (Vygotsky, 1978). Touring a college campus with classmates, asking people to be in your videos, building toy cars out of mousetraps, and mentoring 9th and 10th graders, English

learners and new transfer students are all activities that require coordinated action in a social context.

The social context, which Vygotsky's cultural-historical psychological learning theory emphasizes, complements Erikson's psychosocial theory of human development because according to Erikson's (1959) model of development, choice and positive social interactions are crucial to resolving the fifth ego crisis, identity cohesion versus identity confusion. Positive social interactions ultimately result in "generativity," defined by Erikson as "care and concern for future generations," and enable people to view their life events from a more detached perspective thereby integrating their life experiences into a cohesive and positive identity. Research has borne out Erikson's theory in this regard because, in emerging adults, ages 18–22 years, generativity has been linked positively to more identity cohesion (Lawford & Ramey, 2015; McLean & Pratt, 2006).

Narrative constructivist therapy conceptualizes Erikson's concept of identity as a "life story" (McAdams & Olson, 2010). Narrative constructivist theorists believe that people construct their cognitions through the stories they tell themselves about their lives, the foundation of which are their interactions with others. Because students chose the type of activity that interested them, they can see some of their own self-expression and are more inclined to think about themselves in terms of their experiences in the community (Savickas, 1998). Researchers Lawford and Ramey (2015) found that the type of activity, sports versus extracurricular club, did not matter as long as the participants were psychologically and emotionally engaged in the activity. The eight students interviewed

described their "most meaningful" experiences, extracurricular activities, with such vividness that it is apparent that they were psychologically and emotionally engaged.

"I am the captain of my soul" (Poetry. n.d., Invictus). The freedom to choose also leads to feelings of autonomy. Attending secondary school during late puberty is a twentieth-century phenomenon that does not afford much autonomy. Before westernized societies required a highly educated workforce, teenagers were considered adults who could get married and were expected to work in some way. A 16-year-old in 1817 had more autonomy in daily living than a 16-year-old in 2017. School culture gives students very little choice about how to succeed. Epstein (2010) points out the fact that nature designed humans to enter adulthood during late puberty; consequently, Epstein posits that adolescents' overly emotional and risk-taking behavior might occur because school culture emotionally "shackles the teenage newly adult mind" (Belsky, 2013, p. 285).

Another explanation for adolescent overly emotional and risk-taking behavior is that adolescents have immature frontal lobes (Belsky, 2013; Epstein, 2010; Males, 2009). I don't know how immature the students' frontal lobes were, but by choosing to participate in these extracurricular activities, all eight students became much more autonomous during the total time they spent at school, even though their most autonomous time was time outside of the classroom.

By spending extra time at school in activities that made the participants of this study feel more autonomous and self-confident, they perceived themselves to be more like adults, independent and able to handle their own responsibilities—the captains of their souls (*Invictus,* n.d.). They made school into their job; like adults, they went to school in

the morning and then chose to stay longer returning home in the early evening. Thus, these students worked an eight-hour shift just like the other working adults in their homes.

School culture: aspects that do not fit masculine gender norms. One theory presented in this study's Literature Review hypothesized that boys are less motivated than girls in academic tasks because the school culture fits the feminine identity norms better than it fits the masculine identity norms (Huyge et al., 2015; Wang et al., 2011). To assess this theory, I asked the eight what they "most liked about school" and what they "most disliked or what about school did not work" for them. As discussed in the section "Synthesis: at least one motivating relationship," when I asked, "What did you like best about school?" all the students described emotionally supportive relationships at school. However, their responses about what parts of school they disliked or were not helpful, varied.

Homework. Two of the students, John and Jacob, answered the question about what did not work for them in school definitively without hesitation with one word: homework. Interestingly, John and Jacob were the two students who said their families always assumed that they would to go to college and made that expectation explicitly clear. Perhaps, their family members nagged these two students more about completing homework. I did not specifically ask about conflict with family members over homework, and when I asked them what about homework was difficult, they did not mention tension with family members.

John said that homework assignments were not generally "worth his time" and that he was too tired in the evenings after participating in sports, ROTC, FFA, and Student 2 Student. John said he would do homework assignments that were worth the most points and ignore the smaller assignments because he could get a good grade in the class without doing them. For John, the payoff from completing about half the assigned homework was not worth the investment.

Jacob said abashedly that he "even copied" homework rather than doing it in high school. He would rather go to tutoring with a teacher either before or after school than do homework. He praised his U.S. History and math teachers who structured their classes so that there was never any homework. He told me about how he would go to study groups with his peers in MESA, to make sure he learned what was expected, but he did not do homework regularly. In sixth grade, Jacob failed math because he did not turn in any homework all semester, for which his parents "spanked" him, and in university, Jacob says his greatest weakness as a student still is completing homework. Jacob was the most gregarious student whom I interviewed; He liked to talk, and our interview lasted 1:17 minutes. I can see that sitting alone doing math problems or writing an essay just doesn't match Jacob's personality style; consequently, he has a hard time intrinsically motivating himself to do homework.

Homework completion is a topic that educators debate: Is traditional homework useful in the 21st century? What are the benefits of homework? Regardless of whether an educator supports homework, educational entrepreneurs have developed a myriad of programs to help students complete their homework. David and Val told me about how

their schools helped students complete homework. David chose to stay after school every day in a traditional homework center where teachers are available to help students with homework.

Val's school had a different approach to homework. Homework was not specifically assigned because his high school changed the whole medium of instruction. Every student at Val's high school was issued a laptop, and all work and instruction was done online. In class students watched instructional lessons on their laptops, and then answered questions about what they learned. Courses were dived up into eight sections, and there were no midterms or finals. After completing all the lessons in a unit, students took a test, and if they passed, they moved on to the next unit; if they failed, they repeated the unit. There was peer pressure to keep up with the class and not fall behind. As a consequence of the computer-based learning implementation, no formal homework was assigned, but students were expected to complete lessons and keep up with the rest of the class. If students did not answer all the lesson questions in class, they would have to do homework to ensure they didn't fall behind and could move on with the rest of the class. Val also participated in a homework club, which provided extrinsic motivation to do homework by providing students with a pass to a local gym after they spent an hour in the library doing homework. It is because of this program and the peer pressure that Val kept up with his classmates and only had to repeat one or two sections. Val was not sure his high school's computer-based instructional approach helped him because he had a hard time transitioning to a more 19th-century instructional approach at San José State, but he liked the computer-based instruction while he was in high school.

Waking up early. Two other students, Bob and Val, also answered the question about what didn't help them in school definitively without hesitation. They both replied, "waking up early."

Early school start times have been a focus of educational discussions for several years because having schools start later in the morning is one way to help students get more sleep. The American Academy of Pediatrics has recommended that schools should start at 8:30 a.m. or later because the National Sleep Foundation has recommended that adolescents get at least nine hours of sleep (Adolescent Sleep Working Group, 2014). However, because adolescents tend to go to bed after 11 p.m. and must get up between 6–7 a.m. they typically sleep for less than seven hours a night (Colrain & Baker, 2011). Paksarian, Rudolph, He, and Merikangas (2015) conducted a cross-sectional national study to see how adolescent sleep patterns are affected by school start times. Paksarian et al. (2015) found that the group that increased their sleep times the most as a result of later school start times, defined as 8:30 a.m. or later, was adolescent boys.

The early morning start times at many high schools do not fit adolescent biological rhythms, particularly for males. Some argue that high school students should go to bed earlier if they need more sleep, but our culture has changed in the last 120 years since the invention of the electric light bulb. Most people do not have to get up with the sun to do farm chores, and electricity now provides a multitude of entertainment venues after sunset. Our culture has changed, but our schools have not changed and still start at times that worked when adolescents had to do chores during the dawn hour. People perform at optimal levels when their environment meets their physiological and psychological needs

(Belsky, 2013). Because our culture has shifted to doing more things later in the day, our institutions, like schools, need to shift, too, so that participating fully in these institutions is not hindered by physiology.

Looking at screens heightens arousal (Dunckley, 2015). Both Bob and Val told me they spent a lot of time in high school looking at screens playing videogames. Val's routine was first to study in the school's library thereby earning a gym pass, then workout, and finally go home and play videogames all evening with his friends. Bob did not bring his game station with him when he moved into a residence hall as a freshman or this year as a sophomore because he did not want videogames to "take way time from studying."

Sleepy adolescents have been noticed before the invention of the electric light bulb as evidenced by the following that were first published in the 18th century: Where is the boy who looks after the sheep? / Under the haystack fast asleep (Opie & Opie, 1997). In institutions, like school, where it is critical to society that most people succeed, educators should structure schools to support adolescents' physiological need for more sleep.

English Language Development (ELD) classes. All eight of the students whom I interviewed spent a few of their K–8 years in English Language Development (ELD) classes. Val was in a bilingual program during his K–6 grades in which instruction was in both English and Spanish equally. But, by middle school, all eight of them said they spoke English most of the time at school even with their Latino peers. In high school Jacob, Val, and Jack said they spoke more Spanish at school with their Latino peers than they had spoken in middle school because they were taking Spanish to meet their foreign

language requirement. For seven of the students, ELD classes did not stand out because they were just a part of school; they simply went to school and learned English with the rest of their Latino peers. Bob, David, John, and Finn said they remembered they were in ELD classes in early elementary school, but they could not remember anything specific, except that the teachers were "nice ladies" who had Hispanic last names. However, one student felt differently, and because ELD classes are part of many Latinos' school experience, it merits listening to students who have strong feelings about them.

Jack also answered the question about what didn't help him in school without hesitation and with more affect than he had shown in the first 18 minutes of our interview.

> Jack: Just the thing I disliked the most was that *I had to know so much more than I actually knew in English* [emphasis is Jack's] because I wanted to be able to write and read extremely well because I wanted to be able to get A's on my papers. I wanted to do well, but I was never able to do that just because the foundation that I had of English was not that well established.

Jack returned to the second language theme when I asked him what he considered his weakest areas as a student.

> Jack: Well, my education always told me that I was not that great at speaking English or writing English. So that really affected me. Like at the high school level I really tried to like learn, but at that point I had to know everything already. They expected me to know a lot more than I knew, and I would struggle in these English classes and I was just trying to catch up, and then even at the college level I didn't pass the English placement test, and I was placed into a lower division English class and I wasn't able to take English for my first semester of college. I have trouble with writing. I have a lot of fragment errors, comma splices, stuff like that.

Jack obviously has seen a lot of teacher-directed grammar lessons because he knows the prescriptive jargon unique to English teachers. But, any linguist or educator knows that an awareness of what is expected does not translate into competency. This sentiment of not knowing enough academic English is common to many people in ELD classes (Delpit, 1988). Delpit (1988) found that the reason that ELD students give for their lack of knowledge is that class time is wasted because the teacher is somehow abdicating his/her duty to teach. Jack's explanation about the reasons he was behind match Delpit's findings:

> Jack: I feel like since I was being placed in these language learning classes throughout elementary school and middle school I was losing a lot of what was being taught in [the non–ELD, regular] class because I never really learned it, and also in middle school and in my freshman year in high school I had a lot of teachers that were sick a lot and English teachers that went on maternity leave.

Jack felt that his literacy level was not proficient for academic work. This belief caused Jack to question the quality of the instruction because a teacher who is absent is in a sense abdicating his/her duty to teach, and consequently, Jack assessed himself in the following way:

> Jack: The more I felt like I didn't know, the less I was trying because it just put me in a position of like, oh, you're not smart enough to be in these classes. You don't know enough.

Jack's unmotivated feelings towards his academics because of self-doubts about his intelligence are natural considering that Jack said he "wanted to learn and get A's on his papers," but he was not succeeding. Jack's GPA was so low that he was prohibited from playing sports in high school, which he wanted to do.

Although feeling unmotivated, Jack still was smart enough to do the academic work required to be accepted into a university. He was able to improve his GPA when he encountered "teachers who cared" in 10th grade and connected with a new peer group of college-focused students when he got a new girlfriend in 11th grade. It was the result of renewed motivation and consequent effort, and not tutoring interventions or better curriculum, that Jack was admitted to a four-year university.

Educators and linguists have been arguing over the best way to teach English to English Language Learners and native speakers alike since the 1970s when the Whole Language movement was introduced to replace the more explicit and traditional phonics lessons. This pedagogical debate is beyond the scope of this paper, and I do not know how much of Jack's ELD classes used Whole Language methodology versus more explicit instruction. However, as educators, we can use Bandura's (1986) construct of a triadic interaction in social learning theory to describe how Jack's ELD classes affected his identity formation. The triadic interaction consists of the following:

(a) Jack's environment: his ELD class where the teacher is often absent.

(b) Jack's characteristics/beliefs: Jack believes smart people get A's on their papers because they "know enough," and because he is not getting A's, Jack, therefore, believes that he must "not [be] smart enough."

(c) Jack's actual behavior: he does not "try" in academic areas.

Jack's behavior reinforced his beliefs because not studying means he is even less likely to get A's. When Jack's environment changed—he had "teachers who are always there" for him, and a new girlfriend who studied—his behavior changed, and he started studying. If

Jack's environment, an ELD class, could not change, how could school personnel help Jack change his beliefs about himself? What could someone at school have done to encourage Jack to study even though he was not getting A's on his papers, yet?

Someone at school needed to explain that knowledge and intelligence are not the same things to help Jack understand that because he did not start out speaking English as a kindergartener, he was behind other native speakers and that catching up to them was not impossible, but would take time. This kind of conversation requires a bit of trust on the student's part. Developing trust takes time, time on the part of the teacher to share and time to be a consistent presence in the student's life.

Peer groups. The other three students I interviewed, Chad, David, and Finn, did not mention established school cultural norms like homework, early start times, and ELD classes, as hindrances to their education. They commented on something more pervasive in any organization: cliques. Finn's answer named and described the problem he had with his social peer groups:

> Finn: I really didn't like I guess the student environment about all the kids and stuff, just high school kids in general, all the cliques and stuff, I didn't like how people were so quickly to jump to conclusions about how people were and people bullying and stuff, I never liked that.

Chad also described social peer groups in his answer about what was not helpful about high school:

> Chad: The bad thing, I would say, it's, well, like, there was like some you can call it like gangs or groups of people that were just looking for trouble and if they saw you wearing, like, red shoes or blue shoes, they were always looking for trouble. So, I was like for me it was like, "Why are you fighting, like, for a color? It's not going to get you anywhere." I thought it, like, it was like a dumb idea. Like, some of my friends also that came, they were more into, they were

> getting closer and closer to the gangs. And I mean, I was just still talking to them. But then there was a point that I saw something that really disappointed about my friends, and I was like, "Hey, you know, we been friends for a couple months and I kind of like, I don't want to lose your friendship, but the things that you're doing, like, they don't go with what I believe." That's when I start, like, separating from my friends.

What is noteworthy is that both Finn and Chad chose not to derive any of their identity from their peer groups. Finn avoided the clique problem by not getting emotionally involved with many people during high school. He said he had "lots of acquaintances" during high school so that he always had someone to joke around with, but that he only had "two real friends" from high school, one who is now attending a UC and the other who moved out of state with his family after high school graduation. As a consequence, Finn has become involved with two clubs on campus and is enjoying forming new friendships, especially with the older male students in these clubs.

As the above quote from Chad reveals, he made a conscious decision to "separate" himself from his friends. Luckily, this decision was followed by his decision to join the Leadership club at his school. Consequently, as Chad separated from one peer group, he was able to join another where "I met, like, lot of friends, like, from different backgrounds. And now I had my social circle."

Choosing new peer groups. Like Chad, Bob and Jack also told me about finding new peer groups in high school. Jack joined a new peer group when he got a new girlfriend who was college-bound, and thus he started hanging out with her college-bound friends who studied a lot; Jack adopted the values of the new peer group and started studying, too. Bob joined a new peer group for a different reason. In 10thgrade, Bob's best friend

since Kindergarten dropped out of school, so Bob did not have anyone at school to hang out with; consequently, he looked for new friends, and he ended up hanging out with students in his Algebra 2 class. Because Bob was a year ahead in math, this new peer group consisted of 11th graders who were roughly a year older than he was.

Changing peer groups in high school is difficult for many adolescents because having friends is a critical part of one's identity, yet three of the students I interviewed switched peer groups, and two of them, Bob and Chad, made a conscious choice about switching. Chad decided not to hang out with his friends from his ELD classes, and Bob consciously chose a group of students to befriend and did an online search for the term "university" so that he would have "something to talk to them about" because they were always talking about "going to a four-year university."

What do Chad and Bob have in common that potentially could help them be secure enough in what they believed about themselves to choose to new peer groups? Both Chad and Bob come from still-intact nuclear families with parents who never expressed the expectation that their children should go to college. Both Chad and Bob talked about their fathers in detail describing where in Mexico their fathers came from and how their fathers financially helped them as much as they possibly could with unexpected expenses at university, but they both said that their fathers could not really help them in university because they did not go to school in the U.S., and in consequence their fathers "did not know all the things you have to do in university." Chad and Bob both talked about how their mothers were always telling them how proud they were of their sons for attending a

university. Finally, both families are very involved in their respective local Roman Catholic parishes, and both Chad and Bob still go to mass with their families.

Bronfenbrenner's (2005) Ecological Systems Theory provides a theoretical construct to explain how Chad and Bob's self-perceptions, the building blocks of identity, influenced their ability to choose healthy peer groups. Chad and Bob were members of three common microsystems: their respective families, schools, and local parish communities. Someone's microsystem does not only consist of the people in the microsystem but also the interaction that an individual has with the people in each microsystem and the meanings the individual ascribes to the interactions. A person's mesosystems are the net meaning a person perceives from the interactions between his/her various microsystems. For both Chad and Bob, it is reasonable to suppose that the interactions between parish-family mesosystem were mostly affirming otherwise, the family would stop going to mass and interacting with the parish.

The meaning that Chad and Bob derived from their respective school-family mesosystem is more problematic because the languages used in these environments are different: Spanish in the home and mainly English at school. In the case of Chad and Bob, we know that their parents did not have much interaction with the high school because their parents were not fluent in English. One of the reasons Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory is applied to identity development in multiethnic societies is because of this linguistic construct in the mesosystem (Bronfenbrenner 2005; Torres, 2003). The linguistic mismatch can cause stress resulting in the child thinking that one language is better than the other, and, therefore, the people who speak the language that the child

perceives to be inferior are judged to be inferior. Chad and Bob's identity in the school microsystem formed from positive interactions with school personnel, Chad's counselor and Bob's math teacher (see the section "School Personnel and Educational Persistence"), but in the school-family mesosystem interactions were limited. Students not only create meaning by interpreting direct interactions but also by interpreting meaning from the lack of interaction between the two microsystems.

Chad and Bob saw their families with positive interactions in the parish and limited interactions in school. The meaning derived from being a member of a family with positive interactions outside the home in the parish community might have given both Bob and Chad a more cohesive positive identity about who they were as people independent from their peer groups, which in turn resulted in them being able to more actively choose a peer group than other adolescents. If a person doesn't see one's family having positive interactions when they participate in communities outside the home, it is hard to "situate one's identity" (Torres, 20003) as a valued, contributing individual in the context of the communities-family mesosystems. By participating in their parish, these families provided a venue for their children to see themselves in relation to a community in a positive way.

Finn, who chose not to participate in any of the cliques at his high school, keeping an emotional distance between himself and others as evidenced by the fact that he only considered two classmates his friends, was also active in his local Roman Catholic parish with his mother. Because Finn's mom was a single parent who worked to support Finn and his younger brother, she had limited involvement with Finn's school community.

Finn could have seen his family having positive interaction in the community theater that he was involved in or the soccer and baseball leagues Finn played in, but he did not mention his mom being involved in those activities; however, he did mention going to mass "with his family."

Finn, Chad, and Bob could have seen positive interactions between their family and the community through whichever venue their family chose to participate in. Most community organizations are geared to people with a common interest (e.g., theater), or to a certain demographic (e.g., a sports league is for either adult players or child athletes and other adults who enjoy the sport run the events). However, a Catholic parish is supposed to provide a venue that caters to every demographic—the whole family. A parish is supposed to promote unconditional positive regard; therefore, the goal of the parish is congruent with someone discovering their own self-worth in the context of their family and the larger community. Being able to place, or situate (Torres, 2013), their respective identities positively in the context Bronfenbrenner's mesosystem of community-family interactions might have provided these three students with the belief that "I am valued in the greater community because my family has so many positive interactions, so I don't need to be in cliques that don't value a person for who he/she is."

Not cliquing. Like Chad and Finn, David answered the question about what was least helpful or most difficult about his K–12 education with a comment about other students:

> David: The only minor complaints I had was that with each year the freshman got more and more immature. And I kind of noticed that the freshman they feel like they could do whatever. And I'm kind of worried that if that keeps going on, then our generation is going to be in a very weird situation where there's a lot of people that think they could just do whatever.

Trying to figure out why David felt more and more frustrated by each incoming Freshmen class required me to inquire more. David might have felt frustrated with the incoming freshmen because they may have teased him, so I asked. David told me that in elementary school he was teased, and in middle school, there were "dark times" because of "bullying issues," but he was not teased in high school. Because David went to a charter high school with only 400 students where teachers act as individual mentors helping each student to self-direct their own learning, teasing might not have been part of the school culture.

David told me that he was diagnosed with "Asperger's in 5th grade," and people with autism spectrum disorders have deficits in "Theory of Mind," meaning that they have trouble naming their emotions, and consequently, anticipating other people's emotions or understanding their perspectives (Nilsson & López, 2016). Because David most likely has some difficulty with Theory of Mind tasks, it is likely that David was trying to answer my question about what was hardest in high school for him by describing his external environment because labeling his internal feelings is difficult (Hull, E. [Special Education teacher, M.A. Special Ed.] personal communication, May 3, 2017).

Perhaps, David was trying to tell me that each successive year in high school the new freshmen irritated him more than the previous year because he felt himself changing, growing more mature, learning how to interact with adults in an adult way, and he saw the freshman not using the skills he had learned. David most likely felt frustrated because he could not relate to them, because they were not behaving in ways to gain the respect of

teachers like he was, staying after school to do his homework. David did not relate to, or "clique with," the incoming freshmen.

Although high school freshmen and seniors may be only four years apart chronologically, adolescence is a time of rapid development, so that not cliquing with many students is inevitable and also explains the reason that cliques form. We are social beings and need a place to fit in. Cliques enable us to fit in, or connect with people, and when we don't fit in, we are frustrated.

K–12 lessons learned. All of the students that I interviewed spent significant amounts of time at school. They made this choice because the school was offering something they needed emotionally, social interaction, and something that interested them (i.e., help to be successful with homework, technology clubs, and leadership opportunities to help people and organize school events). In the case of these eight students, the educational dollars spent on extracurricular activities and academic resources were not wasted because these activities allowed the students I interviewed to situate the student identity as positive in the school microsystem (Bronfenbrenner, 2005; Torres, 2003).

As for what these eight students said was not helpful in their education, two answers are about aspects of school culture, homework and early school-start times, that are discussed extensively in the academic, pedagogical literature. John and Jacob's experiences with homework, and Bob and Val's experiences waking up early support educational pundits who want schools to rely less on homework and have later start times.

As opposed to the school culture, Chad, Finn, and David had greater difficulties with peer relationships, and Jack felt unsupported by his ELD teachers.

Chad, David, and Finn described problems with social peer groups. Because humans are social, walking away from peer groups or feeling like people don't relate to one's values is a very isolating experience, especially in adolescence when people are trying to establish an identity outside of their family unit.

Jack described a lack of relationship with his ELD teacher as the biggest obstacle, but he also credited "all of his teachers" because they were "always there…" with inspiring him to try to go to a four-year university. It is hard to connect with 150 students. Not every student will connect with every teacher, but school personnel need to authentically convey the belief to each of their students individually that they are capable of going to college.

Finally, in their 2015 literature review Crisp, Taggart, and Nora found that coping style correlated with educational persistence, specifically positive reinterpretations, focusing on one's own personal growth, and students' planning skills. Extracurricular activities allow for interactions with peers and teachers, who serve as coaches and club leaders, that promote communication and planning skills. Being able to talk to peers and teachers as well as organize one's time constitute coping skills that ensure more positive academic experiences. Precollege academic experiences are another cross-cultural factor that affects educational persistence. Latino students who did well academically in high school were more likely to do well in college regardless of whether one was a first-generation student, or attending a two- or four- year institution (Fischer, 2007).

How Do Cultural Expectations Within a Latino Male's Identity influence Educational Persistence?

Precollege academic experiences, coping skills, feelings of belonging while at school, and whether a student's family expects him/her to attend university are cross-cultural variables that help any ethnic group member persist in his/her education (Crisp et al., 2015). Ethnic identity by itself is not a cross-cultural variable because every cultural group has its own unique constructs of what it means to be a member; however, there is a universal element to ethnic identity because students who have positive ethnic identities have more educational persistence than those who don't (Benson & Scales, 2009). Crisp et al. (2015) found the correlation between a positive ethnic identity and educational persistence is true for Latino students, which leads to the question: What does it mean to these eight students to be Latino, and how do they integrate their cultural heritage into their identity?

Like identity development towards a career commitment, ethnic identity development has been described as a series of three consecutive Psychosocial stages: (1) unexamined identity, (2) ethnic identity moratorium when a situation creates enough cognitive dissonance that an individual begins to search for a personal meaning for one's ethnic identity, and (3) ethnic identity achievement—having a "clear, confident sense of one's identity" (Phinney, 1993). When I asked David about how he realized that he was Latino, David described in general terms how one realizes what an ethnic identity is.

> David: When you're young you just think everything is just everything and you just kind of go with whatever. It was some time in my late middle school that's when I realized that race was kind of a contributing factor of which you were that I began to fully kind of know that. Like I knew right from the get-go that my parents spoke

> Spanish, but I didn't know about how important that was to basically how that can describe you especially in this day and age.

Cognitive dissonance: which group do I belong to? Seven of the eight students in this study had experiences consistent with Phinney's (1993) description of an ethnic identity moratorium, prompted by some form of racial provocation that caused cognitive dissonance during yjeor K–12 education.

As a Portuguese speaker in a primarily Spanish ELD class, John became aware that his ethnicity was more than just a detail in early elementary school. John described the cognitive dissonance that he felt in a still bewildered tone when he became aware of his perceived otherness because of his Latino ethnicity: "I didn't understand how I was born on a military base in California, but I could still be considered like from a different country?"

Bob described the same type of cognitive dissonance startling him in middle school, but he shared the specific incident that caused it:

> Bob: In middle school this guy-- it was the end of lunch, and he was like, "Hey, go back to Mexico." And it just kind of struck me out of nowhere. I had never even been to Mexico, so how could I go back? That's the first time I'd been told anything racial.

As Jack comments show, some students not only felt confused but described stronger negative feelings:

> Jack: We moved like around fourth grade, and I went to another school where it was like mainly populated by other ethnicities. So, it was like Asians, white students. Like I would not see as many Latinos or people as me, or even people that spoke Spanish. So, I was really like felt *isolated* [emphasis added]. Then I realized, oh, I'm different from these people. Like, these people have viewed me as someone different just because of the language I speak. It was pretty big like shellshock.

Like Jack, Finn also felt isolated:

> Finn: When you get to middle school, that's when you start seeing the difference between the different racial structures and stuff like that. Some people hung out with their race specifically, I felt when we were growing up I was normal in how I did things and how I acted and then you see all these other people and you're just like an outsider, so, I definitely felt like *an outsider* [emphasis added] in school I guess.
>
> Michelle: Because?
>
> Finn: Because there was like the different cliques in school, there was the popular kids and there's all these different groups and stuff and I always felt I was always *lower than them* [emphasis added] I guess.

Cognitive dissonance provoked by racial discrimination, whether overt like Bob described or covert, is confusing for the victim and leads to feelings of isolation and a loss of self-worth. Discrimination causes a person to question who he/she is; this self-questioning is what psychosocial researchers refer to as an identity moratorium (Marcia, 1966; Phinney, 1993; Schwartz et al., 2009).

Through direct interactions about their skin color and language in what Bronfenbrenner (2005) refers to as the school microsystem, Bob, Finn, Jack, and John were provoked into assessing what being Latino means—an identity moratorium. Both Val and Jacob went through their ethnic identity moratoriums, but their moratoriums were prompted by events occurring in two systems above the microsystems of direct interactions.

Although Val grew up in a rural agricultural area and Jacob grew up in a densely populated urban area, they both grew up in neighborhoods and schools that are over 65%

Latino. Consequently, while growing up neither of them, had any occasion to think about being Latino because everyone they knew was Latino.

Jacob discovered some of what it meant to be Latino through the second system in Bronfenbrenner Ecological Systems' theory, the mesosystem of his family and its interactions with the school community. Jacob's oldest brother, who is six years older than he is, was involved in "race riots" between African Americans and Latinos at the local high school.

Val realized some of the implications of being Latino through the third system in Bronfenbrenner Ecological Systems' theory, the exosystem, which is comprised of the broader institutional context that influences an individual's development. In Val's life, his exosystem in part consisted of school funding and immigration status. Val's parents listened to the News "a lot," and during his sixth-grade year, the local Spanish news stations carried a lot of stories about the DREAM (Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors) Act. Subsequently, Val's parents had many discussions about whether his older sister should register for under the DREAM Act, which she ultimately did not do. From this exosystem context, Val heard a lot about what it means to be Latino.

One student interviewed, Chad, has not had to resolve his ethnic identity because he has not had an ethnic identity crisis. He was a Mexican growing up in Mexico until he was 14 years old. Chad knew who he was because he was like everyone else he knew. It is a person's differences from people and the stress of feeling like you don't fit into your environment that prompt an ethnic identity crises (Marcia, 1966; Phinney, 1993). Marcia refers to identity foreclosure when he describes career identity—not making a choice for

oneself at all is a state of identity foreclosure (Marcia, 1966; Schwartz et al, 2009). Phinney applied Marcia's concept of identity foreclosure to encompass ethnic identity.

After a year of living with his older brother's family, Chad decided to join his parents in the United States to take advantage of the benefits of socioeconomic mobility through education. Chad still considers himself a Mexican even though he and his family are now living in the United States, so there was no reason for him to question his ethnic identity. Marcia refers to not questioning an aspect of one's identity as being in a state of "identity foreclosure" (Marcia, 1966; Schwartz et al., 2009).

When I asked David about how he realized he was Latino, he did not describe a specific situation but rather told me what an ethnic identity was. John, Jack, and Finn also did not describe specific situations when I asked them about how they realized that being Latino meant belong to a particular group, but they told me how they felt after they realized that they were Latino, which is what I, using a narrative-constructivist approach, really wanted to know because emotions influence how we interpret events and make meaning from which we develop our life story (McAdams & Olson, 2010).

Because context affects how we feel and interpret events, I tried to see if I could make a reasonable guess about the context of David's comment about realizing his own ethic identity, "It was some time in my late middle school that...I realized that race was...a contributing factor of who you were... I didn't know about how important that was..." (p. 92). The only contextual comment David made was "in late middle school," so I looked for other comments David made about middle school.

David mentioned middle school two additional times. The first time was in the explanation about how he was diagnosed with Asperger syndrome:

> David: I was very struggling with middle school. In middle school that I began to notice that I struggle with certain topics more. Like I struggle with math and English...

The other time David mentioned middle school was when I asked him about it:

> Michelle: What about middle school and elementary school? Did you…
>
> David: Yeah, middle school and elementary, middle school especially where I'm comfortable with talking about it now because I kind of got over it. They weren't the best years.
>
> Michelle: Middle school's not the best years for anybody.
>
> David: Middle school and elementary no. There was bullying issues. I didn't fully know what to do. Middle school is definitely the era where your *mind starts to go into dark places*, for me anyway.

These quotes reveal that David had a hard time in middle school because of academics and bullying.

Bob and Finn told me they were teased in middle school, and the teasing occasioned their realization that being Latino gave one a lesser status among some peers with different ethnicities. Although John and Jacob realized that being Latino set them apart from other groups during elementary school, they both said they were "picked on a lot" in middle school. John was teased in middle school because he was "fat" and Jacob because he was "short." Jacob described middle school as "harsh" and also described other conflicts between Latinos and African Americans at his middle school. Because of the information that David did provide about his middle school experience and because five of the eight students told me they were teased during middle school, it is reasonable,

although not certain to conclude, that David's ethnic identity moratorium also began in part as a result of some sort of provocation from his peers. In the U.S. racism that creates enough cognitive dissonance to generate an identity moratorium is usually first perceived at school (Ortiz & Santos, 2009; Torres, 2003).

David also mentioned a current situation that has provoked him into thinking more about what it means to be Latino. My interview with David took place in late September 2016 during the Presidential election in which the then Republican candidate Donald Trump made a highly publicized pledge to build a wall across the U.S. border with Mexico. As a Latino, this concerned David.

> David: I've been thankful that no really racial like problems have happened upon my family to my knowledge. We've just been living by regular ways, but now especially with Donald Trump's very harsh comments about us it kind of just shows that we need to stick together almost.

Like Val and his exosystem of the ramifications and attitudes toward the DREAM ACT, David's exosystem with its distrust of Latinos as evidenced by the promise to build a border is influencing David's identity (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). From David's perspective, a Latino identity in the U.S. means being excluded by some people.

David knows that the Trump administration and its supporters do not welcome some of his family because of their immigration status. Just like a gender identity, an ethnic identity is based fundamentally on ethnic differences as Connolly (2002, p. 64) stated, "Identity requires difference in order to be, and converts difference into otherness in order to secure its own self-certainty."

Highlighting the environment in which an individual derives what an event means to him/her is crucial to being able to understand someone else's experience of the world (Patton, 1990). In summary, seven of the eight students I interviewed started to think about their ethnic identity because of some sort of provocation resulting from someone's racism that the defined them as not deserving to be include. Table 2 summarizes the experiences of the seven students that provoked enough cognitive dissonance to cause an identity moratorium (Phinney, 1993) and the system, according to Bronfenbrenner (2005) Ecological Systems Theory, in which the provocation occurred.

Table 2

Ecological System in which Interactions Caused an Identity Moratorium

Student	Ecological System in which Provocation occurred	Provocation or Feelings
1. Bob	School Microsystem[a]	Classmate: "Hey, go back to Mexico!" (p. 92).
2. David	School Microsystem and Exosystem[b]	"bullying," (p. 89) and "Trump's very harsh comments about us" (p. 98).
3. Finn	School Microsystem	"lower than them" and "an outsider" (p. 93).
4. Jack	School Microsystem	"big shellshock" and "isolated" (p. 93).
5. Jacob	School-Family Mesosystem[c]	Older brother was involved in "race riots" between African Americans and Latinos at the local high school.

Student	Ecological System in which Provocation occurred	Provocation or Feelings
6. John	School Microsystem	"I didn't understand how I was born on a military base in California but I could still be considered like from a different country?" (p. 93)
7. Val	Exosystem	Political controversy about the DREAM ACT.

[a] Interactions an individual has within a group (e.g., in the family, at school).
[b] Social systems that indirectly affect an individual (e.g., school funding).
[c] Interactions between members of two microsystems (e.g., school and family).

Of the eight students I interviewed, Chad has an "unexamined ethnic identity" because while growing up in Mexico Chad's role models were Mexican. The other seven students I interviewed were made to feel like they did not belong in their local school or community because of the color of their skin and the language they spoke. How can a language or skin color be inherently a problem? They were healthy and whole developmentally, not lacking anything, and they knew this to be true within themselves. But, the people they interacted with conveyed the messages that they didn't belong because something was wrong with them. Their internal experience of themselves and their social experiences in the microsystem of their school or mesosystem of their community did not match, and this mismatch between what they knew to be true about themselves and how other people treated them caused their cognitive dissonance.

Ethnic identity moratorium: resolving cognitive dissonance. John and Bob both talked to their mothers about why people were singling them out because their families of origin hailed from Latin America, and David said he got through his "dark" period with

the "support of his family." It is not surprising that John talked to his mother about his ethnicity because he was in early elementary school when he experienced an ethnic identity moratorium at an age when children believe parents can fix most anything. Bob appears to be close to his mother because he brought her up in a positive and natural way five times during our 65-minute interview. The other students generally mentioned their mothers at the beginning of the interview when they were telling me about themselves. David said he didn't have many friends, which is common for people on the autism spectrum (National Institute of Mental Health, 2015), so it is not surprising that he received support from his parents.

Although Jacob and Val's families frequently discussed the implications of being Latino in the context of race riots (Jacob's family) and the DREAM ACT (Val's family), neither of them, nor the other three students, Chad, Finn, or Jack, talked to anyone about the implication of being Latino nor their subsequent feelings. In answering my question about whether or not Jack talked to anyone about the "shellshock" he experienced because of the language he spoke, Jack brought up another aspect of his identity which he was more comfortable with: "Not really. I'm the type of person that usually keeps my feelings to myself. I don't know if that comes just from being a middle child."

Jack's answer about keeping his feelings to himself is not surprising because people who have internalized masculine gender norms, such as the students I interviewed, do not seek help if the problem is "ego central," that is, affecting one's identity or if the person thinks he will lose status or control by seeking help (Addis & Mahalik, 2003). Adolescents, students in middle school, generally are very status conscious as well as

self-conscious (Molloy, Gest & Rulison, 2011), which explains why the students I interviewed did not tell anyone that they were "shunned" because of their ethnicity.

However, people who have internalized masculine gender norms are likely to seek help if they view their problem as a normal, that is, a problem a significant percentage of people have (Addis & Mahalik, 2003). But, if a person is singled out and experiences any form aggression for a way of speaking or a physical characteristic, that person does not feel normal. Researchers, however, have found that approximately 60% of the children of immigrants, both Asian and Latino, experience some sort of discrimination measured by traditional surveys (e.g., "Do people respect you less and harass you because of your ethnicity?") and daily diary responses (e.g., yes-or-no-checkboxes to answer the question, "Were you treated poorly because of your ethnicity today?"; Huynh & Fuligni, 2010; Portes, 1999). If approximately 60% of the respondents answered "yes" to these questions, then, unfortunately, race-based aggression is a common problem for Latino students, but it is doubtful students experiencing it for the first time are aware of how common it is.

Latino ethnic identity. Even though only three of the students talked to anyone about the alienation they experienced because of their Latino ethnicity, no one expressed an overtly negative Latino ethnic identity. Although Chad never went through an ethnic identity crisis with the resulting identity moratorium (Phinney, 1993; Portes, 1999), he talked about what being Latino encompassed:

> Chad: After I knew what Latino was, then I embraced it because, like, there are some things that only Latinos can understand with each other. Even though we are from different parts of the country, like, let's say I'm from Mexico, I can easily talk to anyone, like, in

> Argentina and in Guatemala. And it's easy to connect with them. Like, I was proud of being Latino, because, like, there are some things that only Latinos can understand Like, jokes and things like that.

Coming to the U.S. and encountering the ethnic diversity in the Bay Area has expanded Chad's conception of his own ethnic identity from Mexican to all people from Spanish-speaking countries in the Western Hemisphere.

To understand how these eight students saw themselves within the context of their ethnic identity, I asked them how they felt about being Latino. Different ethnic groups have different levels of ethnic-identity saliency. Torkelson and Hartmann's (2010) finding that less than 15% of whites in the U.S. assert an ethnic identity despite the fact "there are more nonwhites who possess salient ties to their ethnicity than there are whites asserting any ethnicity at all" (p. 13210) lends support to the assertion that for most whites, "whiteness compromises a largely invisible category" (Hyde, 1995; Torkelson & Hartmann, 2010, p. 1314). Whites don't have to think about their ethnicity or race very often because it is not a problem for them. Other ethnicities in the United States have to think about their ethnicity more because a lack of white privilege constitutes more problems.

Jacob reacted to this question with surprise because the majority of his microsystems growing up at school and in his neighborhood were populated with Latinos. Consequently, as he answered, it appeared as if he were considering his ethnicity for the first time.

> Jacob: What is Latino mean? I still appreciate my background. I'm never letting go of my background, my culture. I still practice my culture with my family. So being Latino, doesn't really bother me.

[7-second pause]

Jacob: Everyone is a human being. So being Latino, *it doesn't really affect me*. I love being Latino. I love my culture. Yeah. I'm sure other people love their own culture, which I respect.

Jacob's answer revealed that he was not thinking about being Latino because, being Latino was not causing him any problems: "So being Latino, it doesn't really affect me." Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory posits that people re-evaluate their identities over time, a process, that Bronfenbrenner called the chronosystem. Over time, or in the chronosystem, as a person's environment changes, new interactions provoke new cognitions and revisions to one's identity occur. My question about what being Latino meant served as a provocation for Jacob to think about his ethnicity.

Jacob gave the impression that he is close to his family because of the positive and affectionate way he told stories about them. For the most part, Jacob recounted a happy childhood telling me about all the places he lived and playing soccer. In short, Jacob loves his family and everything their Latino culture has given him.

Like Jacob, Val grew up in a predominantly Latino community but with even less ethnic diversity; Latinos made up 85% of Val's hometown and 65% of Jacob's hometown. Consequently, Val's comments about being Latino reflected the part of Jacob's answer about practicing the culture of one's family by explicitly mentioning what social studies textbooks describe as categories that are part of every culture:

Val: Latino, to me? Just different culture, different background. Basically, a whole different background and culture, yeah, different language, different environment. I find being Latino very differently compared to, say, if I was an African-American or white. I find it very differently.

Michelle: How so?

Val: How I said culture, food, language, surroundings, yeah.

Val liked his grandmother's cooking. He loved selling "truck tamales" at Christmastime with his mother. He likes going back to the rural agricultural town he grew up in and does so at least once a month during the semester.

Finn talked about the same cultural elements as Val, even the detail of tamales, but personalized his comments about being Latino, describing his thought process.

> Finn: To me, I take pride in it [being Latino] because I took a big admiration towards people's cultures because a lot of people would talk down about stuff, and I was always interested about how people did things, how their culture affected their lifestyle and when I looked at other people and then I looked at my own life, I did notice how different my life was compared to other people. So, I would see people who were White and then they would be like, "Oh, I did this," and stuff and I was like, "Oh, that's where I usually do this." And so, I would see the different lifestyles we had and how-- my grandma, she always cooked during Christmas, she would make tamales. So, then I saw all these different cultures. We practiced the Three Kings Day, and so I would talk to other people about what they did.

Like Finn, Jack shared his thought process about being Latino:

> Jack: I was really big on trying to say Asians, just because I didn't know if they were Japanese, Korean, Chinese, and I was just trying to like learn more about that because I didn't want to be as ignorant as some people believe other people to be. I was really trying to like differentiating all those type of races. I wanted to be more like accepting to all those other ethnicities, because also within the Latin American countries they all think, oh, we're all Mexicans.

Instead of talking about cultural awareness like Finn, Jack, and Val, Bob talked about how being Latino affected him academically:

> Bob: Being Latino means to me now that you have to learn from your mistakes. There's not always someone there to guide you. 'Cause

> me being the first of my family to go to school, I've kind of had to learn everything from my mistakes and my errors to make it big and use it as an opportunity to go to school.

Bob returned to the subject of his lack of cultural capital[14] in academia when talking about high school:

> Bob: So, I was in a calculus workshop for Calculus 1 and we were working on some problems, and there was one kid who's, like, Indian and he called his dad up to get help with the question. And I was like, in my head I was like, "Oh, that's really cool. I wish I could do that." But... 'cause my dad didn't go to school. He wasn't really proficient in math.

And Bob mentioned it again when we were talking about his experiences at San José State: "That's the hardest part, just getting the right resources to help. I couldn't ask my friends for help, 'cause they don't know what's going on either."

Although Bob sees his lack of cultural capital in the university as a result of his Latino ethic identity, he is not letting his ethnicity define his aspirations. He is in college because of his internal motivation. Bob's attitude and the fact that he is in university reflects researchers' finding that the most significant factor predicting educational persistence for Latino students was internal motivation, and internal motivation mitigated all other sociocultural variables (Alvarado & Ricard, 2013; Crisp, Taggart & Nora, 2015; Próspero, Russell, and Vohra-Gupta, 2012). Bob said that his parents never told him they wanted him to go to university, and consequently, Bob had to learn about university on his own starting with an internet search. Bob is in university because he is self-motivated.

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[14] "a social force consisting of competencies and connections that functions within a field, [or microsystem] in which it is subject to contestation." (Bourdieu, 1986).

Familismo*: a Latino value expanded*. Like the six students described above, David mentioned "culture" when he was talking about what being Latino meant to him, but David also brought up the Latino cultural value, familyism or *familismo*: "We are the kind of family that family isn't defined by your blood. It's in my dad's words, 'Who you'll die for.' And everybody is that close."

Familismo refers to the importance of loyalty, closeness, and mutual support of one's nuclear family, extended family and kinship networks in Latino culture (Ayón, et al., 2010). Researchers have found *familismo* to be a protective factor for Latinos; for example, the degree to which a person identifies with *familismo* has been linked to lower levels of substance use (Gil et al., 2000).

Six of the students I interviewed expressed their personal value of *familismo* in their interviews. As soon as they graduate, both Jack and Chad intend to financially help their older brothers, who are currently working to support the family, attend university. Jack also mentioned that as the first person in his family to go to university, he has to be a good example. As a Business major, Val intends to help his undocumented parents set up legal businesses earning a bachelorette degree in Business. Finn intends to get an Electrical Engineering degree so that he can buy a house for his mother, and after a few years working as an Engineer, he is hoping he will have enough money to switch careers and get a teaching credential. Bob intends to provide his younger siblings and cousins with the cultural capital for university that he does not have currently.

> Bob: I can teach them my mistakes. Making sure they don't make the same mistakes I did and now they have someone to, like, guide them through school-- 'cause I didn't have that.

Finally, Jacob shared value for *familismo* when he said that going to college is "a duty to my parents because they came to this country to give us a better life."

Being an honorable man means taking care of one's family. In an agrarian society, men take care of their families by going to work and physically laboring. In a service-based society, like the U.S., people need an education to secure a well-paying job and provide for their families. These six students, Bob, Chad, Finn, Jack, Jacob, and Val, have expanded the concept of providing for their families to include getting an education. They are motivated to go to school so they can one day fulfill their duty as conceived in the cultural value of *familismo.* The most significant factor of the nine factors identified by Crisp et al. (2015) for predicting educational persistence for Latino students was internal motivation, which mitigated all other sociocultural variables (Alvarado & Ricard, 2013; Crisp et al., 2015; Próspero et al., 2012). Additionally, Próspero et al., (2012) found that first-generation Latino students' internal motivation strongly correlated with their GPAs. Based on my interviews with these students, a significant part of their internal motivation is the result of valuing *familismo.*

Latino incognito

9+/. When I asked John about what being Latino meant to him, he didn't directly answer the question but rather told me how he resolved his ethnic identity moratorium:

> John: When people ask me, I tell them I'm Portuguese. If I say I'm Mexican and Portuguese, they tend to be very confused that I'm Mexican. Everyone's always like "Oh, you look…like I would have never guessed the Mexican part." So, I don't tell people. But when I have like a document that I have to put my ethnicity on always mark Latino or Mexican on there.

Despite not always mentioning his Mexican heritage, John expressed pride that he is trilingual in Portuguese, Spanish, and English. By emphasizing his Portuguese ethnicity more than his Mexican ethnicity, I believe he is giving himself more freedom to create his own identity instead of confronting his peers' impressions about what it does or does not mean to be Mexican.

Seven of the eight students I interviewed had the Spanish form of a given name (e.g., Mateo as opposed to Matthew). As part of my confidentiality explanation, I asked them to choose their own pseudonym. They all looked perplexed about what to choose, so I elaborated, "A pseudonym can be any name you want me to use when I refer to what you say in this interview. It can be whatever name you like, or the name of a favorite actor, whatever you want it to be." As the data presented show, they all chose very Anglo-centric names. Although none of the students chose the Anglicized version of their name as a pseudonym, one of the students, John, went by the Anglicized short form of his name (e.g., both Mateo and Matthew can be shortened to Matt), so I had to ask John what his given name was.

Four students, Bob, David, Finn, and John, spoke English without any accent whereas the other four of the students, Chad, Jack, Jacob, and Val spoke English with a Mexican accent. All of the students, except David, took AP Spanish and scored high enough on the AP test to earn college credit for it. The students' level of fluency is important to note because language is a primary inter- and intracultural group identifier (Holmes, 2013).

Of the five students who either live on campus in residence halls or apartments within walking distance of campus, only one student, Val, speaks Spanish daily. Val lives with

six Latino students. Jacob lives with five aerospace engineering students who are all white. Bob, Finn, and John told me that they do not hear people speaking Spanish in their three separate residence halls. John's friends are mainly from the water polo team, and he is the only Latino on the team. Finn has joined a Protestant, evangelical Christian club with a campus ministry, and he is the only Latino in that club. Bob said that his family "can't relate" to him much anymore because he watches TV shows like "The Big Bang Theory," and they don't "understand it and just watch me laugh." None of the five students who either live or work on campus has joined any Latino organizations. It appears on a daily basis that they are seeking a "melting-pot" experience.

¡Latinoamericanos en el Norte! / Latinos in the North (U.S.). Seven of the students I interviewed were born in the U.S., but they discovered their ethnic identity in the context of a racial/ethnic hierarchy that placed them towards the bottom. Perceiving rejection because of one's ethnicity or race can have a negative effect on one's psychological well-being and causes one to distance oneself from the rejecting individuals or groups (Smart Richman & Leary, 2009; Wiley, Lawrence, Figueroa & Percontino, 2013). Rejection because of ethnicity is the first stressor that the students I interviewed had to deal with.

The seven students born in the U.S. had at least one parent who had immigrated from Latin America. Children of immigrants must learn the morés and values of two cultures, their family culture at home and the mainstream culture (Dennis, Fonseca, Gutierrez, Shen, & Salazar, 2016). Reconciling two different cultures can be disorienting because behavioral expectations between cultures often are different, especially if a person must

learn another language at school to participate fully in the mainstream culture. This is the second stressor that the students I interviewed dealt with.

The eight students I interviewed are persisting in their education and participating in mainstream culture by doing what mainstream culture expects people aged 18–22 years to do: go to college to prepare for a career; therefore, researchers would categorize these students as well acculturated. The purpose of my questioning them specifically about being Latino was to see how they overcame the two stressors mentioned above, specific to ethnic minorities in California, to understand how they became acculturated. Their answers described above reveal two coping mechanisms to deal with the stress of acculturation and discrimination.

First, six of the students adhered to the Latino value of *familismo*, so they are getting an education to be able to be honorable men and one day take care of their families. Because they identify as Latino, they care about *familismo* enough to talk about it as a reason for going to university. The Latino culture has provided them with the internal motivation to persist in their education. Extending a value from one culture to accommodate expectations in another culture demonstrates bicultural competence.

Second, to deal with the stress of discrimination, sometimes it is easier to not bring up known differences and blend in with dominant, mainstream culture. Bob, Finn, and John speak English without any Spanish accent, and they are looking to groups that are not traditionally Latino to socialize with. Although Jacob does have a Spanish accent when he speaks English, his English is fluent, and I had no problems understanding him. Like Bob, Fin, and John, Jacob is socializing with people who share his interest, aerospace

engineering. Five of the students I interviewed are just not emphasizing their Latino heritage because they have other interests, and blending is easier and more interesting than bringing up something that might make someone tell them to "go back to Mexico" (see Bob's quote on p. 93).

Although I did not ask the three students who live at home and commute to campus, Chad, David, and Jack, about how much they speak Spanish at university, Jack, who works 40 hours a week as a bank teller and attends fulltime at SJSU two days a week, sums up what I think every university would like to be for all students.

> Jack: To me it [being Latino] means being like everyone else. There's so much diversity here at San Jose State that it doesn't really feel any different being Latino.

Discussion and Conclusion

I have always cherished listening to stories, which is why qualitative research appeals to me. For every statistic, there are hundreds of stories. To understand the statistics, we have to listen to the stories. Counselors are supposed to be good listeners, asking the right questions to uncover salient facts, or themes. So, a listening research project was apropos to me.

Statistics often show us a problem. For example, in the Introduction, I cited Fry and Lopez (2012) who stated, "only nine percent of Latino students are earning postsecondary degrees; this lower graduation rate is despite the fact that Latinos constitute 25% of community college students and 13% of students at universities." Because research studies about pedagogy and educational culture frequently are done to solve problems, researchers often approach problems with a deficit-based orientation in which "some communities are culturally wealthy while others are culturally poor" (Yosso, 2005, p. 76).

In contrast, an asset-based orientation to research seeks to understand the skills and values that socially marginalized groups already have. For example, in the Results section of this study, I found that three-fourths of the students I interviewed "expanded the concept of providing for their families to include getting an education. Latino male students are motivated to go to school so they can one day fulfill their duty as conceived in their cultural value of *familismo*."

Because a deficit-based research orientation is pragmatic in its direct attempt to solve problems, deficit-based research findings often have more sway over intervention

programs. But, because a deficit-based research orientation assumes that problems are due to something lacking, deficit-based research can inadvertently support prejudices in schools (Yosso, 2005).

I was inspired to do asset-based research by Shaun Harper's (2009) study of black, male students who were succeeding on predominantly white college campuses, but because the student body at SJSU is 25.7% Latino (The Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, 2016), I decided to research Latino male students with low socioeconomic status.

The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of how lower socioeconomic status, Latino male students ascribe meaning to their education and then to identify how these students made meaning of their education, gender identity, and ethnicity. The themes that emerged from the eight interview transcripts were (a) the role of family, (b) the role of school personnel, specifically teachers and school counselors, (c) the role of extracurricular activities, (d) the role of racism when becoming aware of one's Latino identity, and (e) the incorporation of Latino values to support education.

Recommendations for School Implementation

The eight interviews did not reveal any information that contradicts the most recent research finding. Homework and early morning school-start times were decidedly not helpful according to students. However, by comparing and contrasting the experiences recounted by the students, the following recommendations can be asserted.

School personnel support for students: David's experience versus Jack's. Both David and Jack expressed a great amount of appreciation for "all [their] teachers"

because of the support they received. David received a great deal of support from teachers for two reasons. First, he went to a smaller, public charter school where all students meet one-on-one with a mentor daily. Second, because of a diagnosis of Asperger Syndrome, David's individual educational plan (IEP) stipulated that he was to meet individually with his resource teacher twice a day. David's teachers fulfilled the mission of his school and ensured David was academically ready for college.

Jack's experience was significantly different from David's because Jack only started to feel supported at school after he became the boyfriend of a college-focused co-ed and as a result switched peer groups and started hanging out with her friends. Consequently, Jack started doing his homework because that is what his new peer group did. Before Jack changed peer groups, he felt very unsupported by his teachers because of frequent substitute teachers and lectures about how he was "not working to his full potential." Jack is fortunate that he switched peer groups, but attention from teachers should not be dependent on belonging to a particular peer group or having an IEP.

To deal with the problem of students feeling unsupported, or a lack of school connectedness, teachers need time and lower student-teacher ratios to develop trusting relationships with students. Students with low socioeconomic status are at risk for low educational persistence (Povich et al., 2014; Schneider & Yin, 2012) and should be tracked in a way similar to IEPs for disabled students, so that they are not lost in the crowd like Jack was. Tracking low socioeconomic status students' school connectedness will be easier than writing IEPs because educational research has shown what all students need: an emotionally supportive relationship with at least one adult at school, preferably a

teacher (Ozer, Wolf & Kong, 2008; Ryan & Patrick, 2001). However, Hass and Graydon (2009) found that 32% of the students surveyed did not mention a faculty member but rather mentioned a staff member (p. 460). School administrators should share this research with staff, encouraging them to look for opportunities to connect with students as they do their jobs at school. A cafeteria worker, office assistant, or janitor who befriends a student will help that student to feel cared for and thus connected to the school community. Feeling supported at school should not be left to chance.

Create cognitive coping strategies to counter microaggression. As discussed in the Results section of this study, researchers have found that approximately 60% of the children of immigrants, both Asian and Latino, experience some sort of discrimination (Huynh & Fuligni, 2010; Portes, 1999). If approximately 60% of respondents reported incidents of race-based aggression, then it is a common problem for Latino students, but it is doubtful students experiencing microaggression because of their ethnicity for the first time are aware of how common racism is.

To help dispel the feelings that Finn and Jack described of being "an outsider," "lower than them," (p. 93) and "isolated" (p. 93), students need to be made aware that they may experience some sort of racism and that the problem is a societal problem based on fear and not valuing humankind's inherent dignity and not a problem with them personally. This message of diversity within inclusion needs to be incorporated into the social studies curriculum and middle school orientation, because schools need to ensure that all students get the message that experiencing any sort of aggression or exclusion does not mean there is a fundamental problem with who they are.

Increase internal motivation through *Familismo*. In their systematic review of 63 published research studies about which sociocultural variables influenced Latino students' educational persistence, Crisp et al., (2015) found that internal motivation mitigated all other sociocultural variables. If students are motivated enough to earn a postsecondary degree, then they are more likely to stay in school, despite whatever difficulties arise.

Six of the students I interviewed (Bob, Chad, Finn, Jacob, Jack, and Val) expressed their personal value of *familismo* in their interviews when telling me about what motivated them to go to university. *Familismo* is a Latino cultural value that encompasses the importance of loyalty, closeness, and mutual support of one's nuclear family, extended family and kinship networks (Ayón, Marsiglia & Bermudez-Parsai, 2010), and it is providing a great deal of internal motivation for six of the students in this study. This is noteworthy because only two students, John and Jacob, said their parents expected them to attend college. Thus, five students in this study are in college in part to help their families after they graduate even though their families never overtly encouraged them to go to college.

Attending college requires delayed gratification in terms of free time and earning money. As such, *familismo* is a powerful internal motivator that all educators, administrators, counselors, and teachers, need to be aware of when trying to increase Latino male students' internal motivation for academics. Curriculum in the form of survey questions about what students value should be developed and used to make students explicitly aware of what they value and want to do as adults (e.g., drive a fancy

car, buy a house for one's parents, be the boss, discover a cure for cancer…). The educators can demonstrate with statistics about the earning potentials of college graduates versus people without any postsecondary degrees (Schneider & Yin, 2012) along with personal stories of Latino male college grads. If students are consciously aware of their values, they will be better able to set and pursue meaningful goals, such as persisting in their education until they earn a diploma. Formal expository training about *familismo* for all educators will help schools become more culturally competent.

Ensure extracurricular activities: they are not extra. When answering the question, "What did you like the most about school in the K–12 grades?" all the students described supportive teachers or counselors. They all also gave the same answer when asked, "What significant events have been most meaningful in your education?" They all named activities that required after-school participation. The types of activities were varied (see Table 1). Four students specifically said, "Leadership," and I had to ask them to explain what they meant.

Two students were in elective classes referred to "Leadership" at least informally. A third student was in a video editing class. Both the "Leadership" class and the video editing class required students to stay after school to work on organizing group projects for the school community. Their elective classes were not part of the California high school curriculum, but they were classes, and the students chose to stay after school to ensure they did well in these classes.

The most unusual extracurricular activity described was a homework center where students can stay after school to do homework with the help of school staff. David chose

to stay after school at the homework center because he did not do well academically the first semester of ninth grade. As a result of the homework center, he completed his homework, improved his GPA enough to be accepted at SJSU, and became friends with the staff and students who were also there after school.

School administrators may not think of academic resources like homework support as extracurricular activities because they are directly related to learning. But, the money spent on extracurricular activities is well spent according to the participants in this study, and it is worth noting that what the students considered to be extracurricular in one case directly supported the required academic curriculum.

Areas for Further Research

In addition to specific recommendations, the data collected from the eight interviews raised at least two questions for further research.

What makes Algebra teachers influential with Latino male students? Three students, Bob, Jacob, and John, talked at length about their algebra teachers, who were also male teachers. David and Jack credited "all" their teachers with inspiring them to go to a four-year university, but the only teacher whom Jack specifically mentioned was his history teacher, also a male teacher. The algebra teachers received more lengthy and thorough descriptions than any other classroom teachers mentioned. So, the research question that arises is the following: Were the teachers influential because of the subject they taught, algebra, their gender, or for some other reason?

Perhaps, gender only appears to be significant because there are more men teaching in high school STEM fields; the U.S. Department of Education found in their Schools and

Staffing Survey (SASS) that only 35% of eighth-grade math teachers are male, but 66% of 12th-grade science teachers are male (as cited in Hechinger Report, 2015), so the students I interviewed were more likely to have a male teacher as they entered higher level STEM classes. Alternatively, perhaps, the students I interviewed perceived having a male teacher as a privilege because male teachers are a scarcity overall in K–12 classrooms with less than 25% of all K–12 teachers being men (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012). Perhaps the male algebra teachers influenced the students whom I interviewed because they had the same communication preference. This finding about male teachers, specifically algebra teachers, raises many questions related to academic subject matter and teacher identity that this study does not have the breadth to answer.

Demographics: ethnic homogeneity versus diversity. Jacob and Val both grew up in neighborhoods and schools that are over 65% Latino, so that as they grew up neither of them had any occasion to think about being Latino because everyone they knew was Latino. Although Jacob and Val are both fluent English speakers, they both speak with strong Mexican accents, so that it is obvious to anyone who meets them that they are Latino. However, when they talked about what being Latino meant to them, they did not mention feeling like "an outsider" or experiencing microaggression directed at them.

Five students grew up in multiethnic neighborhoods where no single ethnicity compromised more than 50% of the population. They described feeling alienated, for example, "lower than everyone else," "an outsider" (p. 93), "shellshock," "isolated" (p. 93), and incidents microaggression when they spoke about realizing their Latino ethnicity.

See Table 2. One student described being Latino in terms of lack of cultural capital (p. 105–106). It is notable that four of these five students speak English without any trace of a foreign accent so that they do not appear to be Latino. If they had not signed up to participate in a study about Latino males and educational persistence, I would not have thought they were Latino. For this reason, it is surprising to me that they reported being and feeling shunned because of their ethnicity, especially because many ethnically diverse communities often espouse antidiscrimination and inclusion.

Because Jacob and Val experienced growing up as Latinos differently, without any feelings of alienation or recalling incidents of microaggression, the question of which type demographic is healthier for identity development arises. People in less diverse environments may perceive themselves as having more culturally prescribed career choices if attending university is not perceived to be an option.

As a society and as educators, we must promote acceptance and healthy identity development that encompasses educational persistence for people from homogenous and diverse areas.

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Appendic

Appendix A: Informed Consent Form

San José State UNIVERSITY

Counselor Education

Connie L. Lurie College of Education

One Washington Square
San José, CA 95192-0073
Voice: 408-924-3634
Fax: 408-924-4137
Internet:
http://www.sjsu.edu/counselored

REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH
INFORMED CONSENT FORM

FACULTY SUPERVISOR: Dr. Jason Laker

TITLE OF STUDY: Educational Persistence in Latino Male Undergraduate Students: What they say

RESEARCHER: Michelle Swartz. San José Staté University, Counselor Education (EDCO) Graduate Student

PURPOSE: The purpose of this study is to explore how Latino male students internalize education into a meaningful part of their identities by uncovering the salient factors that Latino male students perceive as being critical to their education persistence. Educational persistence equates to enrolling in courses each year and all the behaviors required to stay enrolled and complete a degree.

PROCEDURES: Information will be gathered through semi-structured, one-on-one interviews with each of the study participants. Interviews will be conducted on campus, last between 60–90 minutes, and will be recorded and then transcribed.

POTENTIAL RISKS: Completing an interview involves no serious risk to you. But, sometimes remembering stressful events can cause stress in the present. Stress can be alleviated by talking about your feelings, and not just the events themselves.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS: The information obtained from this study is useful to those working with low-income, first generation, and other at risk populations. Counselors and practitioners may be able to use these findings to ensure that the U.S. education system, from the interactions at school to the policies that influence those interactions, is equitable to all students. There are no direct benefits for participants.

Giving participants in this study the opportunity to talk about what they perceive as meaningful events in their lives will reinforce their self-concepts.

COMPENSATION: A $25 Target gift card will be given to each participant who complete a 60–90 minute interview.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Although the results of this survey will be published, no identifying information will be reported that could specifically identify you. Pseudonyms will be used for all transcribed interviews, data analysis, and publication. Audio recordings of the interviews will be destroyed after written transcriptions are completed and verified.

RESTRICTIONS: You must be at least 18 years or older to participate in this study. Study participants must also be Latino, male, San José State undergraduate students in academic good standing.

PARTICIPANT RIGHTS: Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You can refuse to participate in the entire study or any part of the study without any negative effect on your relations with San José State University or Michelle Swartz. This consent form is not a contract. It is a written explanation of what will happen during the study if you decide to participate. You will not waive any rights if you choose not to participate. There is no penalty for stopping your participation in the survey.

QUESTIONS & CONCERNS:

- For further information about the study, please contact Michelle Swartz at michelle@christers.net.
- Complaints about the study may be presented to Dr. Elaine Chin (Dean of the Lurie College of Education at San José Staté University) over the phone at 408.924.3601 or by e-mail elaine.chin@sjsu.edu.
- For questions about participants' rights or if you feel you have been harmed in any way by your participation in this study, please contact Dr. Pamela Stacks (San José State University, Associate Vice President of Research) by phone at 408.924.3654.

RESEARCHER STATEMENT: I certify that the participant has been given adequate time to learn about the study and ask questions. It is my opinion that the participant understands his/her rights and the purpose, risks, benefits, and procedures of this research and has voluntarily agreed to participate.

_____	_____	_____
Researcher's Name (printed)	Researcher's Signature	Date

Appendix B: Local Counseling Resources

At the end of each interview, students received the information below.

- After Hours Advice Nurse, San José State University Health Center: 1 866-935-6347
- Counseling Center, San José State University Health Center: 408-924-5910
- Crisis/Suicide Hotline, Santa Clara County: 408-683-2482
- Regional Medical Center, San José, 225 N. Jackson Ave., San José: 408-259-5000

Table C1 *Participant Demographics**

Participants	Year • Age	Family Status: age 2–15 yrs.	Major	Living situation	Residence Status • Ethnicity
Bob	Sophomore, age 19	Intact nuclear family; oldest of 3	Physics	Residence Hall	Father, undocumented Mexican. Mother, Mexican American.
Chad	Junior, age 20	Intact nuclear family; youngest of 5	Finance	@ home w/ nuclear family	Nuclear family all undocumented Mexicans, including Chad.
David	Freshman, age 18	Intact nuclear family; only child	undeclared	@ Home w/ nuclear family	Nuclear family all citizens; Father: Puerto Rican American. Mother: Portuguese American.
Finn	Freshman, age 18	Single mother; oldest of 2	Electrical Engineering	Residence Hall	Father, undocumented Mexican. Mother, Mexican American.
Jack	Sophomore, age 19	Single mother; 3 children, middle child	Administration of Justice	@ Home w/ nuclear family	Father: Mexican American. Mother, undocumented Guatemalan.
Jacob	Junior, age 20	Intact nuclear family; 4 children, third child	Aerospace Engineering	Apartment w/ roommates	Both parents undocumented Mexicans.
John	Freshman, age 18	Single mother; only child	Environmental Studies	Residence Hall	Nuclear family all citizens; Father: Mexican American. Mother: Portuguese American.
Val	Sophomore, age 19	Intact nuclear family; 3 children, middle child	Business	Apartment w/ roommates	Both parents undocumented Mexicans.

* All students were in ELD classes when they started school because English was not the primary language spoken at home. All students are first-generation postsecondary students at SJSU. All students received Pell grants to cover the cost of tuition. All students were in academic good standing.

University is hard, but you're here getting it done!

In this study about **educational persistence**, researchers want to hear your story about how Latino male students made it this far.**

✪ ✪ ✪ ✪ ✪

Who made a difference? What worked well? What didn't work at all?

The purpose of this study is to understand how male, Latino students feel about their education.

Participant Criteria:

- ☑ **Male***
- ☑ **Latino**
  If you considered yourself Latino that qualifies you. Spanish bilingualism is not required.
- ☑ **Age** 18–22
- ☑ **Full-time, Undergraduate**
- ☑ **In academic good standing**
  Not on academic probation.

- Receive a **$25-Target gift card*****
  for your time telling your story in a 90-minute interview. Interviews will be on the SJSU campus.
- **100% Confidential**
  No names or other identifying information will be used.
- For more information, email Michelle Swartz: **michelle@christers.net**
  Ms. Swartz is a graduate student in the College of Education at San José State.

* Latino male students make up 45% of the Hispanic students at San José State. Researchers want to know what helps Latino male students stay in school. An effective way to find out is to ask them about their lives and experiences in school.

Educational persistence involves everything you do and believe so that you can stay in school. It's the opposite of dropping out.

** This study about educational persistence and male, Latino undergraduate students has been approved by the faculty in the Counselor Education department at SJSU.

*** San José State University is in no way affiliated with Target.