

UNDERSTANDING THE HELP-SEEKING EXPERIENCES OF LATINO

MALE COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS

by

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Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of
The University of Texas at Arlington in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT ARLINGTON

August 2015

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Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation to my dissertation committee. Foremost, my chair, Dr. Ifeoma Amah, without whose patience, optimism, research experience, and motivation this project would have remained uncompleted. Dr. Ozuna, Dr. Martinez-Cosio, and Dr. Zhang, thank you for being so gracious with your time as to be part of my committee. I truly appreciate your commitment towards my academic success.

To my parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, and all my family and friends, this work, like all my achievements, was built on the abundance of love and support you've always provided me. Dad, thank you for the always having such high expectations for me as your son and as a man. Thank you for always reminding me through your actions and your sincere words, about the things most important in life. Mom, thank you for always being a spiritual compass for our family and me. Thank you for always reminding me that these precious moments we have on this earth are for His glory and praise. To my big sister Sophia, my first friend and companion, thank you for being an ever present guarding angel in my life. Together, we've been in this marathon of pushing our selves to be a better person, student, and followers of Christ. I'm not sure this race ever truly ends, but I know we'll keep pushing each other forward.

To my wife, you have been there for me when I needed you, providing me laughter, comfort, motivation to keep writing, but most importantly your never fading love. Thank you for putting up with my grumpiness, my rants about my research, and my physical and emotional absence at times over these years. You have sacrificed so much throughout this journey, and it will never go unnoticed, nor be forgotten. I pray that you will continue to allow me to be your imperfectly perfect man.

To my sons, this was utterly and completely about you. You'll never know how much I wanted to be there with you, instead of in front of my computer writing. Thank you for allowing Papi to share his time with others, and I hope in that sacrifice, even if in the smallest way, I've shown you what life is about. Embrace and never stop striving to be the great man God has created you to be.

July 31, 2015

Abstract

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On a national scale Latinos¹ are the fastest growing segment of the population, and in the state of Texas the Hispanic population is projected to eclipse non-Hispanic whites as the largest race or ethnic group within the next decade. However, today we are experiencing a growing gender gap in academic achievement across the P-16 educational continuum. In fact, compared to their Latina peers, Latino males are more likely to repeat a grade, be suspended and expelled, placed in special education, diagnosed as ADHD, and drop out or be pushed out of school. Additionally, Latino males' continue to be underrepresented in U.S. institutions of higher education participation and completion rates.

Previous literature demonstrates how cultural, social, and psychological

¹ *Hispanics/ Latinos* – these terms are used interchangeably by the U.S. Census Bureau to refer to persons of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central and South American, Dominican, Spanish, and other Hispanic descent (U.S. Census, 2010).

factors have impacted the college experiences of Latino students. However, only recently has there emerged literature that takes into account the distinctive experiences of Latino males in college. This qualitative study specifically examined how twelve Latino male students experienced help-seeking² at two North Texas community college campuses, using the Model for College Students' Help-Seeking Experiences, which takes into account Achievement Goal Theory (motivation), Attribution Theory (academic-control), and Help-Avoidance (basis for avoiding help-seeking) as tools of analysis. The primary data collection sources included demographic information form, semi-structured face-to-face interviews, documents and artifacts, analytical and reflective memos, and observation field notes. The findings of this study revealed differing motivational factors for achievement related behavior, high sense of perceived academic-control, as well as means for avoiding help-seeking.

² *Help-Seeking Experience* is the phenomenon of securing the resources, privileges, and tangible support (Stanton-Salazar, 2001) necessary to navigate an environment (i.e., college).

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In my work as an educational practitioner at a community college in the North Texas region, hence known as North Texas College (NTC), I've had the privilege of organizing campus visits for middle and high school groups. It was through a high school college tour that I first became aware of an alarming gender disparity in college enrollment, campus involvement, and completion. This tour in particular was made up of 50 students from a local Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program, which focuses on college readiness for secondary school students who are the first generation in their families to attend college. Coming from an inner city high school, I was expecting a highly diverse student population, which I received, but I was stunned when the participation included 46 Latinas, 3 African American females, and 1 Latino male. I asked the lone Latino male what brought him to our college campus, and he responded, "My girlfriend dragged me here." I continue to see these gender differences amongst all ethnic/racial groups while conducting campus tours at NTC.

Today at NTC, males make up only 41% of the student population, a disproportionate figure given that males make up 49% of the county's total population. Furthermore, at NTC the retention for first-time college students entering in the fall of 2012 from one academic year to the next is 48.8% for male students and 51.2% for female students. Additionally, I have observed Latino

males attending our community college as less visible in their utilization of academic support services (i.e., tutoring labs, faculty office hours, and academic advising), as well as co-curricular activities (i.e., student clubs and organizations, leadership develop opportunities, and campus events). With these levels of academic and social engagement in mind, it comes with little surprise that there is a lack of Latino males participating in graduation. As a result, as a higher education practitioner, Latino male, and father of two Latino boys of my own, I have a genuine concern and interest in investigating the “vanishing” of the Latino males from higher education (Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009).

Purpose of the Study

Latino males continue to be underrepresented in U.S. institutions of higher education. In addition, data across the P-16 educational continuum also reveals low high school graduation rates, as well as troublingly low college enrollment and completion rates in comparison to other racial/ethnic gender groups (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). Moreover, on numerous measures of academic progress, a consistent and alarming gap separates Latino and Black males from other racial and gender groups (CCCSE, 2014). Therefore, there is an essential need to examine how Latino males experience college to better understand the successes and challenges they encounter in persisting towards degree completion. Specifically, this study examines the experiences of Latino males securing the resources, privileges, and tangible support (Stanton-Salazar, 2001) necessary to

navigate the community college environment, otherwise known as their help-seeking experiences.

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to examine the help-seeking experiences of 12 Latino males at a North Texas Community College. More specifically, the study seeks to develop a composite description of their lived help-seeking experiences (Creswell, 2013) to address the following research questions:

- 1) How do Latino male community college students experience help-seeking?
- 2) What factors support and hinder their help-seeking experiences?
- 3) How do their help-seeking experiences shape their retention and persistence in college?

To initiate this investigation of the Latino male community college students' help-seeking experiences, it is important to highlight the prevalent inequities and disenfranchisements that impact the educational experiences of Latino men and boys (Noguera, Hurtado & Fergus, 2012), that result in low college participation and completion rates. These inequities and gaps exist along the P-16 educational pipeline and together have a mounting effect on the Latino males' community college experiences.

Statement of the Problem

Put simply, Latino males are not participating in college, nor are they succeeding in completing college at rates comparable to other racial/ethnic and gender groups. The current support mechanisms provided by colleges are underutilized or inadequate for retaining Latino male students. For this investigation, it is important to obtain an understanding of the current higher education landscape in Texas, and an awareness of the mounting achievement gaps and inequities that bring purpose and focus to this study of the help-seeking experiences of Latino males. Secondly, it is important to understand why it is essential that this research take place at the community college. And lastly, we must begin to understand the challenges Latino males face in seeking the support they need to succeed in college.

The Texas Higher Education Landscape

In the years leading up to the new millennium, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) began a collaborative effort to engage educational, business, governmental, and other community stakeholders in developing a strategic plan that would focus on setting, measuring, and striving to reach critical goals (THECB, 2000). According to the THECB (2000), it was vital that these goals be developed with a collective mindset, especially cultivating a strong level of support and alignment with K-12 education partners, including the Texas Education Agency (TEA), Texas Parent Teacher Association, the Texas

Association of School Boards, the Texas Association of School Administrators, and others that could provide a critical voice in setting the THECB's agenda for the next 15 years. This effort would in turn lead to many strategic P-16 initiatives across the state of Texas.

The resulting work of the THECB and its partners would be a strategic plan to close the gaps in higher education participation, success, institutional excellence, and research (THECB, 2000). With the rationale that increasing postsecondary participation and success meant a more educated workforce and prosperous Texas (THECB, 2000), the Closing the Gaps (CTG) 2015 strategic plan set participation and success benchmarks for public higher education institutions across the state of Texas, including community colleges (THECB, 2010a). This data-driven initiative continues to be an essential part of steering the efforts of higher education institutions across the state towards closing the participation and success gaps that exist amongst racial/ethnic groups. According to THECB (2010a) data, even institutions such as South Texas College, which are located in high-density Hispanic service areas, saw larger gaps when comparing Hispanic and White students' postsecondary participation. Meanwhile, population projections predicted that the vast majority of growth in the college age (15-34) population would take place in urban areas and along the Texas border (THECB, 2000), which are also the state's regions with the highest Hispanic populations. Additionally, in the state of Texas the Hispanic population is projected to grow by

15.45% between 2011 and 2015, thereby making Hispanics the largest racial/ethnic group in the state and the CTG effort a statewide priority (THECB, 2012). Similarly, on a national scale, Hispanics are the fastest growing segment of the population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011), and therefore it has become a national, economic, and social imperative to address the postsecondary participation and success gaps facing the Hispanic population.

In 2001, Texas lagged behind in postsecondary participation with a percent of total population enrolled in higher education at 5.0% (THECB, 2006a), as compared to the national average of 5.6%. The difference may first appear minor, but this 0.6% difference would have represented an additional 114,000 Texans enrolled in college. Furthermore, statewide Hispanic higher education participation rates were 3.7% in 2000, as compared to the White population at 5.1% and African-American population at 4.6% (THECB, 2006b). As a result, a priority of the participation goals of the Texas Closing the Gap (CTG) initiative included increasing the higher education participation rates of the Hispanic population of Texas from 3.7% in 2000, to 4.8% by 2010, and 5.7% by 2015. According to a recent THECB (2013) report, the 2012 Hispanic higher education participation enrollment rate as a percentage of the state's population was 5.0%, which places the state just below its 2015 target. However, with the Hispanic population projected to grow by 7.6% between 2012 and 2015, Hispanic enrollment will need to grow by almost 59,000 students each of the next three

years to meet the 2015 CTG goal set for all populations of 5.7% (THECB, 2013).

On the other end, success goals include increasing the number of Hispanic students receiving bachelor's degrees, associate's degrees and certificates to 50,000 by 2010, and 67,000 by 2015 (THECB, 2006a). Although the THECB (2012) reports show the quantity of degrees and certificates achieved by Hispanic students is on the rise, these students are still less likely to persist and graduate than White students. For example, six-year graduation and persistence rates for full-time public university students are 65.9% for Hispanics and 76.6% for Whites (THECB, 2012). Likewise, at the community college, where Hispanics are more likely to attend college (Kurlaender, 2006), the full-time students' six-year graduation and persistence rates are 40.8% for Hispanics and 46.0% for Whites (THECB, 2012).

Hidden and Mounting Achievement Gaps

However, only until recently did the Closing the Gaps (CTG) efforts in Texas account for racial/ethnic and gender differences. Previously, their participation and success rates for Hispanics in higher education grouped both males and females together, leaving a hidden and unattended gender gap that is also found amongst White and Black students. Upon first glance, the CTG data for Hispanics reveals gains in success and participation rates, which place Hispanics slightly behind in participation numbers and on track to reach success goals by 2015 (THECB, 2013). However, much of these gains have occurred in

large part to the success Latinas have found in higher education.

According to Saenz and Ponjuan (2009), Latino males have increasingly fallen behind their Latina peers in higher education enrollment and degree attainment. According to the THECB (2013), in the state of Texas males from all three of the major racial/ethnic groups (e.g. African American, White and Hispanic) lag behind females in higher education participation. Of these male groups, Hispanic males had the lowest college participation rate in the fall of 2012 of 4.1% of the total Hispanic male population, which was 1.7 percentage points below the rate of Hispanic females (THECB, 2013). Consequently, if males had participated at the same rate as females, about 88,000 more Hispanic students would have been enrolled in college, driving the gains since 2000 to approximately 348,000, well above the growth required to reach the CTG 2015 targets (THECB, 2013, p. 9). It is worthwhile to note, Hispanic females produced the fastest growth in college participation amongst all major racial/ethnic and gender groups, having their enrollment grow by 5.4% between 2011 and 2012 (THECB, 2013).

However, one challenge facing the state of Texas, like many other states, is increasing college participation and success rates, while simultaneously experiencing rapid growth in their Hispanic population. In the state of Texas, for example, population trends predict 600,000 Hispanic 9th to 12th graders in public education as compared to 500,000 White students in 2015 (THECB, 2006a).

Therefore, the success of Hispanics across secondary and postsecondary education is a growing phenomenon that will drive the success of Texas as a whole. Moreover, given that in contrast to African Americans and Whites, there are more males in the Hispanic population than females (362,000 more in 2011), increasing the Hispanic male participation rate is imperative to increasing overall Hispanic participation (THECB, 2012).

As a result, gaps still must be closed and college-going rates for Hispanic graduates improved, as we would have seen an additional 5,500 Hispanic students enroll straight into college from the high school class of 2012 if their college-going rates were the same as White high school graduates at 55.6% (THECB, 2013). Moreover, male college-going rates need to be improved and more supportive college-pathways constructed, as we find that just 46.9% of Hispanic males who graduated from Texas public high schools in 2012 immediately enrolled in college in the subsequent fall semester, compared with 55.7% of Hispanic females. These achievement gaps, which remain hidden within the grouped male and female Hispanic student data so often reported, are even greater within the community college context.

A Critical Context for Investigating the Experiences of Latino Males

Although this Latino male crisis deserves to be investigated across the educational pipeline, there is growing politically driven fiscal concern surrounding the ability and efficiency of higher education institutions to produce

more college graduates. In the same regard, community colleges have been called upon, now more than ever, to step up their role in producing a more highly educated workforce (AACU, 2012). Although many studies have focused on the experiences of men of color at 4-year colleges and universities, the majority of men of color, including Latino males, are more likely to attend a community college than a 4-year institution (CCCES, 2014). According to the American Association of Community Colleges (2013), community college student enrollment in Fall 2012 represented 45% of all U.S. undergraduates, including 56% of all Latino undergraduates. Nationally, 50% of Latino students start at a community college, in comparison to 31% of Black students and 28% of White students (NCPP, 2011). Thus, we find that Latinos are more likely than both Black and Whites to enroll in community colleges (Kurlaender, 2006).

Furthermore, as open access institutions, community colleges are dedicated to serving all students reaching their doors. Therefore, community colleges must address the pervasive gaps in student persistence and completion across racial and ethnic groups (CCCSE, 2014), which in turn includes addressing the challenges Latino males experience every day on their campuses. Therefore, the community college is a critical context in which to conduct my investigation. In addition, community colleges play a valuable part in the production of baccalaureate degrees, as many university graduates attend two-year institutions prior to attending four-year institutions (THECB, 2013). In fact, 35.4% of Texas

public university students who obtained a baccalaureate degree in 2012 first acquired 30 or more semester credit hours at a two-year college (THECB, 2013).

Adding to the challenges facing community colleges, academically underprepared students are more likely to attend community college than universities (THECB, 2013). In the fall of 2008, 41.5% of entering Texas public community college students did not meet college readiness standards in math, 26.4% in reading, and 19.1% in writing (THECB, 2013). In turn, the lack of academic preparedness often leads to less success in completing college level course work in the area of deficiency (reading, writing, math), along with lower rates of retention and persistence. Therefore, community college is a vital context in which to begin understanding the experiences that lead to the hidden and mounting achievement gaps facing Latino males. Furthermore, it gives way for the need to understand the challenges Latino males face in seeking and engaging the support they need to persist towards completing their academic aspirations.

The Latino Male's Needs for Support

In the state of Texas, the recent efforts of the Texas Education Consortium for Male Students of Color (TECMSC), lead by Dr. Victor Saenz and Dr. Luis Ponjuan (2009, 2012), has helped project the educational and social challenges facing all males of color across the P-16 educational continuum onto a national stage. The TECMSC seeks to align and coordinate current programs targeting males of color, in addition to supporting the development of new efforts that

target underrepresented male students throughout the education continuum (Saenz & Ponjuan, 2012). Through their work with TECMSC, Saenz and Ponjuan (2012) have utilized qualitative research methods to conduct numerous interviews and focus groups with Latino K-12 and college students and administrators across the state of Texas. With the majority of Latino postsecondary enrollment taking place at 2-year colleges (Cook & Cardova, 2007), much of their work has centered on Latinos attending Texas community colleges. In a summative account of their research findings, Saenz and Ponjuan (2012) found four major themes that emerged from the experiences of Latino males: 1) misguided perceptions of masculinity, 2) complex influences of peers and family, 3) low community awareness, and 4) program outreach and partnerships.

Saenz and Ponjuan (2012) found that Latinos associated masculinity with not seeking help and dodging expressions of fear, especially when truly fearful of consequences. These notions of masculinity could impede their ability to seek help and support from campus programs and services (Gloria, Castellanos, Scull, & Villegas, 2009) and lead to a less engaged and connected college experience. On the other hand, the research findings put forward by CCCSE (2014) show that Latino males report overall higher engagement than White males, but lower outcomes in terms of GPA and credits earned. In other words, when Latino males and White males are engaged at the same level, Latinos yield lower outcomes. However, in his study of college males of color in New York City, Harper (2012)

found great benefits for those that established value-added relationships with institutional agents and engaged in enriching educational experiences, such as student organizations, service learning, and academic tutoring.

Additionally, gender and familial roles sometimes influence Latino males to work instead of attend college, perhaps suggesting a polarizing relationship between Latino familial expectations and educational achievement. On the contrary, those with strong positive peer and familial support often had firmer ambitions for succeeding in college (Saenz & Ponjuan, 2012). Hence, it is important that we move beyond the deficit narrative and depressing statistics (Harper, 2014) and stereotype threats (Steele, 2010) that can enclose us into a deficit-orientation (Harper, 2014), thereby averting our ability to find what and who Latino males already engage and connect with in order to succeed in college. Thus, this study will seek to use an anti-deficit reframing (Harper, 2014) in its efforts to understand the narrative of the Latino males' help-seeking experiences. Saenz and Ponjuan (2012) also point out a large need for community and campus awareness about the issues facing Latinos as to bring down barriers both inside and outside the classrooms. Furthermore, more institutional supportive efforts are needed to target Latino males and their families, provide targeted Latino or male-focused socializing opportunities, and formal and informal mentoring by faculty, staff, older peers, and community leaders.

With a large portion of Latinos being first-generation college students,

their ability to navigate an institutionalized college environment, which often lacks the cultural congruity needed to validate their college participation (Gloria, Castellanos, Scull, & Villegas, 2009), is a struggle that can lead to their attrition. In fact, only 55% of Latinos/as at 4-year institutions attain a college degree in 6 years, while only 35% do at 2-year institutions within 6 years (Excelencia in Education, 2007). Additionally, the struggle of Latino first-generation college students in their journey towards attaining higher education is perpetuated by social and educational inequities (Kiyama, 2011), which can result from such matters a rising cost of tuition and insufficient pre-college preparation (Aurebach, 2004; Valenzuela, 1999). Thus, it is even more crucial that Latino college students connect with the agents and gatekeepers of institutional knowledge that can assist them in developing a network of support that can act as the bridge to the social capital they need to navigate educational institutions (Stanton-Salazar, 2001). Students' ability to cultivate these relationships and networks is an essential element of their capacity to access the information and tools necessary to manufacture their educational success (Stanton-Salazar & Dornbusch, 1995). However, too often their psychological and social orientations may prevent them from seeking help or leave them feeling disinclined to engage with those willing to provide support (Salazar, 2001). These conditions set the stage for this study which seeks to understand the Latino males' experience navigating college.

Research Goals & Overview

Others have examined the help-seeking orientation of Latino students (Stanton-Salazar 2001, Stanton-Salazar, Chavez, & Tai, 2001), which have been defined in terms of the perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, and correspondent behaviors that either encourage or hinder one from actively seeking help and support from communal and familial resources or mainstream institutions (Stanton-Salazar, 2001). Instead, it is the intention of this study to develop a “text” of the lived help-seeking experiences (Van Manen, 1990) of Latino male community college students, which describes the phenomenon and develops both textural (what was experienced) and structural (how it was experienced in terms of conditions, circumstances, and context) descriptions of their experiences (Creswell, 2013). Collecting such a rich description allows me to achieve my research goals of exploring: 1) the perceptions, motivations, and attitudes of community college Latino males in seeking help, 2) how their help-seeking experiences have impacted their college persistence and academic achievement, and 3) how this study will add insight to research that informs practices and policies that can better serve Latino males at higher education institutions.

The study consists of three subsequent chapters, each intentionally designed. First, it’s important that I provide an understanding of the current literature that impacts the phenomenon under investigation and further illuminates the gap in the literature that this study seeks to fill. Therefore, Chapter 2 will

examine literature on the challenges, influencers of success, and the behaviors and perceptions of Latino males as they navigate their college experience. Next, Chapter 3 describes in detail the constructs that form conceptual framework. The theoretical constructs included incorporate features of Achievement Goal Theory (Urduan, 1997), Attribution Theory (Weiner, 1985b, 1986), and Help Avoidance (Butler, 1998; Feather, 1961, 1963; Karabenick & Knapp, 1988, 1991). Chapter 4 will outline the research design, including the study's phenomenological approach, participant recruitment, data collection and analysis, along with a description of the research setting. In addition, Chapter 4 will discuss the process for ensuring trustworthiness, my role as the researcher, and implications for research, practice, and policy. Lastly, the appendices will include a glossary of key terms, participant recruitment letter, participant consent form, participant demographic information form, and interview protocol.

Chapter 5 describes in detail the personal, educational, and familial background of each of the twelve participants collectively and through individual bios. Chapter 6 presents the findings through the lens of the first theoretical construct of Achievement Goal Theory, which focuses on the motivation of participants in engaging in achievement related behavior, including help-seeking. Chapter 7 captures the findings through the lens of the second theoretical construct of Attribution Theory, which takes into account participants' perceived academic-control in their college environment as a tool for pursuing the support

they need to succeed in college. Next, Chapter 8 reveals the findings surrounding Help-Avoidance, which describes the basis for Latino males' lack of seeking help. Lastly, in Chapter 9 I conclude the dissertation with a summary, key findings, implications, limitations, and suggestions for research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The magnitude of high school and college dropouts has considerable implications, especially for low-income communities unable to break the cycle of poverty (Gandara & Contreras, 2009). In addition, several social and economic interests are impacted by these unfinished educational opportunities, because an educated family leads to healthy families, greater income, civic participation, and reduced crime rates (Baum, Ma, & Payea 2010). Furthermore, a college education is essential for prosperous participation in today's technologically advanced and globally competitive economy. While Latinos are more likely than the general population to value education as highly important (Alonso-Zaldivar & Tompson, 2010), and therefore aspire to earn a college degree, many fall short of their aspirations to complete that degree (Contreras, 2011). Unfortunately, much of the attrition we see from college takes place at the community college and amongst Latino males. With that said, the attrition that takes place is not due to lack of ability or desire to succeed, but instead, the challenges experienced in seeking, engaging, and leveraging the support needed to complete the college journey.

Therefore, in the effort to understanding the Latino males' help-seeking experiences, it's important to investigate from a holistic perspective, taking into account the psychological, sociological, and cultural factors (Gloria & Rodriguez, 2000) that shape college students' interactions with their college environment and

contribute to behaviors that encourage persistence (Gloria et al., 2005; Gloria & Hird, 1999; Gloria & Robinson-Kurpius, 2001). Taking such a holistic perspective increases the accountability placed on colleges for constructing inclusive learning environments that support the persistence and success of all students (Gloria & Castellanos, 2003). Therefore, the following review of literature is structured to take into account the psychological, social, and cultural factors that influence persistence within the college environment (Gloria & Rodriguez, 2000).

For Latino/a students, the psychological factors entail self-esteem, motivation, and self-efficacy as influencers of self-belief in regards to their confidence in their abilities to succeed in college (Castellanos & Gloria, 2007; Delgado-Guerrero & Gloria, 2013). The social factors include familial, institutional, peer, and other agents that connect students to resources and provide support (Castellanos & Gloria, 2007). For many Latino/a students, often breaking tradition as the first in their families to attend college (Rendon, Jalomo, & Nora, 2000), having such supportive relationships and spaces that foster a sense of belonging in the college environment are essential factors to persistence (Barajas & Pierce, 2001; Nora, 2001; Hurtado & Carter, 1997; Hurtado & Ponjuan, 2005). Lastly, the cultural factors consist of ethnic identity, acculturation, and cultural congruity, which Gloria and Kurpius (1996) describe as a balancing act of incongruent cultural and college values. However, when the division between

college and home cultures are linked, more positive beliefs and attitudes of the college environment are fostered (Gloria & Segura-Herrera, 2004), and as a result we see increased academic success (Rayle, Robinson-Kurpius, & Arredondo, 2007) and persistence (Museus & Quaye, 2009).

Each of these factors contributes to the college adjustment and persistence of Latino/a students (Gloria & Rodriguez, 2000, Castellanos & Gloria, 2007). However, Castellanos and Gloria (2007) advocate that these factors be examined together within the college environment in order to holistically understand the Latino/a students' educational experience. Therefore, the format of this review of literature is examined in three sections: 1) cultural factors, 2) social factors and 3) psychological factors that influence the help-seeking experiences of Latino male community college students. Within the cultural factors section, subthemes include ethnic identity and cultural congruity. Furthermore, the social factors section include the subthemes of familial funds of knowledge and the help-seeking experiences of Latino students utilizing support networks (familial, institutional, peer, and other). Lastly, the psychological factors section include the subthemes of self-efficacy and self-esteem. Each of these sections and related subthemes contributes to the understanding of the help-seeking experiences of Latino males as a means of moving towards educational success. In addition, these studies uncover gender differences in help-seeking orientations that further the cause of this study.

Cultural Factors: Ethnic Identity & Cultural Congruity

To begin my investigation, it is important to understand ethnic identity development as part of the acculturation process, which is activated by the cultural interactions a person experiences in their environment and self-identification into a collective identity (Rotheram-Borus, 1993; Phinney, 1990; Ashmore, Deaux & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004). The social environmental patterns of integration within a multi-ethnic environment have been shown to create the cross-ethnic engagement necessary for bicultural formation among adolescents (Rotheram-Borus, 1993; Phinney, 1989; Torres, 2003b). Within the United States there is an abundance of multi-ethnic environments within which cross-ethnic interactions take place, including our K-12 school, college and university settings. These intersections of ethnicity play an important role in the cultivation of culture and fostering of ethnic identity.

However, the adoption of bicultural patterns is influenced by whether or not a community has adopted a model of assimilation, acculturation, or pluralism (Padilla, 1980). Assimilation describes a model in which the minority group becomes part of the majority or dominant group, losing its uniqueness. Unfortunately, this assimilation process is a model that some communities have adopted, and in particular, assimilation has been a methodology for policy regarding immigration. Policies promoting assimilation have resulted in the minority group accepting the norms of the dominant group or by the majority

group rejecting the minority group (Rotheram-Borus, 1993; Torres, 2003b). In pluralistic situations, the distinct cultural characteristics of each group are valued and consented. However, even with this acceptance of difference, both the minority and majority are unlikely to share or be adaptive to the other's culture (Rotheram-Borus, 1993).

In some situations, including some predominately majority populated institutional settings, pluralism and assimilation are the models for cross-ethnic interactions, but for most minority groups, their bicultural tendencies implies an acculturation process. Acculturation implies an acceptance of the minority and the majority group. Over time, the norms, values, and behaviors of both groups are modified by contact (Cross, 1987), which for Latinos/as has indicated different degrees of Latino/a and mainstream culture orientation (Ramirez, 1983). For youth, the encouragement of pluralistic and acculturative societies can foster tendencies to fuse cultures, creating a new set of blended and often-unaccepted norms (Rotheram-Borus, 1993, Torres, 2003b). These new norms, which on a college campus have been cultivated through cross-cultural academic and social interactions, are often expressed as sentiments of not feeling "ethnic" or "Latino" (Ortiz & Santos, 2009; Ortiz & Santos, 2010; Torres, 2003b). However, the educational benefits of diversity and cross-cultural interactions on a college campus have been well documented (Hurtado, 2007; Chang, Denson & Saenz, 2006, Ortiz & Santos, 2010).

Although many have worked towards framing the definition of ethnic identity (Doyle, Beaudet, Aboud, 1988, Phinney, 1990 Rotherman-Borus, 1989, Spencer, 1982), for the purposes of this study I will utilize as our foundation the Model of Ethnic Identity Development (MEID) developed by psychologist Jean Phinney (1990). In her own work, Phinney (1990) notes that there are "widely discrepant definitions and measures of ethnic identity, which makes generalizations and comparisons across studies difficult and ambiguous" (p.500). However, she maintains that, "ethnic identity is a dynamic, multidimensional construct that refers to one's identity, or sense of self as a member of an ethnic group" (2003, p. 63). Phinney's model is multidimensional and observes three stages of progression of ethnic identity development: unexamined ethnic identity, ethnic identity search, and ethnic identity achievement (Phinney, 2003). Her model demonstrates ethnic identity to be constructed through one's socialization and interactions with the larger sociocultural context (Phinney, 2003). She believes children either do not seek to examine their ethnic identity, or assume it is derived from others. However, the search for ethnic identity, many times during adolescents, is an important period of socialization that can lead to the acquisition of behavior, perceptions, values, and attitudes towards one's own ethnic group(s) and the ethnic groups of others (Phinney, 1990, 2003).

Often, significant experiences during this heightened time of awareness and development, such as discrimination, positively or negatively impact and

further internalize feelings of belonging and identity toward ethnic group(s) (Phinney, 1989). Additionally, ethnic identity of oneself is not an unchanging process, but instead one that fluctuates and varies according to particular social settings (Weinreich, 2003). For example, according to Trimble & Dickson (2004) individuals may circumvent situations where their identity is challenged, threatened, humiliated, and castigated. Likewise, whenever possible, individuals seek out and sustain settings that support their identity condition (Trimble & Dickson, 2004). Furthermore, in this study ethnic identity can play a vital role in understanding the experiences Latinos face in navigating college environments that often seek to preserve institutional and mainstream cultures, possess a predominately White student population, and often challenge the socialized norms and values of their ethnic identity.

Latino/a Identity

For Latino students, as is the case with many students of color, the development of ethnic identity is greatly impacted by the conditions of their college environments, familial influences, and perceptions of their social stratification. Many Latino students experience a need to adjust their understanding or attitudes towards their ethnic identity in order to “fit in” to their college environments (Gloria & Kurpius, 1996). As a result, they often feel pressured to adapt behaviors or norms that conflict with their upbringing. This need for cultural adaptation within their college environment often results in

conditions that challenge their beliefs and understanding of their ethnic identity (Torres, 1999). Without the proper validation of their ethnic identity, not only from peers but also from the institutional agents that could provide vital support, Latino students will struggle to seek the help they need to persist and succeed in college. Therefore, it is important to explore research findings surrounding Latino identity as it plays an influential role in the help-seeking experiences of Latino males.

In their work on Latino/a students on predominately White university campuses, Gloria and Rodriguez (2000) investigated various studies surrounding counseling service providers and other institutional agents that provided support to Latino/a students. Their efforts found social and cultural challenges facing Latino/a students in predominately White college environments, including the university's cultural environment, ethnic identity, acculturation, and social support from family and mentors, often being overlooked or not discussed in developing counseling practices (Gloria & Rodriguez, 2000). Utilizing quotes and narratives of Latino/a students, their work exposed the struggles Latino/a students face in meeting academic and familial commitments, adjusting to college academic culture, feelings of isolation, struggles with ethnic identity development and acculturation, and challenges accessing social support (Gloria & Rodriguez, 2000). In particular, Gloria and Rodriguez (2000) noted that cultural challenges related to the marginalization of Latino/a students, along with exposure to new

experiences and various cultures in their college environment, lead to conflict and stress regarding their cultural orientation. Furthermore, whether their familial environment was highly acculturated or sustaining of ethnic identity, proved at times to lead to their feelings of rejection by Latinos of the opposite acculturated familial upbringing (Gloria & Rodriguez, 2000).

Much of the work of Vasti Torres (2003a, 2003b, 2004, Torres, Martinez, Wallace, Medrano, Robledo, & Hernandez, 2012) has centered around the impact of the college experience on the identity development of Latino/a students, and in turn, the role Latino identity plays on their persistence and success in college. In a qualitative longitudinal study in which grounded theory methodology was employed, Torres (2003a) investigated the ethnic identity development of 10 Latino/a students during their first two years at college. Her study found two categories of influence prominent in the first two years. The first, Situating Identity, was explained by the three conditions of the 1) environment where they grew up, 2) family influences and generational status, and 3) self-perception of status in society (Torres, 2003a). Examples for the first condition include a student's expressed struggle with transitioning from a highly Latino neighborhood and school to a predominately White college environment, where the male participant finds the need to "Americanize" the pronunciation of his Spanish name. Moreover, in order to break down stereotypes of his ethnic identity, he feels a strong need to educate his non-Latino peers about who he is, where he is

from, and his reality (pg. 537).

Furthermore, the condition of familial influence and generational status influenced ethnic identity as students identified themselves utilizing the same terms and language as their parents used, and by those of the first generation to the United States struggling with balancing unfamiliar college expectations with those of their parents (Torres, 2003a). Additionally, students who perceived their status as privileged were more inclined to believe in the negative Latino stereotypes and disassociate themselves from stereotypes and racism, while those who perceived their status as less privileged identified experiences of racism and expressed personal growth in cross-cultural interactions (Torres, 2003a). Lastly, participants' ethnic identity was influenced by change in expressed conditions of cultural dissonance and relationships within their college environment (Torres, 2003a). Some students expressed not feeling comfortable with or accepting of the cultural beliefs of their parents, for which they often felt unfairly pressured to accept, as they viewed their social and cultural conditions vastly different than their parents (pg. 540-542).

In a subsequent qualitative study at seven institutions, Torres (2004) further investigated the category of situating identity, while specifically looking at the condition of generation in the United States and familial influences. Again, utilizing interviews of Latino first-year college student participants (n=83), Torres (2004) found this condition to be described by three properties: Acculturated

Parents – intermingle both Latino and Anglo cultures, Less Acculturated Parents – identify strongly with traditional Latino culture, and White Parent or Parents – one parent is Anglo or both through adoption. Those students with acculturated parents voiced confidence with choosing from both cultures and not feeling a need to castoff or neglect their culture of origin (Torres, 2004). However, those with less acculturated parents often showed a cultural conflict due to their parent’s lack of understanding of college expectations. Cultural expectations, such as the strong commitment towards family, or familismo, resulted in Latino students’ stress in adapting to a college environment that often emphasized individualism and commitment to personal goals. Finally, those with a White parent or parents showed an understanding of their ethnic heritage while maintaining strong Anglo cultural connections and self-identifying in a variety of ways, including Mexican American, American, and Costa Rican (Torres, 2004).

In another qualitative study, Torres (2003b) identified the importance of the relationship between ethnic identity development and acculturation among Latino/a college students. According to Torres (2003b), “acculturation looks at the choices made about the majority culture, whereas ethnic identity looks at the maintenance of the culture of origin” (p.533-534). Her work does not look at the explanation of the process involved in choosing a cultural orientation; however, she considered the construct of cultural orientation. Furthermore, this study offered a model for the cultural orientation of Latino/a college students called the

Bicultural Orientation Model (BOM). After extensive questionnaires and interviews, Latino/a students' orientation preferences were identified as either: Bicultural Orientation – a preference to function competently in both the Hispanic and Anglo cultures, Anglo Orientation – a preference to function within the Anglo culture, Hispanic Orientation – a preference to function within the Hispanic culture, Marginal Orientation – unable to function adequately within the Hispanic or Anglo cultures (Torres, 2003b). This study provides a simplistic model to consider the influence of cultural orientation in the experiences of Latino/a students as they interact often cross-culturally in their efforts to seek support from institutional agents.

In a more recent study, Torres, Martinez, Wallace, Medrano, Robledo, and Hernandez (2012) surveyed Latino adults in regards to the influence of their adult experiences on their Latino ethnic identity. The survey utilized open-ended response questions and axial coding techniques (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) in order to allow the voices of the participants drive the findings of the study. Examination of the findings indicated that changes in environment or life circumstances lead to a “looping process,” otherwise known as the reevaluation of identity (Torres et al., 2012). Thirty-five percent of usable respondents (n=80) indicated experiencing the looping effect, with those who identified as bicultural orientation more likely to than other orientations (Anglo, Hispanic, marginal). Together, these studies (Torres, 2003a, 2003b, 2004, Torres, Martinez, Wallace, Medrano,

Robledo, Hernandez, 2012) outline the complexities and influences Latino/a students' experience in developing their ethnic identity, experiences worthwhile for educational practitioners to understand when working with Latino/a students. Still, a student's understanding of their ethnic identity may not always lead to cultural fit or validation of that identity on the college campus. Thus, it is worthwhile to examine the intersection of culture and the college environment as it pertains to academic persistence and success.

Cultural Congruity

Sensing a need to regulate cultural expressions of their ethnic identity in order to "fit in" to their college environment, Latino students are often conflicted in adapting to the mainstream college campus culture. Many studies have noted the importance of students' perceptions of their college environment (Baron, Vasquez, & Valdez, 1981; Munoz, 1986) and cultural congruity (Cervantes, 1988; Fields, 1988; Fiske, 1988) on their persistence in college. Hence, cultural congruity, defined as a student's perceptions of cultural fit within the college environment (Gloria & Kurpius, 1996), plays a vital role in Latino students' persistence in college and validation in their college setting. The absence of cultural congruity within their college context can often lead to a lack of sense of belonging and isolating behaviors that inhibit them from seeking the support they need to persist and succeed in college. For that reason, it is important to explore

studies that have investigated cultural congruity given its influential role in the help-seeking experiences of Latino males.

Gloria and Kurpius (1996) validated the use of the Cultural Congruity Scale (CCS) and University Environment Scale (UES) in their pilot study, which administered the CCS and UES to 454 Latino/a college students. Positive student perceptions of the college environment and cultural congruity proved to be significant factors in higher rates of academic persistence (Gloria & Kurpius, 1996). In their study that examined 740 undergraduate students, Gloria, Hird, and Navarro (2001) utilized CCS, UES, and Attitudes Toward Seeking Professional Psychological Help Scale – Modified (ATSPPHS-M) to investigate the relationship of cultural congruity and perceptions of university environment to help-seeking attitudes by race/ethnicity and gender. Sample student participants included 385 (54.1%) White, 115 Latino (16.2%), 12 (1.7%) African American, and 135 (19.0%) Asian American. Findings suggested that White students experience higher cultural congruity, more positive perceptions of the university environment, and more positive help-seeking attitudes than students of other racial/ethnic groups (Gloria, Hird, & Navarro, 2001). Furthermore, univariate test revealed that females reported significantly higher ($p < .001$) cultural congruity and more positive help-seeking attitudes than their male counterparts (Gloria, Hird, & Navarro, 2001). Moreover, White males reported significantly higher ($p < .001$) cultural congruity and more positive perceptions of the university

environment than males of other racial/ethnic groups (Gloria, Hird, & Navarro, 2001).

In a subsequent study, Gloria, Castellanos, Segura-Herrera and Mayorga (2010) investigated how cultural orientation and cultural fit inform the help-seeking attitudes of 121 Latina undergraduate students. Again the CCS (Gloria & Kurpius, 1996) was utilized to measure the cultural fit between individual and environmental values, and the UES to assess perceptions of the university environment. In addition, the Acculturation Rating Scale for Mexican Americans II (ARSMA-II; Cuellar et al., 1995) assessed the students' attitudes, behaviors, beliefs, and values for Mexican Americans. Finally, the Attitudes Toward Seeking Professional Psychological Help-Scale – Short Form (ATSPPHSSF; Fisher & Farina, 1995) was employed to measure attitudes toward seeking professional help for emotional and psychological concerns. In this study, Mexican and Anglo orientation, cultural congruity, and perceptions of the university environment did not predict help-seeking attitudes. However, variances did arise as a result of differences in class standing and self-reported previous counseling experience. The effect on class standing and help-seeking attitudes was significant ($p < .01$), suggesting that students with higher academic standing (GPA, class ranking) engage in higher help-seeking attitudes (Gloria et al., 2010). Secondly, the study found that those within the upper-division of their class academically reported being more Anglo oriented, along with holding stronger help-seeking attitudes

(Gloria et al., 2010). Lastly, through correlations by class standing and previous counseling experience, a third hypothesis concluded that Anglo oriented students, in both the lower and upper divisions of their class standing, demonstrated increased cultural congruity (Gloria et al., 2010). In accordance, those with a higher Mexican orientation reported less cultural congruity with their campus environment.

In a more recent study, Cerezo and Chang (2013) investigated the influence of cultural fit on the achievement of Latina/o college students (n=113) at four predominately White institutions (PWI). Their study explored whether cultural integration factors, such as cultural congruity, ethnic identity, and connections with minority peers as cultural, predicted college GPA. A demographic questionnaire was utilized to assess background characteristics (age, gender, ethnicity, nationality, parents education, and employment), while high school and college GPAs were self-reported (Cerezo & Chang, 2013). In regards to the cultural integration factors, the Social Adjustment subscale of the Student Application to College Questionnaire (SACQ; Baker & Siryk, 1984, 1989) was utilized to measure social adjustment to college and the CCS for the students' perceptions of culture fit between the individual values and the college environment (Cerezo & Chang, 2013). In addition, the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM-Revised; Roberts et al., 1999) was employed to measure ethnic identity exploration and ethnic identity commitment. And lastly, Cerezo and

Chang (2013) developed four questions to assess the students' connection with ethnic minority peers (i.e. "I feel a sense of connection with other students of color").

Multiple hierarchical regressions analysis was run to examine whether the cultural integration factors influenced GPA for the participating students. Results indicated that high school GPA had a significant ($p < .001$) impact on the variance in college GPA. Moreover, once controlling for high school GPA, social adjustment to college did not reveal itself to be a significant factor in predicting college GPA. However, after controlling for high school GPA and social adjustment to college, cultural factors proved to be a significant ($p < .001$) influencer on predicting GPA (Cerezo & Chang, 2013). Overall, the strongest predictors for college GPA were 1) high school GPA ($\beta = .28$), 2) connection with ethnic minority peers ($\beta = .23$), and 3) cultural congruity ($\beta = .20$).

Social Factors: Familial Funds of Knowledge & Help-Seeking Experiences

The term social capital was first coined by Loury (1977) to describe a set of resources that live in families and in community organizations that possess the ability to positively impact the cognitive and social development of a person. However, the concept of social capital was broadly introduced by Jane Jacobs (1961) while exploring the concept of cultivating effective spaces in encouraging interactions among residents in their urban environments, thereby allowing social capital – or relationships of trust – to flourish. Whereas Jacob's (1961) work

focused on the physical features of the environment, Bourdieu's (1973) work investigated the behaviors of individuals from diverse socioeconomic groups in order to discover the behaviors and characteristics associated with social and economic mobility. Bourdieu (1973) believed social power and privilege to be more easily accessible to those with higher economic status, in large part because they had predispositions to the knowledge, networks, and behaviors tied to economic power through socialization into the dominant culture since birth. However, he believed in large part their advantage was derived and preserved through institutions or systems, including higher education, that fostered false beliefs of social mobility to the masses and further cemented socioeconomic structures. Furthermore, Bourdieu (1979, 1986) extended the idea of capital to classifications such as social capital, cultural capital, financial/economic capital, and symbolic capital. He coined social capital as the collection of the actual or potential resources that are linked to affiliation with an institutionalized network or less informal relationships in which each member is afforded a collectively held capital (Bourdieu 1979, 1986). Additionally, he described cultural capital as existing in three forms. The first, the embodied state, consisted of the intentionally attained and the passively inherited properties of oneself (Bourdieu, 1986), which entailed socializations through cultural traditions (Bourdieu, 1986). The second, the objectified state, consisted of physical objects or cultural goods that are owned and can be used for economic profit or as symbolic capital that is

derived from prestige, recognition, or honor (Bourdieu, 1979, 1986). Lastly, cultural capital in its institutionalized embodiment consists of institutional recognition, most often from academic credentials and qualifications (Bourdieu, 1979, 1986). Together, all these capitals are taken into account within the characteristics of their social conditions, and can be acquired and exchanged in order to achieve social mobility in what Bourdieu (1979) described as the environment's social stratification.

Through much of the work of sociologist James Coleman, social capital found its way into the field of education. Through his observations of public school students, Coleman (Coleman & Hoffer, 1987; Coleman, 1988; Coleman & Schneider, 1993) witnessed and derived his meaning of social capital as the intentional effort of actors within a network to develop norms of behavior and expectations for network affiliation (Coleman et al., 1982). Additionally, Coleman (1988) believed parents and families played a large role in establishing norms for behavior. Households that were able to sustain one parent at home were better able to pass along these norms of behavior much more efficiently.

However, as we see today, many low and middle socioeconomic households rely on two working parents, or have only one parent, which can deplete the quantity and time available to share critical social capital (Coleman, 1994). Thus, in many cases institutional agents, such as educators, have played an increasingly important role in closing the social capital gap. Additionally,

Coleman (1988) believed through social network closure, networks of support could be developed amongst parents, friends, and educational institutions that could leverage enough social capital to move a student towards educational success and economic prosperity. Finally, Putman (2000) brings us to the concepts of the bridging and bonding social capital. Putnam's view of social capital is that is a resource that resides in relationships in communities. In his study of Italian towns, he developed two approaches for understanding the manner in which social capital operates: bridging and bonding social capital. In bridging, members of different social networks foster strong relationships that connect people from diverse backgrounds and allow for the exchanging of social capital, whereas bonding reinforces ties within a similar group (Putman, 2000). Therefore, knowing the social capital Latino males bring with them into college, benefits this study by providing and understanding their experiences with the college's institutionalized social stratification, along with participants' motivations for social mobility. Furthermore, understanding how Latino males navigate the collegiate social context provides insights into the relationship that foster their sense of belonging and mattering on campus.

Familial Funds of Knowledge and the Latino Male

In the collegiate context, a student's social capital has a direct impact on their experiences navigating college, including efforts towards leveraging social networks and the support they need to succeed in college. A frequently misguided

assumption is that many Latino students, especially those stemming from poor socioeconomic backgrounds, lack the social capital they need to succeed in college. This mistaken perception is often presumed to be further applicable to students who are the first generation in their family to attend college or high school and/or the first generation to live in the United States. The social capital that Latino students bring to their collegiate experiences has been termed familial funds of knowledge (Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005; Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992; Rios-Aguilar, Kiyama, Moll, & Gravitt, 2010; Kiyama, 2011). According to Kiyama (2011) familial funds of knowledge represent the daily educational practices, extended family networks, and preexisting college knowledge that support the cultivation and fostering of positive college beliefs and perceptions. Therefore, for the purposes of this study I will seek to validate the social capital Latino males bring to their college experience, and pay special attention to how it impacts their help-seeking experiences. Similarly, I will seek to incorporate familial funds of knowledge as means for authenticating participants' sense of belonging within the college context and in opening an avenue for greater access and exchanging of institutional resources. Thus, it is important to review the following literature to gain an understanding of the Latino males' familial funds of knowledge.

Utilizing a qualitative multiple case study approach, that included pre- and post-program interviews and oral history interviews, Kiyama (2011) studied the

funds of knowledge and educational ideologies of Mexican American families within a university outreach program. Her study identified cultural and familial funds of knowledge as vital to the development of a college-going culture. Kiyama (2011) found three significant themes of funds of knowledge that impacted access to educational resources: 1) daily educational practices within the household, 2) extended family and social networks, and 3) preexisting family college knowledge. Students in the study benefited from extended family social networks that integrated educational values, and these systems served as tools for passing on knowledge and strategies for coping with situations. These networks became extremely valuable for first-generation immigrants and their children who looked to become the first in their families to attend college. Furthermore, her study uncovered an inclusive understanding of how Mexican American families cultivate a culture and social capital that values education. However, the study found that Latinas were more likely than their male counterparts to be connected with these networks and funds of knowledge (Kiyama, 2011). Although these funds of knowledge may not always replicate the institutional funds of knowledge often needed by Latino males to navigate college, they do reveal the importance of families in developing a college-going culture at home. For the Latino community college student, who is often living in the same household or neighborhood in which he grew up, these funds of knowledge and networks may still play a role during his college experience.

Additionally, *familismo*, which is a strong identification and sense of responsibility to family (Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009), creates deep loyalty to familial responsibilities, which for Latino males often translates to providing financial and emotional support to family (Marin & Marin, 1991; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez Orozco, 1995). Furthermore, Latino gender roles supply cultural expectations to work and contribute financially to the family, and these roles are seen in greater intensity among Latino males who are recent immigrants or whose parents have recently immigrated (De Leon, 2005). However, even for Latino males who are not recent immigrants, the gender roles within the Latino culture continues to remain significant and often becomes a challenge confronted during their acculturation experience (Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009).

For Latino males, the process of acculturation could result in acceptance or rejection by the majority and/or minority group. One example of this process is the notion that Black and Hispanic males somehow reject academic excellence because they perceive it as “acting White” (Saenz, 2005). This perception of academic success is often viewed among Black and Latino males as perceived notions of White pursuits and values of success (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986). According to Saenz (2009), Latino males will utilize the phrase “acting White” as a social tool to cast out those who have adopted mainstream culture tendencies, thereby, labeling the person a “sell out” among his cultural peers. This need for cultural significance and identity is a way Latino males establish pride and

promote pluralistic attitudes, not necessarily a resistance towards educational success (Saenz, 2009).

Help-Seeking Experiences

At the core of this study is the intent to understand the phenomenon of Latino male community college students pursuing and leveraging the support they need to succeed in college, or what I have defined as their help-seeking experiences. Help-seeking experiences are centered on the social interactions between students and those institutional agents who serve as bridges or gatekeepers to the institutional support and knowledge students need to succeed in college. However, other important social encounters during help-seeking experiences take place between students and their peers, along with familial and extended familial networks of support. The following review of literature provides a fundamental understanding of research findings on the help-seeking experiences of Latino students. In addition, it illuminates the need for this study to extend the research on this topic.

In a quantitative study of 100 male Latino undergraduate college students, Gloria, Castellanos, Scull and Villegas (2009) investigated cultural self-esteem, perceived educational barriers, cultural fit, and coping responses as measurements of the Latino males' well-being in higher education. As Gloria, et al. (2009) point out in their study that an inadequate amount of research has been conducted to understand the manners in which Latino/a college students utilize coping

strategies in dealing with the stresses of college. Utilizing the List of Coping Responses-Modified (LCR-M) and Student Coping Scale (SCOPE) as survey instruments, the researchers found that the three most commonly utilized coping responses (CRs) were: 1) to actively find out more about the situation, 2) take some positive planned action, and 3) draw upon past experiences (Gloria et al., 2009). Furthermore, the least commonly employed CRs were: 1) to pray and/or consult with a minister and 2) to seek professional advice (Gloria et al., 2009). Although this study began to uncover some of the strategies for which Latino college students deal with stressful situations, it does little to connect the actual stressful experiences with the specific strategy employed. This is where a qualitative analysis, utilizing interviews as an instrument of inquiry, could uncover some of these helpful insights.

In a study of help-seeking orientation of Latino and non-Latino urban high school students, Stanton-Salazar, Chavez and Tai (2001) utilized surveys (n=1,187) operationalized to measure help-seeking orientation by the following three measures: 1) confidence in the support process, 2) interpersonal openness, and 3) a desire for academic support. The first measure, confidence in support, represented the respondent's assurance in the capacity of others to provide support. The second measure, interpersonal openness, signified the respondent's capability and desire to share problems with others (Stanton-Salazar et al., 2001). Finally, the third measure, desire for academic support, measured the areas in

which the student would have liked important information and guidance (Stanton-Salazar, Chavez & Tai, 2001). The study found that gender played a significant role in help-seeking orientation. First, the study found that males had a significantly ($p < .001$) lower confidence in the support process. With this in mind, it was also found that students with a higher confidence in the support process achieved higher academically. Secondly, low English proficiency males (Spanish-dominant) were 2.1 times less likely to desire academic support than with moderate to high English proficiency males. Overall, the study found, with strong evidence, that males consistently reported lower confidence in support services, less willingness to share problems, and less desire for academic support (Stanton-Salazar et al., 2001).

Additionally, research notes a connection between perceived accessibility of support and willingness to seek support (Vaux, Burda, & Stewart, 1986), and therefore, since females report having a large support network, they are more inclined and likely to ask for support (Stanton-Salazar & Spina, 2000). Those individuals with lower help-seeking orientation were found to have smaller networks of support, and thereby often received less guidance and material, financial, and emotional support (Stanton-Salazar & Spina, 2000). In that regards, the ability to establish relationships with institutional agents, whom often act as gatekeepers or support networks, can be understood in terms of developing help-seeking orientation, networking and problem solving skills, and other helpful

behaviors that can help students overcome institutional barriers (Stanton-Salazar, 2011).

Much of the work of Stanton-Salazar (2001) focused on the relationships between people and their interactions with social structures and institutionalized contexts. In his work Stanton-Salazar (2001) noted, “an individual’s social class, racial assignment, and gender play a decisive role in shaping these structured opportunities” (p.17). With an emphasis concerning the group process, or social embeddedness (Granovetter, 1985), Stanton-Salazar (2001) viewed the phenomenon of social stratification as the participation in multiple relationships and the use of instrumental institutional tools in navigating towards social mobility. Although much of his scholarship centered on Latino youth in their neighborhood and high school context, his work towards developing strategies for institutions to construct environments that support and validate their efforts towards seeking help is still applicable to this study and the community college context.

The typologies of institutional support developed by Stanton-Salazar (2001), called the Funds of Knowledge Typologies, are geared towards increasing the likelihood of Latinos to benefit from social capital. The Funds of Knowledge Typologies (FKT) consist of 12 items, including the following Six Forms of Institutional Support that allow for the bridging (Putnam, 2000) of social capital: Bridging, Network Development, Advocacy, Role Modeling, Emotional and

Moral Support, and Personalized and Soundly Based Evaluative Feedback (Stanton-Salazar, 2001, pg. 268). Additionally, the FKT include the following Six Forms of Institutionally Based Funds of Knowledge: Institutionally Sanctioned Discourses, Academic Task Specific Knowledge, Organizational/Bureaucratic Funds of Knowledge, Technical Funds of Knowledge, Knowledge of Labor and Educational Markets, and Problem-Solving Knowledge (Stanton-Salazar, 2001, pg. 268). Thus, the social stratification that often excludes some groups from social mobility is challenged by a counter stratification (Stanton-Salazar, 2001), in which the forms of institutional support describe the methods in which institutional funds of knowledge are accessed and exchanged between students and institutional agents. Additionally, other familial or community agents that hold access to certain essential resources and support can partake in access and exchange of resources.

Psychological Factors: Self-Efficacy & Self-Esteem

According to Bandura (1977) self-efficacy is the belief in one's capabilities to succeed in a specific situation. Moreover, self-efficacy is one's ability to organize and carry out the course of action necessary to achieve a goal within a certain context (Bandura, 1977). The role of self-efficacy has an important place in one's psychological state, behaviors, motivation, and ability to not only set goals, but also develop a plan of action to achieve those goals (Bandura, 1992).

Self-efficacy and the Latino/a Student

Self-efficacy has been explored in connection with confidence, self-esteem, and resilience as it relates to Latino/a student persistence (Solberg & Villareal, 1997). Previous research in higher education has noted several academic, social/environmental, and personal factors relating to college adjustment (Russell & Petrie, 1992), student integration (Tinto, 1986), and prevention of attrition from college (Bell, 1982). This study examined the potential of self-efficacy, social support, and stress on the personal adjustment amongst Hispanic college students (n=164). Instruments for examining these factors included the College Self-Efficacy Inventory (CSEI), the College Stress Inventory (CSI), two social support subscales generated from the Social Provisions Scale (SPS), and the Brief Symptom Inventory (BSI) to measure physical and psychological distress (Solberg & Villareal, 1997). The complete regression model, which included stress, self-efficacy, social support, acculturation, and gender, accounted for 46% of the variance in college distress (Solberg & Villareal, 1997). Therefore, findings suggested that higher self-efficacy and perceived social support led to less distress amongst Hispanic college students. Furthermore, findings revealed that self-efficacy and social support alone accounted for 33% of the variance in college adjustment, with self-efficacy being the greater underwriter (Solberg & Villareal, 1997), and thereby a contributor to the persistence of Hispanic college students. Thus, the development

of experiences designed to facilitate self-efficacy and the positive adjustment of Hispanics to the college environment may also play a role in their help-seeking experiences while adjusting to college.

Torres' (2009) study examined Latino intercultural competence via two separate methodologies. The first phase entailed discovering and generating themes regarding the features of intercultural competence based on semi-structured interviews of 15 Latino/a adults. The second phase included conducting a cultural consensus analysis from the quantitative responses of Latino/a adults to determine the cultural model of intercultural competence. Findings of the study indicated that the participants, despite variations in socioeconomic and generational statuses, shared a common knowledge base regarding the competencies needed for Latinos to successfully navigate interactions with different cultures. Torres' work contributed to this study in that the overall findings indicated a shared cultural model of Latino/a intercultural competence, which included a set of skills (relationship building, networking, effective communication) that integrated traditional cultural values along with attributes of self-efficacy (ambition and desire to succeed, perseverance) (Torres, 2009). Additionally, participants in the qualitative interviews shared the importance of a community-orientation in knowing and advocating for the issues facing Latinos, and the importance of maintaining and identifying with one's cultural origin. The intercultural competencies are the skills that facilitate the ability to communicate

effectively and appropriately with people of other cultures. Thus, these skills can be valuable in unfamiliar and often predominately White college environments, especially when many institutional agents themselves are of a different race/ethnicity or culture.

The work of Zell (2010) has focused on disparities in higher education affecting Latinos/as in the U.S. and their relationship between social justice and social work practice. However, the purpose of this study was to examine the psychological and subjective experiences of Latina/o community college students as it impacts their persistence toward achieving their education goals (Zell, 2010). Zell's study is a phenomenological study that utilized qualitative methods to investigate the lived experience of 15 community college students. The semi-structured interviews generated eight themes: overcoming personal and social challenges, maturation, self-discovery and college adjustment, self-efficacy, continuously strategizing, sense of purpose, perception of faculty, perception of advisors, and guided and groomed by family to succeed.

In connection to self-efficacy, students reported feeling confidence that they could achieve their academic goals, even though prior to enrolling some might have questioned their ability to succeed (Zell, 2010). As Bandura (1992) noted, the most effective way of acquiring a strong sense of self-efficacy is through executing a task successfully. Similarly, inadequately managing a task or challenge can destabilize and weaken self-efficacy (Bandura, 1992). Therefore, in

this study, students' self-efficacy was in partial credited to having made successful achievements thus far in their community college experiences. Additionally, a frequent student response included feelings of appreciation for the diverse perspectives and viewpoints they brought to classroom dialogue (Zell, 2010).

In turn, these sentiments added to their self-efficacy and confidence to navigate contexts that were culturally diverse and not predominately Latino (Zell, 2010). Lastly, according to Zell (2010), a unique impression related to self-efficacy was students expressed confidence for their return-on-investment by beginning their journey at a community college, a route that was more affordable for them and their families. Overall, Zell's (2010) work demonstrates how self-efficacy for Latino/a students contributes to their overcoming of feelings of marginalization, doubts about succeeding, lack of career goals and misconceptions about college expectations when entering college. Moreover, self-efficacy adds to their motivation to persist and develop the critical relationships with faculty and other support agents that they will need to succeed (Zell, 2010).

The previous literature demonstrates how cultural, social, and psychological factors, many not visible at the surface and others structured within the fabric of our institutions, impact the help-seeking experiences of Latino males. The cultural factors of ethnic identity and cultural congruity have a significant impact on how Latino male students experience familial and cultural values that

conflict with institutional values and expectations. This lack of cultural fit, in turn, leads to challenges in adjusting to the college environments, including their struggle and apprehension with seeking help from college support services. Likewise, social factors such as familial funds of knowledge represent an avenue for institutions to validate the social capital Latino male students bring with them to college. Tapping into these funds could provide a greater sense of belonging within the college context and lead to a greater confidence in their ability to seek help. In a similar fashion, self-efficacy and self-esteem impact how Latino males confront moments of adversity, including their confidence in the ability to succeed at meeting college and familial expectations. Consequently, these psychological factors influence the anxiety or lack of assurance Latino males experience in seeking the support they need to adjust and persist in college. Therefore, this investigation took into consideration these factors as to illuminate their influence on the Latino males' help-seeking experiences accessing, engaging, and leveraging the support needed to persist and succeed in college.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In order to provide a guiding framework for this investigation, the following theoretical frameworks were joined to provide a lens for which to view the Latino males' help-seeking experiences. This arrangement included the theoretical constructs of achievement goal theory (ATG), attribution theory, and help avoidance. The diagram below illustrates how each construct contributes to the overall framework.

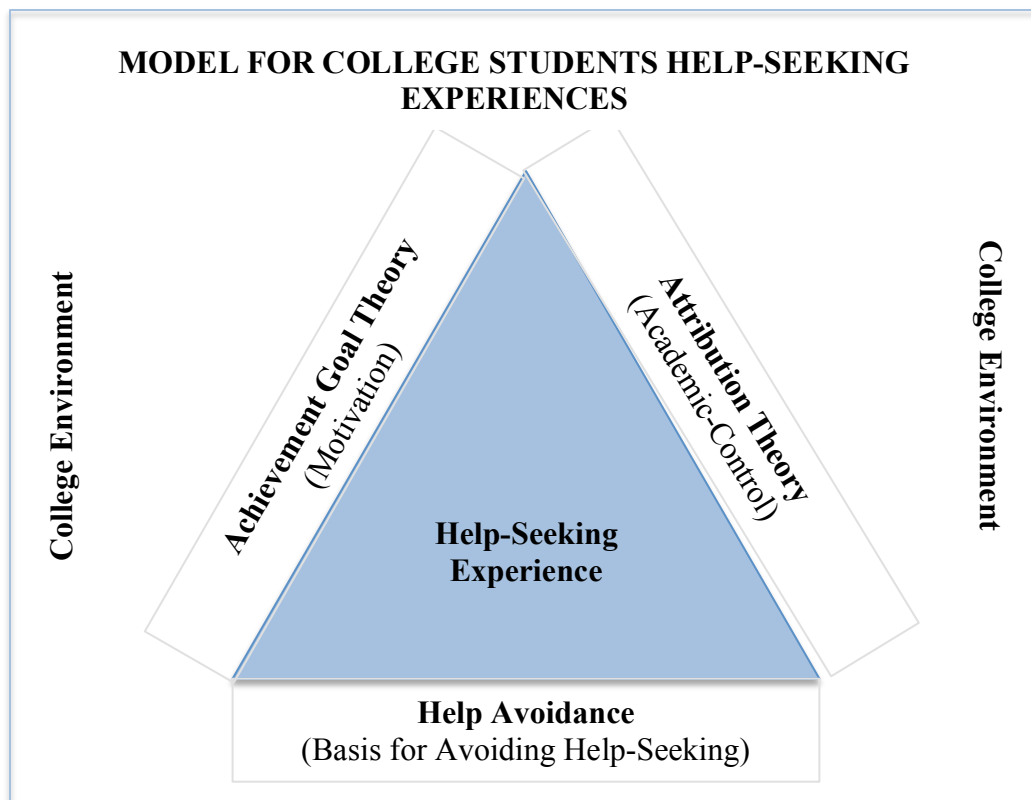


Figure 3-1 Model for College Student Help-Seeking Experiences (MCSHSE).

As is central to my investigation, the model focused on the help-seeking experiences of college students within the college environment. The three theoretical constructs each provided a theme which may impact students' help-seeking behaviors during the phenomenon, including: 1) motivation to seek help, 2) sense of academic-control, and 3) reasons for avoiding help-seeking. This chapter will provide more detail as to how each construct contributes to the understanding of Latino males' help-seeking experiences.

Achievement Goal Theory

According to Collins and Sims (2006), "understanding the role of motivation in help seeking may enhance insight regarding obstacles that prevent students from seeking help" (p. 209). Therefore, Achievement Goal Theory (AGT) is an important framework for this study because it centers on the reasons why students engage in achievement-related behavior, as well as the standards that students use to assess their advancement towards reaching goals (Collins & Sims, 2006). In AGT, the dichotomy for a student's achievement-related behavior is characterized as either mastery goal orientation or performance goal orientation. Mastery goal orientated students' focus is on learning and understanding, utilizing their progress and improvement as criteria for evaluating success (Collins & Sims, 2006). On the other hand, performance goal oriented students' focus is on their ability to perform in comparison to others (Collins & Sims, 2006). According to the authors, achievement goal theory forecasts that

students who function under a mastery goal orientation are more inclined to engage in behaviors that value learning and task mastery and as a result are more likely to appreciate academic tasks and live out self-regulated learning behaviors that are conducive to learning. Furthermore, students' mastery and performance goal orientations have been connected to various academic help-seeking behaviors (Arbeton, 1998, Karabenick, 2004, Karabenick & Knapp, 1991, Midgley, 2002), whereas highly motivated students are likely to seek help when needed as a self-regulating and proactive learning strategy (Nelson-Le Gall, 1981), making their orientation for exerting effort vital in their decision to seek help (Collins & Sims, 2006).

This construct not only led me to include goal orientation as part of this study, but also to include the motives for seeking help. For the purpose of this study, I incorporated a secondary explanation for understanding the driving forces that lead to help-seeking, which is described as either executive help-seeking or instrumental help-seeking. Executive help-seeking refers to those occurrences in which the student's objective is to have someone else answer a problem or achieve a goal on his or her behalf (Nelson-Le Gall, 1985). Consequently, this leads to the development of dependency on others to provide solutions to subsequent problems of a similar nature (Collins & Sims, 2006). In a different regard, Nelson-Le Gall (1981) refers to instrumental help-seeking as acquiring only the support essential to achieve a task independently, as to increase

proficiency, competence and a stronger self-reliance in facing similar challenges moving forward. Within the college context, we often find that institutional agents view their support as instrumental. However, students often seek executive assistance, frequently due to their seeking help once they have already experienced significant struggles and failing grades on assignments.

Attribution Theory

Attribution theory is a motivational framework that is concerned with how individuals understand events and how it relates to their thinking and behavior (Weiner, 1985). In more detail, attribution theory characterizes a way to describe how students' interpretations of past failure or success outcomes can indirectly shape future achievement through affective reactions, anticipations for success, choice of task, such as seeking help, and persistence (Collins & Sims, 2006). In turn, many college students who have experienced academic failure, build a mindset that associates failure as unchangeable and related to such personal attributes as lack of ability, less motivation, and less control of the outcomes of challenging situations (Collins & Sims, 2006). In contrast, students who believed they held a stronger sense of academic control of their achievement employed more effort, expressed less apprehension, were more motivated and engaged in self-monitoring strategies, and reported higher academic achievement than students perceiving low academic control (Perry, Hladkyj, Pekrun, and Pelletier, 2001). Furthermore, an additional barrier to help-seeking is effort-ability

covariation, or the perception that the more students need help, the lower their ability. Thus, this theoretical construct provided me with a lens in which to understand how previous experiences and perceptions of control impact the help-seeking experiences of Latino males.

Help Avoidance

In addition to these theoretical constructs, the design of this investigation took into consideration research findings for help avoidance by college students. Help avoidance has been considered a form of motivated behavior that stems from when the benefits to be gained from seeking help are outweighed by the cost of requesting help (Butler, 1998; Nadler, 1997). One such rationale for help avoidance includes overconfidence, where students overestimate their true abilities and determine that they do not need for help (Yates & Collins, 1979). In addition, stereotype threat, or when a negative stereotype about a group becomes self-relevant (Steele, 1997), can result in help avoidance in order to prevent further engraining such stereotypes, including threats that some groups are less capable of succeeding academically than others (Steele & Aronson, 1995). In addition, research on help avoidance has found that those individuals who need help are less likely to seek it, lower self-esteem results in perceptions of help-seeking as threatening (Karabenick & Knapp, 1988, 1991), help-seeking is perceived as dependent behavior that conflicts with needs for autonomy (Deci &

Ryan, 1985), and help-seeking is seen as evidence of incompetence and lack of ability (Butler, 1998).

In conclusion, achievement goal theory supported this investigation with a framework for understanding the intentions of students help-seeking, or goal orientation, and motives for seeking help, either executive or instrumental. Attribution theory provided me with a lens in which to understand how previous experiences and perceptions of control impact subsequent help-seeking experiences. And lastly, previous research findings on help-avoidance offered me with potential themes to look for in constructing the description of the help-seeking experiences of Latino males. Together the theoretical constructs framed the help-seeking experiences of college students. Furthermore, the MCSHSE theoretical framework provided a lens to view the investigated phenomenon through their experienced motivation, perception of academic-control, and means for avoiding seeking help.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH DESIGN

The review of literature exposes a need for a more detailed understanding of the experiences of Latino males seeking, engaging, and leveraging the support they need to navigate and ultimately succeed in college. Until recently, much of the research on the college experiences of Latino students had not accounted for the unique gender experiences of Latino males, thereby leaving a gap in the literature that could contribute to research, policies, and practices surrounding the Latino males' persistence and success in college. Therefore, this study will employ a qualitative research approach, which offers the ability to acquire rich descriptions of Latino males' perceptions, in addition to exploring the meanings and interpretations given to precise decisions, experiences, and ideas (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This chapter will further discuss in detail the research approach and methodology, as well as site, participant selection and recruitment, data collection and analysis, my role as the researcher, and the way I hope to ensure the trustworthiness of my research.

Qualitative Research Approach

For this study a qualitative research design was employed in order to examine the help-seeking experiences of Latino male students at North Texas College (NTC) on the Red Oak and Downtown Campuses. To examine these experiences, the use of qualitative research assisted with building connections

between Latino males' narratives and uncovering, in depth, how they constructed their attitudes, decisions, and behaviors throughout these experiences. Qualitative research has often been criticized for not being orderly and merely impressionistic story telling (Wilson, 1977). To the contrary, qualitative research is methodical, following focused data collection strategies and protocols that allow the researcher to understand the human experience through the framework of interpreting their thoughts, feelings, and actions (Wilson, 1977). Furthermore, qualitative research permits us to give thorough consideration to contextual and conditional details of specific facets of the Latino males' help-seeking experience, otherwise unaccounted for by quantitative approaches (Gubrium & Holstein, 1997). As is the case in this study, as the qualitative researcher, I was not out to prove anything. Instead, through inductive and deductive data analysis, I described events within their natural environment (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011) that can interpret a phenomenon with thoughtful regard to the people and places under study (Creswell, 2013).

Qualitative research does not place constraints on the responses of participants, but instead allows them to derive their own description of their experiences in their own words. Through an interpretive lens, the researcher constructs patterns, categories, and themes that cut across all data sources, by arranging the data inductively into increasingly more complex and organized units of information (Creswell, 2013). Thus, a qualitative research design was most

appropriate for gathering the personal details and in-depth perspectives of Latino males' help-seeking experiences needed to answer the research questions of this study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 1990).

Methodology

Because this study sought to understand a lived experience of Latino male community college students, this study utilized a phenomenological approach. The purpose of the methodological approach is to make clear the specific phenomena under investigation, through understanding how the actors in a situation perceive their help-seeking experiences (Lester, 1999). A phenomenology is rooted in understanding a subjective experience from the perspective of the individual, gaining insight into motivations and behaviors, thereby eliminating assumptions (Lester, 1999). Furthermore, phenomenology seeks to describe rather than explain, initiating without preconceptions or hypotheses (Husserl, 1970), with the aim to give an account of experiences as accurately as possible (Groenewald, 2004). For these reasons, it was the intention of this study to utilize a phenomenological approach in order to develop a "text" of the lived experience (Van Manen, 1990) that described the phenomenon and allowed me to use an interpretation process as a method of investigating (pg. 26). Finally, this approach allowed for the emerging of deeply rooted issues by bringing to the surfaces the voices (Lester, 1999) of Latino male students' help-seeking experiences at the community college level.

Setting

Recent national estimations have indicated that Latina females are twice as likely to earn a college degree compared to Latino males (Aud, Fox, & Ramani, 2010). This alarming trend is also apparent across the state of Texas, where for example in 2011 only 41.3% of Latino males completed a baccalaureate degree in six years (THECB, 2010). In addition, in fall of 2012 Latino males had the lowest enrollment in public and private institutions as a percentage of their total population at 4.1%, compared to Black males at 5.4%, White males at 4.9%, and Latinas at 5.9% (THECB, 2013). These statistics are distressing considering that Texas has the second largest Hispanic population, with 37.6% of Texans being of Hispanic origin (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Moreover, Hispanics account for 65% of the state's population growth since 2000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010) and are projected to grow by 15.45% between 2011 and 2015, thereby making Hispanics the largest racial/ethnic group in the state of Texas (THECB, 2012). Meanwhile, population projections predict that the vast majority of growth amongst the college age (15-34) population would take place in urban areas and along the Texas border (THECB, 2000), which are also the state's regions with the highest Hispanic populations.

Of these regions, the North Texas metropolitan statistical area is the largest in the state, boasting a population just over 6.5 million, making it the 4th largest such region in the country (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). The racial makeup

of the North Texas region is 50.2% White, 15.4% African American, and 25.7% Hispanic or Latino of any race. In addition, this highly populated region boasts three of the largest community college districts in the country (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Therefore, the North Texas region is an ideal setting for my investigation of Latino male community college students.

More precisely, within the North Texas metropolitan area this investigation took place at North Texas College (NTC), a community college district with five campuses located in three cities across the county it serves. NTC is the sixth largest college or university in the state of Texas, with over 50,000 students enrolled in the Fall of 2012. Across all five campuses, 27.2% of the student population is Hispanic, making NTC qualified as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HACU, 2014). In addition, NTC is a partner institution and leader college within the national Achieving the Dream (ATD) network of community colleges dedicated to increasing student success, especially for students of color. NTC's affiliation with ATD is significant because for much of its history the community college's mission has been focused on access, whereas now for colleges such as NTC, that focus has grown to include the success of students from the point of access to their completion of degrees and certificates. For NTC, this dedication to a success agenda has included programs targeting men of color, including their participation in the Texas Consortium for Male Students of Color

(TCMSC), a collaboration focused on improving student success for Hispanic and African American males.

Furthermore, this investigation centered on the Downtown and Red Oak Campuses, which boast the highest Hispanic enrollments, but unequal rates of successful degree or certificate completion for Hispanic students. For example, according to the THECB (2014), at the Red Oak Campus Hispanics encompassed 28.4% of enrollments but only 21.3% of the degrees or certificates awarded. Likewise, at the Downtown Campus Hispanics make up 35.6% of enrollments but only 23.0% of degrees or certificates awarded (THECB, 2014). Therefore, investigating the help-seeking experiences of Latino males within this setting could have a profound impact on the success agenda of community colleges across the state and national ATD and TCMSC networks.

Participants

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB, 2010) has made recent revisions to their benchmarks that intentionally emphasize the importance of increasing participation and success rates for Latino males, foremost within community colleges. However, as stated by Harris and Harper (2008), “disparities in enrollment, attainment, and engagement constitute most of what is known about men at community colleges ... make[ing] the exploration of gendered questions necessary” (p.26). Thus, in light of renewed policy imperative

and the need to add to the limited literature on this issue, this study focused on understanding the experiences of Latino males in the community college context.

Recruitment and Participants

Through my experiences as a student affairs administrator at a NTC campus, I have developed many relationships with Latino male students and have avenues to come in contact with many others through colleagues in support service offices, as well as faculty members. Therefore, this study utilized a purposeful sampling method, which is the most commonly used non-probability sampling method (Welman & Kruger, 1999; Creswell, 2013), to recruit participants. Purposeful sampling is commonly used in qualitative research for the identification and assembly of information-rich cases related to the phenomenon of interest (Palinkas et al., 2013; Krueger, 1988). In the case of this study, the phenomenon of interest was the help-seeking experiences of Latino males.

Sample participants included self-identified Latino males currently or having recently attended a NTC Downtown or Red Oak Campuses. Recently attended was determined as having been enrolled within the previous two main academic semesters (Fall and Spring). Initially a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 14 participants from NTC's Downtown and Red Oak Campuses were sought to provide adequate participation, as the intent of this study was to uncover in detail their experiences. This included minimum of three participants from each campus. Preference was given to the first 10 participants that responded, and in total there

were 12 participants. The 12 participants included 7 from the NTC’s Downtown Campus and 5 from the Red Oak Campus. Although it was not found to be necessary, all extra participants would have been notified that the study had meet its participant capacity (see Appendix E). NTC faculty and staff colleagues were utilized as a resource for identifying potential participants. An email was sent to NTC colleagues (see Appendix C) asking them to recommended Latino male students. Afterwards, recruitment of participants occurred face-to-face or via email (see Appendix B). Additionally, some participants were recruited through the recommendation of other participants, otherwise known as a snowball sampling method (Creswell, 2013).

Demographic Table Summary

The 12 Latino male community college students who participated in this study represented a diverse group with varying personal, educational, and familial backgrounds. In addition, they have similar and different pre-college and college experiences. (See Table 4-1).

Table 4-1 Participants’ Pseudonyms and Background Information

Name (Campus)	Place of Birth	Age	Parents’ Education Attainment Mother / Father		Enrollment Status (FT/PT)	Work Hours Per Week
Victor (DT)	USA	22	Associate’s Degree	NA	FT	19.5
Arturo (DT)	Mexico	23	Some Middle School	Some Middle School	PT	50

Table 4-1 continued

Pedro (DT)	Mexico	19	Some Middle School	Some Middle School	FT	0
Hector (DT)	USA	19	Elementary	Some Middle School	FT	0
Manuel (DT)	USA	22	High School	High School	PT	19.5
Rodolfo (RO)	USA	20	High School	High School	PT	19.5
Alejandro (RO)	Mexico	21	Some Middle School	Some Middle School	FT	19.5
Santiago (DT)	USA	26	High School	High School	FT	45-50
Xavier (RO)	USA	40+	NA	NA	FT/PT	40
Gustavo (RO)	Mexico	21	Associate's Degree	Some Elementary	FT	40
Oscar (DT)	USA	26	Associate's Degree	Some Middle School	FT/PT	0
Luis (RO)	Mexico	19	High School	Some College	FT	0

Data Collection

The data collection process was thorough and utilized multiple data collection procedures to gather a complete description of the phenomenon. This process included the following data collection procedures: a) demographic information form, b) interviews, c) documents and artifacts, and d) analytical and reflective memos.

Demographic Information Form

Prior to the interview, participants completed the demographic information form (see Appendix D). The completion of this form provided a snapshots of participants' personal backgrounds, which included their racial/ethnic background, age, employment status, marital status, and number of children, if any. Furthermore, data on participants' educational background that was gathered included the colleges they have previously and are currently attending, full-time or part-time student status, years in college, program of study, intent to transfer to 4-year college/university, their means for paying for college, current involvement on campus, and future aspirations. Lastly, the demographic information form collected familial background information that included their parents' race/ethnicity, parents' place of birth, socioeconomic status, and their parents' educational attainment. All of this information provided a glimpse into the background of our participants that informed probing questions during interviews and offered depth to the developing description of the help-seeking experiences of Latino males.

Interviews

One-on-one interviews were utilized as the tool of inquiry to develop both textural (what was experienced) and structural (how it was experienced in terms of conditions, circumstances, and context) descriptions of the help-seeking experiences (Creswell, 2013). Thorough 60- to 90-minute interviews with 12

participants were found to be sufficient to reach a saturated understanding of their experiences (Boyd, 2001; Creswell, 1998). The informed consent agreement' form was made clear to participants prior to each interview in order inhibit deception (Bailey, 1996), and further trustworthiness and confidentiality that diminishes suspicion and promotes sincere responses (Groenewald, 2004). Participants who did not sign the agreement were not pressured to participate in the study.

Each participant was invited to participate in one individual face-to-face interview, which began with a broad all-encompassing question (Spradley 1979) applied to launch an interview that fostered a dialogue with authentic responses. Then, employing a semi-structured interview protocol (Appendix A) to garner greater depth (Fontana & Prokos, 2007), the interview process utilized guided questions to gather a more detailed understanding of the participant's experiences (Moustakas, 1994). Then, probing questions were utilized as needed for clarification or elaboration. Again, the specific 'phenomena' under investigation was the help-seeking experiences of Latino male community college students. However, with a more focal lens, the investigation utilized the theoretical frameworks of achievement goal theory, attribution theory, and help avoidance, to intentionally uncover motives and motivation for seeking help, how previous experiences and perceptions of control impacted subsequent help-seeking experiences, and lastly the role of overconfidence, stereotype threat, and other

causes for help-avoidance. It's worthwhile to note that the intention of this inquiry was not to find answers (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998), but instead to allow the data to emerge through the "rich descriptions of the phenomena and their settings" (Kensit, 2000, p.104). Again, the data collection process continued until participants had introduced new insights that had saturated the topic (Groenewald, 2004). Subsequently, in one case further descriptions of the experiences were deemed necessary. Therefore, follow-up interview questions were employed via a face-to-face conversation.

Documents and Artifacts

Additionally, documents and artifacts, such as flyers and brochures from support service offices leveraged during help-seeking experiences were collected. As stated by Norum in Given (2008), artifacts provide "insight into how people lived, what they valued and believed, their ideas and assumptions, and their knowledge and opinions," and therefore are valuable in composing a rich and holistic description of the phenomenon. Additionally, documents and artifacts can be more personal in nature and include unofficial transcripts, classwork, or other items related to their experiences during college.

Analytical & Reflective Memos

With the understanding that I, as the researcher, am the primary instrument of data collection and analysis (Merriam, 1998) and therefore an integral participant of the interview, a central part of the data collection process

and analysis was my field notes, or memoing (Miles & Huberman, 1984, p.69). According to Groenwald (2004), “memoing is the act of recording reflective notes about what the researcher is learning from the data.” These memos represent the accumulation of ideas or records about concepts and their relationships from what the researcher hears, pursues to understand, and experiences in the course of collecting data and reflecting (Groenwald, 2004). The memos collected were reflective, as noted above, but also analytical. By being analytical in nature, the memos served as early “mini-analyses” of the help-seeking experiences, which were later utilized during data analysis to construct the textural, structural, and composite description of the phenomenon.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was an on-going process during the course of data collection, with the primary goal of eliciting understanding and meaning of the phenomena that leads to richly descriptive findings (Merriam, 1998). More than a few methods to phenomenological data analysis have been reviewed by Moustakas (1994), but for the purposes of this study a more “simplified version” (Creswell, 2013, p. 193) of the methods discussed by Moustakas (1994) was adopted. Figure 4-1 illustrates how the phases of data analysis will advance throughout the study.

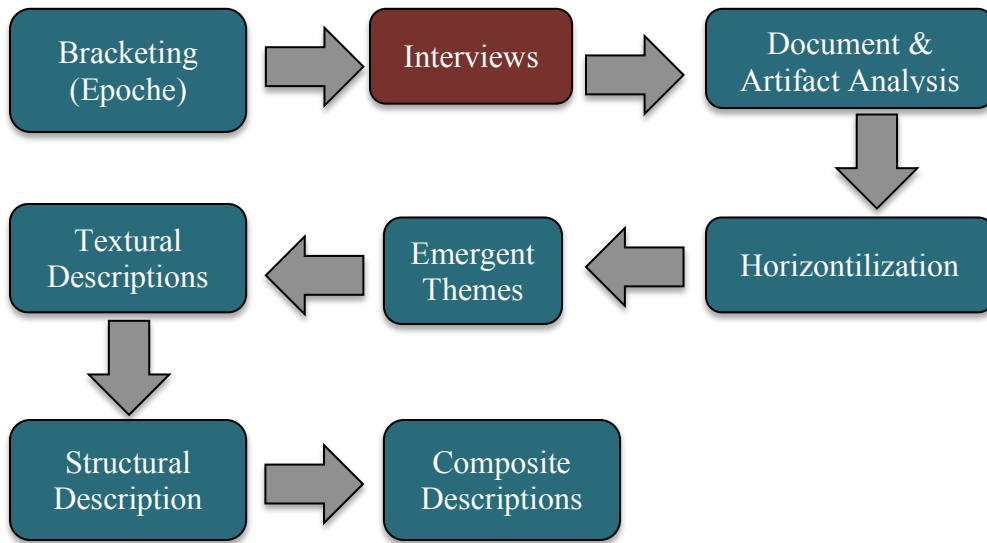


Figure 4-1 Phases of data analysis.

Bracketing

In order to bring structure and meaning to the accumulation of data (Marshall & Rossman, 2006), transcendental phenomenological methods was employed in analyzing the participants' interviews (Moustakas 1994). First, in an effort to set aside my personal experiences with the phenomenon, I first described, or bracketed (Mouton & Marias, 1990), my experiences with the phenomenon under investigation. Bracketing exposed my positionality and helped keep the focus of the study on understanding the experiences of the participants.

Document & Artifact Analysis

Documents and artifacts were collected prior to, during, and after interviews. Therefore, the analysis was an on-going process. During the documents and artifacts analysis, I examined items collected from both the Downtown and Red Oak campuses, such as program and event flyers, brochures from student support service offices, and other publicly open materials. Furthermore, I analyzed personal items provided directly from interview participants, including unofficial transcripts, classroom assignments, and other personal items that reflected their college experience. The analysis of these items provided more insight into the help-seeking experiences of the Latino male participants by adding to, or filling in the gaps, of the data obtained through interviews about the phenomenon.

Horizontalization

The next step in data analysis involved horizontalization (Moustakas, 1994). Horizontalization is used to place equal value on every statement coming from the interviews, and according to Creswell (2013, p. 82) entails “highlighting significant statements, sentences, or quotes that provide and understanding of how the participants experienced the phenomenon.” In the case of this study, the significant statements were extracted from descriptions of what and how NTC Latino male students experienced help-seeking in their college environment. The theoretical constructs of the Model for College Student Help-Seeking Experiences

(MCSHSE) framework functioned as a lens during data analysis. The MCSHSE's constructs provided broad themes around help-seeking motivation, academic-control, and help avoidance during the data coding process. However, cluster-sampling data coding themes were not limited to these constructs in order to ensure an equal value was placed on all findings and the opportunity to discover new themes that emerged from the participants' voices. Likewise, all interview statements were considered to have equal worth and significance to the research study. To assist in the documenting of significant comments and non-verbal communications, such as body language, facial expressions, and other gestures, memoing took place during the interview and transcription process. These memos were both descriptive and reflective in nature and focused not only on participants' verbal and non-verbal communications, but the interview context as well.

Textural, Structural, & Composite Descriptions

Next, a cluster sampling coding method, which brings together the broader and concentrated units of analysis, was intentionally utilized to bridge the textural and structural aspects of the experienced phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). First, I developed a written "textural description" of what the participants within the phenomenon experienced. Secondly, in similar regard to the previous step, I developed a written "structural description" that describes "how" the phenomenon was experienced. In developing the textural and structural descriptions, the

MCSHSE provided a lens for describing the impact of motivation, academic control, and help avoidance on the help-seeking experiences of Latino male community college students. When fused together, the textural and structural aspects form a composite description of the phenomenon, including those features found to be common experiences.

Trustworthiness

Many scholars (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Creswell, 1998; Guba, 1981; Lincoln, 1995; Merriam, 1998; Silverman, 2001) have demonstrated that trustworthiness, in relation to validity and reliability, can be addressed adequately in qualitative research. In order to enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of my study, I utilized the following procedures: 1) established research methods, 2) memoing, 3) member-checking, 4) data triangulation and 5) knowledge of research topic.

Established Research Methods

In order to establish credibility, or the assurance that this study measures or describes what is actually intended, the adoption of well-established research methods have been employed. Such established protocols incorporated the procedures previously outlined for data collection, which included the use of a pre-interview demographic information form, face-to-face interviews, the gathering of documents and artifacts, and personal memos throughout the interview and transcription review process. Moreover, Figure 2 illustrates this

study's data analysis procedures, which numerous previous qualitative studies have demonstrated as being credible and reliable methods of analysis.

Memoing

Memoing, or 'reflective commentary' (Shenton, 2004), was used to record initial impressions of data collected during interviews and the gathering of documents and artifacts. This continuous reflection is a vital role in what Lincoln and Guba (1985) call 'progressive subjectivity,' or the monitoring of the researcher's own developing constructs. In addition, memoing allowed me to take notice of non-verbal communication and contextual details otherwise hidden in the interviews audio recording. These details were significant in constructing an in-depth description that was trustworthy and authentic in describing the experiences of participants.

Member-Checking

Moreover, member checks, which are considered the most important provision to establish credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), entailed each participant reviewing their interview transcript to ensure accuracy and verification of emerging inferences. In addition, the verification of information may also take place during follow-up interview conversations. In essence, member-checking: 1) provided an opportunity to understand and assess what the participant intended, 2) gave participants the space to correct errors and challenge interpretations, 3)

offered an chance for participants to volunteer additional information and 4) allowed for aspects of preliminary findings to be confirmed.

Data Triangulation

Furthermore, triangulation was utilized as a method to check and establish validity by analyzing the research question from multiple perspectives. A common misconception of triangulation is that its intent is to come to a consistency across data sources (Patton, 2002). Instead, inconsistencies make meaningful the comparative strengths of different data sources or methods and should be viewed as an opportunity to uncover deeper meaning in the data (Patton, 2002). Thus, through the triangulation of several data sources, including the demographic information form, interviews, documents and artifacts, and memos, data was crosschecked and verified between data sources. Likewise, research findings were crosschecked for congruency with the research findings of reliable studies. As a result, more detailed and trustworthy descriptions of the help-seeking experiences of Latino males can be developed and my bias as the researcher can be avoided. Furthermore, my composite description of the phenomenon was continuously refined until each participant's description of their experience was taken into consideration, which required data to be consistently revisited for analysis.

Knowledge of Research Topic

Having the ability to crosscheck my data findings with other studies required that I stay abreast of the latest research on Latino male college students. Likewise, it was vital that I immersed myself in the hands-on work of helping Latino males succeed in college. Through my extensive work and personal experience at the community college working with Latino males, I have established a familiarity with the context and participant backgrounds (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). As an employee of NTC, I have been involved with many student success efforts, including new student orientation, Achieving the Dream (ATD), teaching freshman student success courses, service learning, student club and organizations, and various campus programs. Furthermore, I have directly been involved with NTC's Men of Color Success mentoring program, which is geared towards providing a support network for Black and Latino male students through mentoring, leadership workshops, student engagement activities (social, service projects, etc.), and exposure to new opportunities. As a partnering institution of the Texas Consortium for Male Students of Color, NTC is well positioned to participate in and gain from the latest research findings of this multi-college consortium centralized at the University of Texas at Austin. Additionally, over the past two years I have been part of the establishment of Men Advancing New Opportunities (MANO), a non-profit geared towards advancing the success of Latino males in our community, with a focus on organizing a support network for

Latino youth consisting of Latino male professionals. Furthermore, I have been a board member of NTC's Texas Association of Chicanos in Higher Education and an advocate for Latino students as a sponsor for the Downtown Campus' Latino student organization. Thus, I believe my professional experiences, along with the time I have spent as an academic scholar on this topic, brought a greater credibility and trust to my understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. However, it's important that I go into more detail on my role as researcher in this study.

My Role as Researcher

Bailey (1996) recalls the interview as “a conscious attempt by the researcher to find out more information about the setting of the person,” free from preconditions and in the most direct ways (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998). By allowing my interpretation to be unrestricted, I was able to construct “the lived experience in a language as free from the constructs of intellect and society as possible” (Groenwald, 2004, p.13). However, qualitative research begins with issues or problems of interest to the researcher (Creswell, 2013), and thus the interviews are reciprocal, with both researcher and participant engaged in dialogue (Groenwald, 2004), employing the use of self as the phenomenon interpreter (Miller & Crabtree, 1992). There is such interplay between researcher and participant that Kvale (1996) comments that it is “literally an inter view, and interchange of views between two persons conversing about a theme of mutual

interest,” with the researcher attempting to derive meaning of the experience from the participant’s perspective.

Accounting for Researcher Bias

According to Creswell (2009), bias is one of the major threats to a research study. However, I can account for and reduce my bias by keeping my personal views out of the interpretation of data. Still, this does not underscore the relationship that develops between the participant and researcher as detailed descriptions of personal experiences are shared. Instead, these close relationships add to the value and accuracy of a study and reduces bias (Creswell, 2009). With that in mind, it was important that I was aware of my personal and professional biases, as I am myself a Latino male college student, who at times struggled and to an extent still struggles with seeking the help I need to succeed in college. Thus, it was vital that I clarified my own educational experiences as a Latino male college students to position any assumptions, biases, and orientations that have shaped my approach to this study. Part of accounting for my biases began with the bracketing of my personal responses and interpretations during data collection and analysis procedures. This process allowed me to set aside prejudgments and previous knowledge about the phenomenon so that participants’ experiences were described with an authentic voice. Additionally, it was important as the researcher that I took into account any personal experiences and views that may have influenced my position on the help-seeking experiences of Latino males.

Hence, it was important that I conveyed my personal interest in studying the help-seeking experiences of Latino male college students, as it was an integral part of the research process. It has been through my experiences as a Latino male college student, and an educational practitioner at a community college, that I first became aware of the educational phenomenon that is the Latino male higher education enrollment and attainment gap. As a college student attending a 4-year public university in Texas, I grew cautiously aware of the lack of Latino student representation at my university. Furthermore, on numerous occasions I witnessed the social and academic challenges of my Latino male peers, challenges that silently led to their attrition from college. I intentionally say “silently” because their departure appeared to fall on the unresponsive ears of college personnel, leaving the experiences of their struggles never spoken nor heard.

I too experienced my own difficulties early on, failing my freshman calculus class and thereby losing a majority of my scholarships. Seeking help from my professor the last few weeks of that distressful semester, especially upon realizing the financial implications of my academic performance, my professor responded, “I can’t help you now, you should have come to me a lot sooner, sorry.” Not expecting the volume of her response to reach the ears of my classmates, as it did, I gathered my books and self, and with every ounce of my pride tried to keep my head up and eyes from tearing. Luckily for me, all hope was not lost, as I found the social and academic support I needed from a group of

Latino male peers, whom would eventually become my network of support and a select few my college roommates.

Thus, it is apparent that my interest in understanding the experiences of Latino male college students seeking the help they need to succeed in college is personal. Adding to this interest, my role as the father of two Latino boys of my own has peaked my interest in understanding how I, as a parent and therefore primary educator, can impact the positive socialization of my sons into *caballeros*, or gentlemen, who have the ability to successfully navigate the academic and social settings of the college environment and life in general. However, I am well aware that many of the young men, and the participants of this study, may not have the luxury of having a male example to imitate, nor possibly even a father figure of any sort. Some may be not only the first in their families to attend college, but also graduate high school, all while possibly navigating the challenges of pursuing their American dream and U.S. citizenship at the same time. However, even though I share cultural and gender similarities with my participants as a Latino male, a vast majority of their personal experiences still remain to be discovered, unwrapped, and thoughtfully described. As a result of this study, it was my intent and hope to contribute to the understanding of Latino male community college students as to make a significant contribution to future research, policy, and practice.

CHAPTER 5

LATINO MALE COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS

The purpose of this study was to examine the help-seeking experiences (e.g. meeting with academic advisor) of Latino male community college students as they navigate North Texas College (NTC) system. Researchers have examined the help-seeking orientation of Latino students (Stanton-Salazar 2001, Stanton-Salazar, Chavez, & Tai, 2001), which has been defined in terms of the perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, and correspondent behaviors that either encourage or hinder one from actively seeking help and support from communal and familial resources or mainstream institutions (Stanton-Salazar, 2001). Instead, this study developed a “text” of the lived help-seeking experiences (Van Manen, 1990) of Latino male community college students, which described the phenomenon and developed both textural (what was experienced) and structural (how it was experienced in terms of conditions, circumstances, and context) descriptions of their experiences (Creswell, 2013). Collecting such a rich description allowed me to achieve my research goals of exploring: 1) the perceptions, motivations, and attitudes of Latino males community college students in seeking help, 2) how their help-seeking experiences have impacted their college persistence and academic achievement, and 4) how this study will add insight to research that informs practices and policies that can better serve Latino males at higher education institutions.

Thus, this chapter provides a starting point for the construction of these textural and structural aspects by providing access to the personal and academic backgrounds of each participant. An integral piece of any phenomenological study is gaining access to the lived experiences of the research participants (Van Manen, 1990). Therefore, the first section introduces information gathered from the participant demographic information form, including their personal, familial, and educational backgrounds. This section is followed by biographies that present a personalized description of the context and significant influences in each participant's collegiate journey.

Participants' Background Information

Specific criteria existed for participants involved in this study (See Chapter 4). However, beyond these conditions they also shared many other similarities related to personal, familial, and educational aspects of their backgrounds. These similarities have been gathered from the demographic information form, interviews, and artifacts provided by the participants, including academic transcripts. Although all participants completed a demographic information form and interview, not all provided artifacts for this study.

Personal Background

The section will cover aspects of the students' personal background, including their race/ethnicity, place of birth as well as their employment, marital, and parental statuses. In regards to the participants' racial/ethnic backgrounds,

seven of the 12 participants (Victor, Arturo, Pedro, Hector, Manuel, Xavier, Oscar) identified themselves as Chicano/Mexican American, four (Rodolfo, Alejandro, Gustavo, Luis) identified as Latino, and one (Santiago) chose the option of other and wrote in Hispanic. Five participants (Arturo, Pedro, Alejandro, Gustavo, Luis) were born outside the United States, all in Mexico. The remaining participants (Victor, Hector, Manuel, Rodolfo, Santiago, Xavier, Oscar) were all born in the state of Texas. Nine of the participants were between the ages of 18 and 24, two (Santiago, Oscar) were 26 years old and one (Xavier) chose not to mark his age on the participant demographic information form. Yet, during the interview, he identified as being above 40. Eleven of the participants were single, with one (Xavier) being divorced. Two of the participants (Santiago, Xavier) each have one child, while one participant (Oscar) has four children.

Familial Background

This section will cover aspects of the students' familial backgrounds, including information about their parents' race/ethnicity, place of birth, socioeconomic status, educational attainment, and whether other family members have attended college. Eight of the participants (Arturo, Pedro, Hector, Rodolfo, Alejandro, Gustavo, Oscar, Luis) had parents who were born outside of the United States. Mexico was the primary country of origin for their parents, except for one participant's father (Rodolfo) being from Puerto Rico. The remaining participants (Victor, Manuel, Santiago, Xavier) had both parents born in the

United States. However, due to lack of parental involvement, Victor was unsure where his father was born. In regards to their families' socioeconomic status, nine participants (Victor, Arturo, Pedro, Hector, Manuel, Alejandro, Santiago, Xavier, Gustavo) identified their families as working class, two (Oscar, Luis) identified as middle class, and one (Rodolfo) identified as low income. As far as their parents' educational attainment, three participants' (Victor, Gustavo, Oscar) mothers had obtained associate degrees. Only one of the three participants' (Victor's) mother obtained that degree in the United States. Of the other mothers, four (Manuel, Rodolfo, Santiago, Luis) had a high school diploma/GED, three (Arturo, Pedro, Alejandro) had some middle school education, one (Hector) had an elementary education, and one's (Xavier) education level is unknown. None of the participants' fathers had obtained a college degree. However, five of the participants' fathers (Arturo, Pedro, Hector, Alejandro, Oscar) had some middle school education, four (Manuel, Rodolfo, Santiago, Luis) had a high school diploma/GED, one (Gustavo) noted that his father completed "two days of kindergarten" and two (Victor, Xavier) had no educational information to provide about their fathers.

Educational Background

This section provides an overview of the educational background of the participants, including their first-generation college student status, the colleges they were currently enrolled in and/or previously attended, full-time or part-time

enrollment status, the number of years they attended college, degree and career aspirations, campus involvement, and the means by which their college expenses were funded. Four of the participants (Arturo, Rodolfo, Alejandro, Luis) were the first in their families to go to college, while all the other participants except three (Victor, Gustavo, Oscar) represented the first generation in their families in college. Some participants mentioned siblings and more distant relatives that have attempted and/or completed college. In regards to the participants' current enrollment status at a NTC, seven (Victor, Pedro, Hector, Manuel, Santiago, Oscar, Arturo) went to the Downtown Campus, and five (Rodolfo, Alejandro, Xavier, Gustavo, Luis) went to the Red Oak Campus. Two participants (Arturo, Oscar) had attended other local technical colleges and trade schools. Seven participants (Victor, Pedro, Hector, Alejandro, Santiago, Gustavo, Luis) were full-time students, or a minimum of 12 credit hours, and three (Arturo, Manuel, Rodolfo) were part-time. The other two participants (Xavier, Oscar) attended college both part-time and full-time at different points of their college experience. In addition, three of the students (Pedro, Hector, Rodolfo) were in their first year of attending college, three (Gustavo, Oscar, Luis) were in their second year, five (Arturo, Manuel, Alejandro, Santiago, Xavier) were in their third year and one (Victor) was in his fourth year.

All of the students expressed great interest in transferring to a 4-year university to attain their bachelor's degree, with almost all choosing a university

in the North Texas region. However, there were a few exceptions, which included a university in Central Texas (Manuel) and two schools in West Texas (Pedro, Luis). All students except one (Gustavo) acknowledged using a variety of sources, including federal financial aid, grants, and scholarships to pay for college. Many of the students also worked on or off campus to meet their academic and personal financial responsibilities. Eight of the participants acknowledged that they worked, with four working on campus (Victor, Manuel, Rodolfo, Alejandro), two off campus (Xavier, Gustavo), and two both on and off campus (Arturo, Santiago). The students on average worked 32.5 hours per week. This included four students who worked 40 or more hours a week (Arturo, Santiago, Xavier, Gustavo), while the remaining four (Victor, Manuel, Rodolfo, Alejandro) worked only on campus for the allotted college student worker maximum of 19.5 hours per week. Two students (Rodolfo, Santiago) leveraged their military benefits to pay for college. In terms of campus engagement, only two students (Rodolfo, Xavier) acknowledged not being involved in campus activities or organizations. The most common campus involvement included the campus' Latino student organization (Pedro, Hector, Alejandro, Gustavo, Oscar, Luis), the Men of Color Success mentoring program (Victor, Pedro, Hector, Oscar, Luis), and Student Government (Victor, Manuel, Alejandro).

Participants' Biographies

Victor was born and raised on the Eastside of Fort Worth, Texas where he attended his neighborhood public schools. Although he described his neighborhood as being “rough” and a place others look down upon, he had a strong sense of pride about his community. Victor was the youngest of three brothers raised by a single mother for almost his entire upbringing. His mother had a profound impact on his motivation to achieve a college degree, especially given that she was a teenage mother and high school dropout who then earned her associate’s degree in her 30s.

Initially Victor wanted to become a high school history teacher, with hopes of returning to his former high school. However, Victor struggled academically in his first attempt at attending NTC. Socially, he became very engaged in leadership programs and utilizing campus recreational areas (i.e. fitness center) on campus during his first semester. On the other hand, Victor’s abundant social life and low motivation led to an underutilization of campus academic support resources (i.e. writing center, tutoring labs) that he was well aware of, along with poor study habits and class attendance. After finding himself on academic probation and then academic suspension, Victor had time to reflect on his collegiate experience. In addition, while at home he interacted with neighborhood friends who never went to college, which reminded him of the socioeconomic mobility he would lack if he did not continue his pursuit of a

college degree. Thus, Victor knew he must return to NTC. However, presently Victor had a rejuvenated sense of motivation and a work-study position on campus that helped him stay connected to campus resources, engage in programs such as Student Government Association (SGA) and the Men of Color Success program, as well as build important connections with staff members that have become a great support network for him.

Arturo's family arrived to the United States from Durango, Mexico when he was 4 years old. Being the eldest son of immigrant parents with a middle school education, he had a strong sense of responsibility to not only fulfill the American dream his family was in search of, but also pave a path of success for his two younger brothers. Arturo began his experiences as the first in his family to attend college at a local trade school where he obtained a certification that would allow him to install HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning) systems. However, after experiencing first-hand the harsh physical conditions of installing HVAC systems in the attics of such a warm state like Texas, Arturo decided to pursue another occupation and college degree at NTC's Downtown Campus.

Working both on and off campus 50 hours per week placed much strain on the time Arturo had to dedicate to his studies. Although he attended NTC-Downtown Campus part-time, he was taking 11 credit hours, just one shy of full-time status. Still, with ambitions of being a mechanical engineer, Arturo took his studying seriously, but admitted that he might be stretching himself too thin in

terms of his school versus workload balance. Rather shy, or what I would describe as down-to-earth and quite, Arturo was also a campus tour guide and new student orientation peer leader. Given the spotlight of attention these roles had, Arturo was definitely outside his comfort zone. However, he admitted that he benefited tremendously from these opportunities, including the relationships these positions helped him build with peers and NTC staff and faculty. Upon completion of his associate's degree at NTC, Arturo plans to pursue both his bachelor's and master's degrees in mechanical engineering.

Pedro was born in Federal District, Mexico and arrived in the United States as a 3-month-old infant. His family settled in Texas, and for most his life he has been raised by his mother. However, a stepfather and uncle, both of whom he admired, filled the absence of Pedro's biological father. He had an undisclosed amount of younger siblings and considered his family to be working class. Although his parents only attained a middle school education, his uncle and aunt, who both attended college, had a large motivational influence on his decision to go to college. Initially arriving as an undocumented immigrant, Pedro's collegiate and occupational future was not always so apparent. However, his family was able to garner U.S. citizenship status, something Pedro was extremely grateful for as he witnessed daily the struggles many of his peers encountered in cultivating their educational and economic aspirations.

Although Pedro started college right after high school, he described himself as an unfocused high school student. Consequently, he did not consider pursuing a college degree until the second semester of his senior year. As a first-year student at NTC's Downtown Campus, establishing early social connections with peers and staff through student organizations, leadership programs, and the Men of Color Success Mentoring Program, were key to his early success and retention. However, academically he acknowledged a need for improvement from his first semester performance that ended in a 2.67 GPA. Pedro's aspirations included earning bachelor's degree in business and becoming a successful entrepreneur and community leader. In addition, he desired to be a role model for his younger siblings. His continued engagement on campus allotted him the opportunity to meet community leaders, many of whom were also Latino and provided him inspiration to reach his dreams.

Hector came from a working class two parent household. His parents were born in Mexico where his mother obtained an elementary school education and his father obtained some middle school education. He took great pride in his family's roots and often visited family in Mexico. He has two older brothers, one of which was also pursuing a degree at NTC. Hector grew up as an avid video gamer, spending much of his time outside of school playing games online. In high school, Hector acknowledged that he never took challenging courses or even planned on attending college. It was not until a counselor encouraged him to

consider NTC that he began researching college and discovered the Downtown Campus.

Nevertheless, Hector had academically achieved a 3.75 GPA in his first semester of college. But, he often struggled socially in growing relationships with peers, something he admitted has always been a challenge for him. As one might imagine, Hector was quiet, and classes such as speech brought him anxiety. But, through the encouragement of staff on campus, Hector became involved with the Downtown Campus' Latino student organization, as well as the Men of Color Success mentoring program. Hector was a full-time student who was anxious to transfer to a 4-year university to obtain a bachelor's degree in criminal justice, after which he hopes to start a career in law enforcement. His aspirations were encouraged by a desire to give back to his community, including assisting non-English speakers in understanding the laws of the U.S. criminal justice system.

Manuel was one of the few participants whose parents were both born in the United States and graduated from high school. He identified his family's socioeconomic status as working class. Manuel had one older brother who was currently enrolled in college and an older sister that graduated with her bachelor's degree. Manuel is also gay, an identity he takes great pride in. However, he noted that growing up gay was difficult at times, especially given the Latino males' machismo culture.

Manuel was entering his final semester at NTC's Downtown Campus, after which he had aspirations to attend a university to obtain a degree in radio television and film broadcasting. His ultimate goal was to become a director and make full-length films. Although he considered other universities to transfer to, he believed Austin, Texas provided him the most opportune environment to engage in film making while attending school. He was employed on the Downtown Campus, something he considered important to connecting him with campus resources. He recognized his academic weakness in math, which was reflected in his grades. However, overall he was an outstanding student with a 3.32 cumulative GPA and had received awards for his leadership in the Student Government Association and the Downtown Campus Equality in Education (DCEE) student organization. Manuel's leadership had been influential in advocating for awareness of and equality for the LGBT community on campus. His leadership played a significant role in DCEE being awarded back-to-back student organization of the year awards. Although he acknowledged the lack of Latino male engagement on campus, he was a passionate advocate for LGBT social justice. Given the machismo gender norms surrounding Latino males, Manuel expressed that being a gay Latino male comes with its challenges on and off the college campus.

Rodolfo's father was from Puerto Rico and his mother was from Mexico. He proudly identified himself as Latino. Rodolfo was the youngest in his family,

which included two half-sisters who resided in Puerto Rico, as well as one sister and two brothers who also lived in Texas. He identified his family's socioeconomic status as low income. Both of his parents graduated from high school. However, none of his older siblings had attended college, making him the first in his family to do so. Prior to attending NTC's Red Oak campus, Rodolfo enlisted in the Army National Guard. Coming out of high school, he had little intention, if any, of attending college. But through interactions with fellow enlisted soldiers and officers during his initial Army job training, he was encouraged to consider a path that would lead him to being a commissioned officer.

Rodolfo's experiences and training in the National Guard had a profound impact on the attitude and discipline in which he approached his college work. He was very much "all business" on campus, whether in the classroom or at his on-campus job. Rodolfo was in his first year of attending the NTC Red Oak Campus, where he worked on campus part-time. Outside of his job, Rodolfo was not involved in co-curricular activities. Instead he preferred to get done what he needed to on campus and then go home. This approach helped him avoid what he described as "negative influences" that existed on campus, which could be distractions. He had much gratitude for the campus Welcome Center and Veterans Affairs Office for providing him with the support he needed in getting started at NTC. He admitted that seeking help was not a natural habit for him and males in

general. Rodolfo noted that there was a desire not to “feel dumb” or lose respect for not knowing. Nevertheless, he knew this was something he needed to improve upon in order to reach his goals of completing a bachelor’s degree in kinesiology and being commissioned as an officer in the active duty military.

Alejandro was born in Mexico and arrived to the United States at the age of 9. The lack of opportunities his cousins in Mexico experienced were a constant reminder for him to take advantage of opportunity he had to succeed in college. His father worked long shifts as a waiter, which was a motivating factor in his desire to succeed in college and a career. Alejandro was the oldest child in his family that included three younger sisters, and he had a strong sense of responsibility to set a positive example for them. He identified his family’s socioeconomic status as working class. While his father had some middle school education, his mother attended some college in Mexico.

Alejandro was in his third year at the NTC’s Red Oak Campus. Like other participants, during his first semester Alejandro did not search for the help he needed early on. However, he contributed much of his success to his ability to work on campus and thereby build connections with staff, faculty, and peers. Beyond working on campus, Alejandro was involved with many student organizations, including the Latin American Student Success Organization, Student Government Association, Cornerstone Honors Program, and the Film

Club. He aspired to pursue a bachelor's degree in film production, after which he hoped to produce films that could have an impact on social justice challenges.

Santiago was born and raised in El Paso, Texas and was cared for during his youth in large part by a single mother. He described the short time his father was in his life as emotionally and physically abusive. However, he drew much of his motivation from his father's bad example, stating, "I want ...not to be anything like my father, but the opposite." Santiago's other motivation was his infant daughter, which he enjoyed raising with his girlfriend. In addition, he tragically lost his older brother a few years back, and was determined to live out the legacy of his brother by working hard to achieve his aspirations.

Prior to attending NTC, Santiago served in the United States Marine Corps, which included three valiant tours in Iraq. He was head strong and often determined to figure things out on his own. Although he had been successful in graduating from NTC, he likely took a harder path to completion than if he would have asked for help along the way. However, as a veteran, Santiago was able to garner assistance from fellow veteran staff that reached out to him, and connected him with the Veterans Club on campus. He eventually led the Veterans Club on campus and became a key campus advocate for veteran students. Santiago finished his tenure at NTC during the previous semester. He successfully transferred to a local area university, but continued to work on the NTC Downtown Campus. His goals included achieving a bachelor's and master's

degree in criminal justice and becoming a special agent with the Department of Homeland Security.

Xavier was an older student, who only stated that he was over 40, which was not uncommon for community colleges, even though his age comes with the label of being a non-traditional student. His family resided in the United States for four generations, which does make him unique amongst the participants I interviewed. Nevertheless, Xavier took great pride in his Texan and Chicano/Mexican-American heritages alike. He identified his family's socioeconomic status as working class and was unsure of the educational attainment of his parents. Xavier had an older brother and a young sister that completed her master's degree. He was divorced and had one son.

Xavier did not attend NTC directly after high school, but instead entered the workforce and soon after was married. He attended NTC's Red Oak Campus a few times over the past decade, with large breaks in-between. He worked full-time off campus and had been attending the Red Oak Campus both part-time and full-time for 3 years. Although he acknowledged using study areas such as the library and computer labs, he was not involved in any campus programs or student organizations. Xavier looked forward to transferring to a university to pursue a degree in education or psychology, after which he intended to work in a field that would allow him to help others, whether it was with children or adults.

Gustavo was born in Coahuila, Mexico and arrived to the United States at the age of 16. Although his mother attained an associate's degree in Mexico, his father only attended a few days of elementary school. He had one older sister and identified his family's socioeconomic status as working class. Gustavo was the first person in his family to attend college in the United States. Arriving as a teenager meant Gustavo attended schools designed for new arrivals. He recalled his high school experience as being very diverse in terms of students from different cultures and countries across the globe.

Gustavo attended college full-time at the NTC's Red Oak Campus for 2 years, while simultaneously working full-time off campus. Although his English language acquisition remained an academic challenge, he had achieved a 3.39 GPA. Furthermore, socially he made positive peer connections through the Latino student organization on campus. At the Red Oak Campus, he was pursuing an Associate of Arts degree in teaching, after which he intended to transfer for a bachelor's degree and teacher certification. He hoped to one day teach in a setting that helps newcomers like himself transition into the United States educational system.

While **Oscar** was born in the United States, his parents were both born in Mexico. He had three sisters and a brother, and together they grew up in what he described as a middle-income household. His mother attend some college and his father some middle school. However, Oscar became associated with the wrong

crowd of friends at an early age and did not complete high school. Oscar lived in a neighborhood surrounded by gang activity, violence, and narcotics, all of which he hoped to escape through achieving his college degree. His sister who was an NTC graduate inspired him to go to college.

Prior to attending NTC's Downtown Campus, Oscar was enrolled in a trade school to study auto mechanics, and later a local for-profit school to begin his college pursuits. Life circumstances required him to stop attending trade school, and he found better affordability at NTC in comparison to the for-profit college. Altogether he had been attending college for 2 years, now alongside his girlfriend with whom he shared a newborn son. Oscar also had three other sons from previous relationships. He often felt judged by others, including peers, faculty, and staff on campus, due to his tattoos. Nevertheless, Oscar was a very determined young man, but was often frustrated by the circumstances of his neighborhood environment. Most recently his family was victim to a drive-by shooting, for which no one was physically injured. However, this incident was very emotionally challenging for him and his family, especially given what he described as a slow police response (hours later) and accusations that he was at fault. Consequently, these and other experiences motivated Oscar to attain his associate's degree and ultimately attend the police academy.

Luis, like his parents, was born in Mexico and arrived in the United States in middle school. Both his mother and father had high school diplomas, and he

identified his family's socioeconomic status as middle income. Luis had one younger sister, and was the first in his family to attend college. He attended the local school district's Language Center as a means to grow his English proficiency prior to attending high school.

Luis enrolled in NTC's Red Oak Campus directly after high school, and had been doing so for 2 years. Although he currently does not work, he was an active member of the Men of Color Success mentoring program and the campus' Latino Student Organization for which he assumed leadership roles. He shared that these organizations had the most impact on him fostering relationships with his peers, faculty and staff. He aspired to transfer to a university to earn his bachelor's degree in history or political science along with a teacher certification in secondary education.

Summary

The 12 Latino male participants shared many commonalities in their backgrounds and campus involvement. However, they represent an assortment of experiences. Their diverse backgrounds, experiences, and perceptions have shaped how they conceptualize their current help-seeking orientation and practices. Inevitably these aspects of their background influenced my efforts to construct a "text" of their lived help-seeking experiences (Van Manen, 1990) that described the phenomenon and developed both textural (what was experienced)

and structural (how it was experienced in terms of conditions, circumstances, and context) descriptions of their experiences (Creswell, 2013).

CHAPTER 6

LATINO MALES' MOTIVATION AND THE HELP-SEEKING

EXPERIENCE

In guidance with this study's theoretical framework, the Model for College Student Help-Seeking Experiences (MCSHE), the findings of this investigation are through the lens of Achievement Goal Theory (motivation), Attribution Theory (academic-control), and Help-Avoidance (basis for avoiding help) in the college environment. Thus, this chapter begins with understanding the impact of motivation on help-seeking as it provides insight into the obstacles that often prevent students from seeking help (Collins & Sims, 2006). The following chapter centers on the reason that students engage in achievement-related behavior, as well as the standards that students use to assess their advancement towards reaching goals (Collins & Sims, 2006). Therefore, this chapter includes the following sections: 1) Balancing Machismo and Caballerismo Identities and 2) Engagement and Academic Goal Orientation & Self-Efficacy. The first section includes subthemes related to undocumented students who were brought to the United States as children, otherwise known as: 1) dreamers and participants' experiences and 2) fighting stereotypes. The second section incorporates the subthemes of 1) engagement on campus and 2) academic goal orientation and self-efficacy.

Balancing Machismo and Caballerismo Identities

Two narratives often associated with the “standard” behaviors of Latino men are machismo and caballerismo. Machismo, a manifestation of prized and expected behaviors amongst Latino men (Panitz, McConchie, Sauber, & Fonesca, 1983), is often characterized as aggressive and hypermasculine (Anders, 1993; Ingoldsby, 1991). Although machismo represents both positive and negative perceived male characteristics (Arciniega, Tovar-Gamero, & Sand, 2004), the common negative description is that of a stereotypical masculine personification of a Latino/Mexican-American man as controlling, sexist and violent, correlated with antisocial behavior, aggressive masculinity, and wishful thinking as a coping style (Arciniega, Anderson, Tovar-Blank, Tracey, 2008). This machismo gender identification has been attributed to Latino males’ resistance to seeking help (Gloria, Castellanos, Scull & Vilegas, 2009, Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009; Saenz & Bukoski, 2014). However, others have moved towards a more balanced narrative of machismo that is being described as a paradigm that is both positive and negative (Casas, et al., 1994; Mirande, 1997, Neff, 2001, & Arciniega et al., 2008). According to Arciniega et al. (2008), caballerismo is a positive image of a man as nurturing and noble and the family provider who respects and cares for his family. Furthermore, this positive construct of Latino male behavior is demonstrated through social connectedness, value in their family relationships,

understanding and appreciation of their emotions and the feelings of others, and an exhibited practical means of resolving their challenges (Arciniega et al., 2008).

Familial and Gender Role Influences on Motivation

Also what, you know, motivated me was my mom was a single mom. You know, my dad wasn't in the picture, so she had to do a lot for us... since I'm working and going to school, I can help her out more and I can help the family out more.

(Victor, Personal communication, January 15, 2015)

A recurring theme that was gathered from my data analysis was participants' motivation to achieve their college goals through a strong value for its impact on family, an appreciation of familial sacrifices, and a desire to be a family provider. Furthermore, Victor noted, "seeing kids without fathers really irks me...it hurts me even – 'cause, you know, seeing a mother raise three kids, you know, it was tough." As caballeros, Victor and other participants without involved biological fathers (see section: Participants' Background) expressed feelings of emotional pain and empathy for their single mothers.

Santiago conveyed his emotions towards being raised by a single mother in the following;

Having not seen my dad for 21 years and not even having a vivid picture, it's just like – he's kind of like a ghost to me –...it was hard growing up without a father. Yeah, it was hard to see my mom doing everything that

she possibly can do for us, but...knowing that it wasn't a father figure in the family – that didn't stop me from...succeeding just because he left.

In addition, Santiago demonstrated resilience, or the capability to persist in spite of instability throughout his adolescents (Bonanno, 2004; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). This resilience included facing transient living, emotional and physical abuse, and family drug and alcohol addictions. He expressed that his resilience in this way: “That doesn't stop me 'cause, I – thankfully I have other father figures in my life that helps me out with advice, and gives me advice, and, you know – men that I can trust, – past, present, or future.” Despite what some might view as overwhelming obstacles, and what he described as a home environment where there was “nothing but trouble,” Santiago found a healthy environment with the Young Marines, a program he joined in middle school. Through this program, he found role models that he stated “kind of gave you that we did it you can do it, too, and kind of took you from that bad...side of growing up to there's more, more to life than just struggling and just doing drugs and in that mindset.” The Young Marines provided him a dependable place for which he escaped the negative influences of his environment. Furthermore, it served as turning point in his life towards a greater sense of control for his future. He explained:

So at that point I had something to look forward to. I was like, okay I want to be like these guys and not like my father, and what he was doing

to us. So my whole mind – like it changed at that point and that’s what led me to going into the Marine Corps and then that just furthered my discipline, my bearing, everything as far as my whole thing is I don’t want to be my father. Don’t know the guy other than he used to beat us and stuff like that. He would drink a lot and always do drugs. He would cheat on my mom and stuff. So my whole life now is, I want to be the complete opposite of what he was.

His ability to find positive solutions and be resilient throughout his childhood lead to his service in the United States Marine Corps along with three honorable and valiant tours in Iraq. In addition, Santiago’s motivation was to be “the complete opposite” of his father’s negative machismo behaviors that include controlling women (Anders, 1993), violence, and alcoholism (Alaniz, 1996; Neff, Prihoda, & Hoppe, 1991).

In light of recently becoming a father, Santiago’s motivation to succeed in college and life was inspired by his aspiration to be a positive image of a man, a family provider and, in essence, a nurturing and noble caballero. However, according to Saenz and Bukoski (2014), behaviors of the military can also represent a “systematic indoctrination of the masculine ideals of strength, silence, and toughness” that attach themselves to gender identity and familial responsibilities (pp.100). Consequently, motivation to engage in achievement-related behavior, including help-seeking, is influenced by a person’s gender role

conflict experience (Harris & Harper, 2008; Harper & Harris, 2010) and strong ties to familial responsibility, or *familismo*.

The theme of motivation deriving from *familismo* was seen amongst all participants, especially those individuals who immigrated to the United States (see section: Participants' Background) such as Alejandro. He explained:

[*My motivation*] to succeed in college would be looking at the life that my cousins have back in Mexico. Again most of them just didn't have a chance to get to know college. So they dropped out, they ended up having a family already. And I just hear how it is that they're living out there, and I want do better for myself 'cause I wouldn't want...my kids to being going [through] what my cousins and their families are in Mexico. I want to get the education that I could – that I need so I can help myself and my future families and also my parents.

In this regard, *familismo*, or the cultural expectation of strong commitment towards family (Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009), resulted in his motivation towards attending and succeeding in college. This familial motivation was not only driven by his desire to provide a better life for his family, but also to make up for the lack of opportunity his family living in Mexico were experiencing. In turn, he understood how much his aspirations and achievements impacted more than just himself.

For Gustavo, this motivation came with a message from his mother. She stressed, “I want someone from the house, from the family to be different.” This difference meant Gustavo going to college and not solely to the workforce. Gustavo and other participants (Victor, Arturo, Pedro, Hector, Rodolfo, Alejandro, Santiago, Oscar, Luis), with a great amount of pride and sense of responsibility, took fulfilling this collective familial goal seriously, understanding the implications it had for their families, including the example it would set for younger siblings. Furthermore, other participants (Victor, Pedro, Hector, Rodolfo, Oscar, Luis) expressed their motivation to succeed in college as communal responsibility. For example, Pedro stated, “The Latino population is very, put down or not seen well in college– the semester helped me decide that –I want to do that aspiration ‘cause it’s my people and, I would like to bring them out and show them that they can do it, and educations [is] for them.” Although these feelings of familial connectedness and concern could be interpreted as overwhelming obligations, these students found a sense pride and motivation from their attitudes towards these responsibilities.

These Latino male students were socialized to incorporate the behaviors and roles associated with *caballerismo* (Arciniega et al., 2008; Valdés, Barón, & Ponce, 1987). However, Gustavo experienced a strong need to take on the sacrifices necessary to build his own understanding of these gender role ideologies.

Yes, I understand and I know that because he tells me that, “I’m working for you, I’m not gonna take it to my grave with me.” That’s gonna be for you guys.”...For my siblings and myself....So, I also want to do something for myself. Like, the sacrifice to get the things for myself. If I just follow my dad’s path it’s like he left me everything and I wouldn’t know what it feels like to sacrifice things to get things for myself. You know? Sometimes. That is why I don’t want my dad just to give me everything just like that.

The caballerismo gender role norms such as honor, respect, dignity, and familismo (Arciniega et al., 2008) are transferred, learned, and reinforced through family members, peer groups, and even media (Liang, Salcedo, & Miller, 2011). In Gustavo’s case, he demonstrated these behaviors through his social connectedness with his father and with a value for family relationships. His authentic appreciation for his father’s sacrifice and hard work were his way of seeking to model these behaviors and values. However, Gustavo also expressed a desire to achieve his “sacrifices” in isolation from his father’s through his own hard work. Thus, he experienced a balancing of machismo and caballerismo behaviors. On one hand, valuable motivation is derived from the respect, social connectedness, and sense of familial responsibility. On the other hand, we also find the maintenance of machismo behaviors leads to seclusion and supports a dissonance from what is interpreted as feministic emotional and affectionate

behaviors relevant to positive help-seeking attitudes (Tsan, Day, Schwartz, & Kimbrel, 2011).

For Oscar, whose family was recently targeted by a drive-by shooting, much of his motivation centered on the prospects that education could be a socioeconomic tool for providing his family with a safer environment. With tears in his eyes, he expressed the hurt, frustration, and anger he felt when bullets rang through his house, only inches from where his children slept. Oscar had contemplated leaving college numerous times, including his first day: “The very first day I came to NTC, man, I was telling myself, ‘I’m outta here. I’m gonna quit. This is not for me.’” For Oscar, making money meant survival in the most literal terms. This could result in his decision to make quick money on the street, something common in his neighborhood. However, he also recognized that this solution is short sighted, and he stopped himself from leaving the classroom that first day. Recalling his thoughts from that day he said, “[I was] thinking, making a little bit of money, little chump change, was better than that [going to school].” For Oscar, education was the long-term problem-solving tool for bringing his family out of poverty and into a safe environment. Although he may not have figured out how to navigate college perfectly, he recalled the following message from his father:

Now, two years later, I’m still here. I’m wondering why, but now I know why... I have to finish. ... My dad tells me all the time, “Don’t start

something [if you] don't finish it. You know? You a quitter?" "No." Do I want to be seen as one? No. So now I gotta finish.

The excerpt above could be seen as a more machismo geared message: don't be a quitter, finish it, and be strong and tough like a man. Although this message helped push Oscar forward in life both inside and outside the classroom, it had also accumulated into an unhealthy amount of emotional stress. For example, Oscar went to school the very next day after the shooting. I asked him how he managed to do that. He responded, "I didn't want to just say I gave up because something's going on in my life, or because this one situation held me back from it." Even through such a traumatic experience he still wanted to work towards his college goals, for he knew that his hope of escaping such violence was inherently connected to his success in college. Oscar went on to describe the days following the drive-by shooting. He expressed:

You know, you can't sleep at night, and not have to stay up wondering what's gonna happen, or when you gotta be ready, you know? And to still show up in a classroom with a straight face, and look at the teacher and say, "Okay. What do we have next?" And still worrying about once you get back over there, you look out for your life, again. It makes you have a panic attack.

Although he maintained his composure inside the classroom, the anxiety that came from his situation was a distracting force on his educational experience.

However, going to college continued to be a strong source of motivation and goodness in Oscar's life.

Being proud that I did something good [going to school], and I feel good about it...and you know, like try to make more good come out of my life than bad, and just try to spend every good day with your family as much as possible, and hopefully it turns out for the best.

The accumulation of this bottled up emotion brought Oscar to tears, and at times our interview felt like a breath of fresh air for him. It was not only an opportunity for him to unload years of feelings of hurt, anger, and hardship, but also it was his personal narrative and expression of love for his family. These strong feelings of familial pride were also communicated in his tattoos, a practice amongst Latino males that is visible in other cultural expressions as well (i.e. family names on clothing and vehicles). These cultural expressions are too often only associated with negative stereotypes (e.g. gangs) of Latino males, and therefore, are only understood as a manifestation of machismo. The often-underappreciated sense of pride, cultural expressions, and wishful thinking, is also a display of familismo, loyalty, honor, hope, and a resilience that is rooted in a desire to be a humble man and provide a better life for your family.

Dreamers

Dreamers represent a demographic profile of immigrants who might benefit from President Obama's executive orders such as Deferred Action for

Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and the Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents (DAPA) programs. Participants from this study that could benefit from the orders, or who had close relatives including siblings that could benefit, included Arturo, Pedro, Hector, Rodolfo, Alejandro, Gustavo, and Luis. For example Gustavo, who arrived in the U.S. as an undocumented child, was faced with not only threat of deportation, but also the challenge of pursuing a college education that may never be useful to him in gaining viable employment that could move him and his family out of poverty. Gustavo's father was supportive of his son's collegiate aspirations, even given the challenges he faced being an undocumented college student. He explained:

I try to help my dad but he doesn't tell me a lot to be with him [work] because of school and other things that I am in, and because I also don't have the legal status. So, yeah, it's that risk, so I can't. So if I am driving a truck and they grab me or if I'm in an accident, then that's a risk. He doesn't tell me that I have to be there with him. But whenever I can I go help him, like with mechanics or things like that.

From a machismo lens, one might presume that Gustavo's father's expectations were for his son to work, and not waste time pursuing a college degree that, as an undocumented student, warrants little impact on his ability to gain employment and provide for his family. However, instead his father encouraged him to be in school, both because he valued the educational opportunities he did not

experience, and he feared his son's deportation. Nevertheless, Gustavo had an eagerness to work alongside and support his father, not leaving either of them in isolation. But then, what motivated Gustavo, or any undocumented student for that matter, to work towards a college degree? Perhaps they are utilizing their traditional machismo coping strategy of wishful thinking (Arciniega et al., 2008), and why they are known as "the dreamers." Whether characterized as machismo or caballerismo, much positive motivational and value-driven social capital is gained from these paternal experiences. For example, Gustavo said, "It's that for my dad it's like hard work. Only hard work is gonna – let you be successful in life." For an immigrant parent and student, much hope is placed into the narrative that "if you work hard enough, you will reach your goals." Therefore, highly motivated by the prospects of socioeconomic prosperity for themselves and their families, Latino males idealize and emulate these attitudes and live out these socialized behaviors, whether for better or worse.

Being a dreamer, or a undocumented student whose family migrated to the United States while he was a minor, Alejandro had garnered motivation to succeed in college from this experience, even saying, "Whenever I started college my first major was actually political science 'cause I was really into political science, especially being a dreamer I really wanted to make a change." Given the recent political halt by a federal district court in Texas to presidential executive orders such as DACA and DAPA programs, dreamers are left contemplating their

futures more than ever. With great aspirations of being productive American citizens, dreamers are found throughout colleges across the country, including Gustavo at NTC. He explained:

When I came here, – like I said, it was difficult. We tried to get the visa; we tried to do, well, the legal steps, you know, to come. But they wouldn't give it to us and Mexico was getting dangerous. So the way that I came here was a little bit traumatizing for me. How it was to be with the “coyote” and see what would happen with the people and I saw how they treated us and how they left us and it feels like – in that moment you don't know if you will get out of there. You are alone, you're not really it's just... my sister and I were coming alone at the time. Leaving my parents, my family, all behind hurt a lot.

For those of us that have been blessed to be born in the United States, a place of opportunity for social mobility, we often take for granted the privileges we are bestowed as citizens. But, for Gustavo who arrived at the age of 16 and Alejandro who arrived at the age of 9, each opportunity to open a book or be in a college classroom was truly savored. Gustavo carried the traumatic experience of migration with him each day. It served as a constant reminder that even though the playing field was not leveled and at any moment he could be back in Mexico, the opportunity he had before him must be seized, for it was built upon many sacrifices. After surviving his journey to U.S. soil, he continued to be greeted by

society with this message, “Well, you don’t got the skills, you don’t got the language, and you don’t got this.” To which he responds, “I mean, – don’t you say that I can’t do things. –You are not even looking at me for the way I am. I know that I can, just give me a chance.” Proving others wrong about him, and dreamers collectively, was an added fuel for motivating him to achieve in college.

For Alejandro, having a father who did not have the opportunity to complete middle school was a source of motivation and responsibility for him to embrace the opportunity he had to attend college. Although Alejandro had much admiration for his father’s hard work, he said, “I wouldn’t like to fall into those footsteps” of being a waiter. When asked what motivates him to succeed in college, he stated:

In a way I did it for my dad, because like he says, he doesn’t want to see me working from, like, 8:00 to 10:00 waiting tables and all that stuff and just making my money off of tips. ... So he pushes me a lot, and I look at my dad’s life I’m like, “I really don’t wanna do that either,” ... and I do that for both of us to have a better life and to just show my dad that I can actually do it.

The dreamers’ narratives were woven intimately with that of their parents. This intimacy fused their aspirations and familial social capital into an arrangement of achievements that can generationally be built upon.

Fighting Stereotypes

Liang, Salcedo, and Miller's (2011) quantitative study found perceived racism in academic, job, and general settings to be the moderator in the relationship between machismo ideology and gender role conflict (GRC). For the Latino male participants in this study, the varying associations of machismo and caballerismo masculine ideologies were impacted by the stereotypes they encountered in and outside of the college environment. These encounters, whether actualized or perceived, inevitably influenced their motivation to attend and/or succeed in college. Arturo recalled running into the following stereotypes:

I heard that all Mexicans are working construction, and cutting yards, and washing cars, and things like that. That's basically what we do – or behind a restaurant washing dishes. Those were the stereotypes that I heard. Oh, it impacted me 'cause at some point in my life it was true 'cause my parents didn't have any papers. So, they couldn't apply for the jobs that they wanted, so they were stuck cutting grass or working at a restaurant making very little money. And whenever you make little money, you sacrifice a lot.

For Arturo and the other participants, the stereotypes they encountered were largely centered on lower socioeconomic status and associated occupations. For Latino males, one's profession encompasses a vital part of fulfilling the gender

ideology of providing for family. The stereotyping of Latino males into these jobs further reflects the image the larger society has of them as cheap labor, illegal, uneducated, and incapable of fulfilling the roles of other occupations. Given that Arturo's parents lived out these casted jobs in a time of great sacrifice, which included living in their car and a park at times, confronting these stereotypes had a substantial impact on his choice to pursue a career as an electrical engineer. Allowing these stereotypes to fester in our community and college campuses permits institutions to further disfranchise a Latino male population that is often found, or placed, in the margins.

Pedro noted that stereotypes were "a big part of influencing me because I would like to prove [to] everybody, all those stereotypes wrong." Furthermore, he expressed a certain level of gratification in rewriting the narrative that has labeled and generalized Latino males into further isolation. He said:

You know that Latinos in general, we're here, we can do big things. And I want to be - a positive role model not only to my own peers, but to everybody else...I guess it gives me a push to finish an assignment or...to keep listening or not walk out of the class if I feel like. It gives me that support.

For Pedro, an engineering major who at times struggled with math, such motivation had recently equated to an adjustment in his study habits, which now

included group study sessions and the utilization of the campuses math tutoring lab.

Likewise, part of Manuel's motivation to succeed in college was derived from his desire to break stereotypes about Latino and gay males in order to bring about social change. As a Latino male he said, "Those stereotypes made me want to do better, I don't just want to have a working class job, I want to do better than ... that stereotype... I want to be more than that." Manuel was one of the few participants whose parents were born in the United States, which may have had a role in the language he used towards breaking the stereotype, "better than" and "more than." Thus, there was a suggestion of generational disconnection from the experiences of many of the stereotyped occupations previously mentioned. Other participants whose parents were immigrants experienced a more emotional connectedness surrounding these stereotypes. However, Manuel also described himself as not a "typical" Latino male, but instead "white washed." He explained being white washed as not speaking Spanish, nor listening to Spanish music, or exhibiting Mexican cultural expressions through his dress, but instead a more assimilated lifestyle of "American culture." He said:

I think just a lot of factors have to do with it. I think... having something to prove, feeling... that I'm not smart enough or I'm not Mexican enough or... I'm not white enough, or... I'm not straight enough, or I'm not gay enough, or... I'm not rich enough -- I think all these things come into play.

However, Manuel pointed out many factors that have impacted his college experience and the shaping of his identity and gender role. Not being Mexican, white, straight, gay, or rich enough were all measuring sticks he felt pressured to meet the normative definition of. None impacted him more than being gay, which made him feel he had no place in the hypermasculine paradigm of machismo. Nevertheless, Manuel was all about challenging the status quo, and he demonstrated this through the social justice work he did for the LGBT community at NTC. His work included LGBT awareness, leadership in the Student Government Association and the Downtown Education for Equality organization, and campus events such as mock weddings, drag shows, and advocating for gender-neutral restrooms. However, Manuel believed strongly that much work still needed to be done to bring equity to experiences of LGBT students. He explained:

I think a lot of hate and ignorance stems from not knowing about it [LGBT] and... if we had more of that taught...I don't think you would see as much hate and ignorance from so many people. I mean we teach straight history, why would we not teach that [LGBT history]? That's my thinking, and I wouldn't even say it's straight history or whatever, I would just say it's history, and I think it's a part of history, so why not teach it?

Although Manuel alluded to more work needing to be done both inside and outside the classroom, he felt strongly that a more inclusive curriculum would be

an important place to start breaking down barriers for the LGBT community. Thus, being an openly gay Latino male were both pieces of identity and masculinity that motivated him to achieve in college, in his future career as a filmmaker, and as a social justice advocate.

Engagement and Academic Goal Orientation & Self-Efficacy

The final section of this chapter will center on the role engagement on campus and academic expectations play in the motivation of participants. Most of the students in this study were involved on their college campuses either through student clubs and organizations and/or campus federal work-study programs. Much research has demonstrated the positive impact of student engagement on college campuses in terms of student retention, social connectedness, and conditions that foster student success (CCCSE, 2014; CCSSE, 2004; Kuh, 2005; Kuh, et al., 2005; Zhao, & Kuh, 2004). Participants' engagement played a significant role in their sense of belonging on campus and acted as a channel for connecting them to institutional resources. Additionally, their academic expectations provided insight into their motivation to partake in achievement-related behaviors, such as help-seeking.

Engagement on Campus

During his interview, Pedro presented an artifact, a copy of a certificate he received for his dedication to leadership development. He shared his commitment to leadership development through his participation in leadership workshops, the

Men of Color Success mentoring program (MCS), and being an officer in the campus Latino student organization. Pedro spoke with tremendous sincerity about how these opportunities influenced him during his first year of college. He shared:

It has impacted me greatly because....it's not anymore about just going to school and getting an education. You also improve yourself with leadership development. You know you kind of - by attending these events, my eyes opened at what else - what other things are out there. And, what somebody else experiences, how I can relate to theirs, and how...they inspire me to do bigger and better things, and also be a positive role model. Like I said ... if they can do it then I can do it.

By being involved with these types of organizations on campus, Pedro quickly realized there was much co-curricular involvement available outside the classroom. This outside the classroom engagement provided him a co-curricular experience that inspired him to engage in leadership development and further broadened his spectrum of college and career opportunities. From these opportunities, he recalled numerous Latino community leaders with whom he had come into contact with that have proven to be role models and inspirational for him to press forward in his education and leadership aspirations. Pedro said of these experiences, "I started getting more involved here, because - on top of that I really enjoyed it - I felt like I was more at home here for a reason." It was during a MCS event that Pedro was first exposed to the concept of social capital and the

importance of taking advantage of the opportunity college provided him with to expand his network of support. He was not only inspired by the Latino community leaders he encountered, but also his Latino peers who have successfully graduated and transferred to their university of choice. Each leadership event he attended continued to motivate him to participate in the next event and put forth greater effort inside the classroom, as he understood both to be important in opening a path to new opportunities. Fortunately for Pedro, he encountered this sort of high-stakes engagement during the earliest parts experience on campus (Saenz & Bukoski, 2014). These types of interactions occurred because of the college's intentional efforts front load efforts to connect with first-time in college students.

Victor's early engagement in leadership programs on campus as a first-time in college student connected him with staff, faculty, and peers on campus, but did not translate into motivation to succeed inside the classroom. This quickly led to his academic probation status after his first semester and academic suspension the following semester. However, Victor's second time around at NTC was embraced with more maturity and an understanding of the importance of his success inside the classroom. Likewise, he provided two artifacts from the Men of Color Success program he was a part of on the Downtown Campus. Being part of this organization afforded him the opportunity to have a Latino male college staff mentor, participate in student success workshops (i.e. managing your success,

financial aid and financial planning, networking), and develop peer-to-peer relationships with other males of color. It seemed that this time around Victor fully embraced the messages he received from the MCS program, which did not exist on campus during his first year of college. He shared:

I think... looking at - others successful Latino people that influences me to do better. I'm a man - I've always wanted to do the same thing, but seeing somebody else already been through that ... that's significant.

As Saenz and Bukoski (2014) noted, role modeling matters for Latino male students, as it provides them the opportunity to encounter someone like them who is successful, increases their social networks, and allows them to operate in a safe spaces with positive support and constructive feedback. Victor recalled his first attempt at college as one lacking motivation and the discipline necessary to succeed academically. However, he spoke of the MCS program as having a positive impact on his motivation. He explained, "If I'm going to have that attitude and...they're showing me that a lot. To have that, you know, go get it attitude, to be ambitious, and to be successful in the program." The MCS program utilized a point rewards system, where participants earned points for being engaged in programmatic activities, events, and having regular contact with their mentors. Earning points then provided even more access to state and national conferences around the country, all of which were experiences that Victor was highly motivated to participate in. Finally, after attending a MCS college preview

day at the University of North Texas (UNT), Victor was inspired to work towards transferring there. I have personally known Victor since his first semester at NTC. Therefore, I have witnessed so much growth in his attitude and approach towards his academics, often self-motivating, with him saying, “Alright, it’s time to hit the books.”

Academic Goal Orientation & Self-Efficacy

As highlighted in this study’s framework, understanding the standards and expectations that students use to assess their advancement towards reaching goals is important to understanding their motivation in exercising achievement-related behaviors such as help-seeking (Collins & Sims, 2006). Motivation is crucial for all students, but perhaps more so for underrepresented student groups (D’Lima, Winsler, & Kitsantas, 2014), especially community college students who are often the first in their families to attend college. According to Ames (1992), goal orientation is a collection of goals, beliefs, and attitudes that define an individual’s principal reason for engaging in achievement-related behavior. Furthermore, male college students have conveyed more observance of performance goal orientation (Cavallo, Potter, & Rozman, 2004), which focuses more on students’ abilities (Ames, 1992) and a desire to outperform others as a means to garner positive judgment (Senko & Harackiewicz, 2002). For example, Oscar explained:

You want to get a good grade to pass. Do you care if it's a C or an A?

Most people would. They would prefer an A. Me, I'm okay with a C, just to pass, because I used to think of myself as just average, like man, they're better than me, and I don't care. You know, I'm just like this. I'm just gonna whatever. As long as I pass I don't care.

Oscar conveyed that he saw himself as average, and therefore just wanted to pass his classes. Yet much of his story expressed an extrinsic motivation, which refers to a context in which a task or activity is completed for external reasons (Klinger, 2006). For Oscar, this extrinsic motivation entailed obtaining a better socioeconomic situation for his family and positive admiration from his children and family. Additionally, as previously mentioned, Oscar was motivated to provide his family with a better living environment, an environment in which he compared to others in his family that have left the confines of his current neighborhood. Thus, Oscar may have exhibited a performance goal orientation in regards to his motivation to succeed in college overall. However, I found Oscar's lack of care for his grades to actually be a front for his desire to find acceptance in his college environment. Thus, in terms of academics, he exhibited more of a performance-avoidance orientation. More specifically, he was motivated by not looking inferior to peers; therefore, he gave off the perception that academic performance means little to him in fear that failure would signify low ability (Elliot & Church, 1997). Furthermore, in terms of the outcome he was looking for

when seeking help, Oscar said, “To just help me find the easiest way to find the solution to a problem. That’s it. And that way I can train myself over and over on how to finish a problem and move on to something else.” He expressed a need to learn ways to solve academic problems, which might indicate mastery-goal orientation. Yet his academics were expressed as just the next tasks towards his desire for a better socioeconomic situation and not necessarily a desire to increase his skills and competence in academic material. Thus, Oscar’s low cognitive engagement (Walker, Greene, & Mansell, 2006) may have resulted from the academic task or activity not being naturally stimulating and gratifying, otherwise known as intrinsically motivating (Conti, 2000; Klinger, 2006).

Manuel expressed a strong self-efficacy in his ability to achieve academic tasks placed in front of him (Meece, Glienke, & Burg, 2006), which was demonstrated through his overall academic performance (GPA). In addition, academic self-efficacy was connected to mastery goal orientation (Clayton, Blumberg, Auld, 2010), which Manuel exhibited through his efforts of mastering his craft and competences as a film major and LGBT social justice advocate. However, when confronted during the interview about his math grades, he admitted to having an academic weakness in the area of mathematics. He explained, “I think with all of my math classes I kind of went in already defeated, and that kind of deterred me from getting help, but I still went to math tutoring and I still talked to my teachers, and I still it just wasn't clicking for me.”

Zajacova, Lynch, & Espenshade (2005) found that an individual's self-efficacy is moderated by their discernment of whether an academic task should be perceived as a threat or seen as a challenge. For Manuel, math was seen as a challenge, one in which he stepped into feeling defeated. Thus, his goal orientation and motivation shifted based on his self-efficacy in the content area of math.

However, for other participants such as Alejandro, grades were conveyed as being very important indicators of how they encountered an academic challenge. In his interview he stated, "To me, getting a B, I wouldn't say that I failed, but if I look at a B, to me it means that I didn't try my hardest." On the contrary, even if he achieved an A, he said, "But whenever I do get As, I don't look at it as a letter A. I look at the percentage, then I see that I got a 90 I'm like, 'Ugh, I could of gotten a 95. I could've done better.'" For Alejandro, grades were a standard by which he measured his success in college. Although it may appear that he was hard on himself for making a 90 instead of a 95, these academic challenges represented a way to self-motivate. Furthermore, he exhibited mastery goal orientation, given his focus on learning and understanding, utilizing his academic progress as a criterion for evaluating success and need for improvement (Collins & Sims, 2006). Alejandro's mastery goal orientation was also displayed through the intrinsic value he placed on the help he received. He said, "Well I mean the outcome was I got an A...for my writing. But then there was the bigger outcome of that – I became a better writer after me going to the writing center."

Alejandro placed a greater value on becoming a better writer, not necessarily on his performance in comparison to others through his grade. He recognized both his grade and gained skill (writing) was important. Furthermore, he understood how seeking help could benefit his mastery goal orientation. Additionally, Alejandro demonstrated instrumental help-seeking, which meant he desired the support necessary to achieve the task independently and increase his proficiency and self-reliance as a writer (Nelson-Le Gall, 1981).

Alejandro also made a significant discovery about the challenges of a science class he recently took at the Red Oak Campus. He shared:

So science helped me – being in science classes I saw that, the ways you look for answers, answers don't come to you; you have to first ask what the answers are and then you look for the answer on the evidence that is thrown at you. So I guess that's just the way that – it helped me change. I saw that college was just more than, doing boring homework and boring volunteer work. I saw that it was actually a community that helps each other.

Through learning the process of the scientific method, he came to better understand the practice of identifying answers or the hypothesis of possible solutions, and then testing those answers based on evidence. He subsequently stated that, “I guess it was just having, the help come to me and then realizing that – it's a community that helps each other.” This discovered awareness of social

support and comfort within his college community has been associated with academic persistence (Gloria, Castellanos, Lopez, & Rosales, 2005). However, the institution's role in bringing the support to him was very significant. Other participants also recognized that the support they utilized often found them, as opposed to them seeking it out. For Alejandro, being educated did not mean an individual had all the answers. Instead he explained, "Getting an education, to me it's important because, it'll help me develop those abilities to ask questions and try to look for the answers." His intentions to develop his ability to search for answers on his own also demonstrated his desire to be self-reliant and instrumental in his help-seeking.

Other students felt grades were important, but were not necessarily the standard they used to assess their progress towards success. For example, Xavier said, "Everybody wants to make good grades, but that's not the most important thing. I think, just trying your best and completing the class or all of the work that the teacher wants." Luis explained, "Grades for me are a good thing because yeah, I mean we had to have good grades. But, I guess what I like the most is the knowledge I get." These two students communicated a value for knowledge and learning as well as the efforts they placed in reaching the finish line. Their desire to achieve more than a passing grade and/or knowledge of the answers, and instead the actual ability to solve the problems and find answers, were products of their motivation to engage in achievement-related behaviors.

Similarly, participants seeking help related to outside the classroom support demonstrated a desire for more detailed explanations, not just quick answers. For example, Pedro said of his intentions to seek out help related to transferring, “Help me out or, inform me of roads to take that I might be interested in. Not just, a simple answer to my question.” He exhibited his intention and need for thorough answers that provided him multiple options and empowered him to make decisions. In thinking about what it would take to reach his college and career aspirations, Rodolfo said, “Right now I’m just taking it, you know, step-by-step and piece-by-piece. Because when I look at it in really the larger picture, it kind of overwhelms me at times.” While working on his academic planning, looking at the long journey ahead resulted in his negative thinking about his ability to finish college. Furthermore, Rodolfo shared the following explanation of his motivation to succeed:

I think it’s that incremental progression that really motivates me. Every time I get something after I’ve been trying it, and I can do it again and go okay, I can do it again, and again, and again. It definitely motivates me to keep going. It’s not a goal that I want to reach; it’s the goals that I have set for me, the smaller goals that keep me motivated to continue.

Rodolfo could benefit from building a pathway towards success that utilized incremental goal setting, which function as milestones towards his success. In turn, meeting these goals would provide him a continuous sense of

accomplishment that builds up his self-efficacy. Therefore, I found that student engagement and goal orientation have a significant role in Latino males' intentions and motivations to seek help.

Conclusion

The first section of this chapter revealed that the Latino male students in this study conveyed that their reason for remaining in college came largely from familial encouragement and expectations, positive relationships with faculty, staff, and peers (Hernandez, 2000), self-fulfillment of gender roles and ideologies, and a desire to break down barriers and stereotypes. The Latino males in this study inherited a masculine script of attitudes, values, and characteristics that have impacted their motivation and persistence in college. But, too often, hegemonic masculinity scripts have focused on the leading narrative of machismo, and thus risked not seeing the alternative patterns that often exist in the margins (Connell, 2008; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Viewing masculinity through a diverse lens allows us to take into account multiple perceptions of male gender roles, such as *caballeros*. Furthermore, by opening a dialogue across multiple geographies, including the community college context, the males living out these various versions of masculinity can be brought out of the margins.

Furthermore, institutional efforts should be made to capitalize on the collective motivational mindset Latino males carry as part of their identity and

intrinsic motivation to succeed in college. As revealed in the findings, leveraging their motivation can be done through early opportunities for engagement that expose them to Latino campus and community leaders, foster peer-to-peer relationships, and create a sense of community and positive identity amongst men of color on campus. In addition, I found that Latino males modeled mastery goal orientation attitudes, which suggest that they were motivated through learning and understanding. Therefore, they were more inclined towards utilizing self-regulated learning behaviors that were conducive to learning, such as help-seeking. Furthermore, participants displayed instrumental help-seeking, where as they looked to acquire increased proficiency, competence, and a stronger self-reliance in facing similar challenges they sought help for.

However, some participants noted that the support they found was first initiated by the actions of the institution or an acting agent. Consequently, such positive messaging must come early in their experiences on campus and they must rely on the institution to place a value on building relationships with them. By having an asset-based approach towards the Latino male's value of familismo, caballerismo, mastery goal orientation, and the need for incremental academic planning, institutions can leverage these assets to grow the self-efficacy and retention of Latino males in college. The next chapter will center on the second component of this study's conceptual framework, which is academic control.

CHAPTER 7

LATINO MALES' ACADEMIC CONTROL AND THE HELP-SEEKING EXPERIENCE

This chapter is concerned with the second aspect of this study's theoretical framework, which is academic control, or generally stated, how participants understand events and how it relates to their thinking and behavior (Weiner, 1985). More specifically, academic control is characterized as a way to describe how students' interpretations of past failed or successful outcomes can indirectly shape future achievement through affective reactions, anticipations for success, choice of task (such as seeking help), and persistence (Collins & Sims, 2006). Similarly, perceived academic control (PAC), or a person's intrinsic beliefs that they can intentionally influence and impact outcomes in their environment (Perry, 1981; Perry, Hall & Ruthig, 2005; and Skinner, 1996), is specifically important to first-time college students who may be facing new and challenging responsibilities and expectations that can make them feel out of control (Perry, 2003). Hence, the following account of the phenomenon provides a description of how previous experiences and perceptions of control shapes the help-seeking experiences of Latino males. In doing so, this chapter is divided into three sections: 1) Academic Control, 2) Responding to Challenges, and 3) Fulfilling Latino Gender Roles.

Academic Control, Responding to Challenges, and Fulfilling Latino Gender Roles

All participants communicated a high sense of perceived academic control and self-responsibility when it came to their academic achievements. In addition, they conveyed a sense of high perceived academic control and self-responsibility to overcoming failures and peer pressures and fulfilling gender and familial roles. However, their perception of academic control did not always align with their acknowledgements of the influence that peers, family, and college staff and faculty had on their college experiences. Therefore, the first section of this chapter will describe how these experiences shaped their perceived academic control and lead to help-seeking and other choice of behaviors, attitudes, or tasks. In doing so, the section is divided into the following subthemes: a) perceived academic control, b) responding to challenges, and c) fulfilling Latino gender roles.

Perceived Academic Control (PAC)

I begin with Oscar, whose family recently experienced a drive-by shooting, as previously mentioned. Yet, he still attended classes the very next day. Oscar described his control of his academic success with these words,

I think I have overall...control, and if I learn how to overcome certain things in my life, I think I'll have 100 percent of the control. But, as long as I keep on procrastinating about certain things, I will never have control, all the way.

Oscar, who was in the midst of dealing with the challenges of his neighborhood environment and adjusting to college, acknowledged that he had control of his academic outcomes. Furthermore, he recognized that through habits such as procrastination, he gave up a portion of his control. However, his self-perceptions as an “average student” that was satisfied with just passing could be a determining factor in his choice to procrastinate on his academic assignments.

When asked about his academic control, Rodolfo said, “I feel that my focus is under my control, and my will and determination to keep going.” He expressed an intrinsic motivation and a sense of internal obligation towards reaching his goals, otherwise defined as an internally accepted responsibility (Lauermann & Karabenick, 2011). Rodolfo shared:

If I take a test and I know I’ve studied for a very long time and I don’t pass, then I’ll be like okay, it’s on me. But if I take a test and study for a very long time and I pass, I’ll be like, well, it’s still on me. Because my determination to actually study and to learn the material, that’s what I feel I have the most control over.

Again, whether failing or passing, Rodolfo articulated a strong belief in his capacity to influence his achievement outcomes (Perry, Hall & Ruthig, 2005). He recognized his capacity to be a self-regulated learner (SRL), including setting incremental goals, self-monitoring, and self-evaluation (Zimmerman, 2008). Furthermore he said, “Sometimes some things happen where you can’t do it just

because...life happens. But I feel like if anything is in my control, it's studying, and the willpower and the focus to continue on." In addition, when faced with challenges Rodolfo maintained secondary control, otherwise known as the perceived capability to adjust behaviors and expectations in accordance with environmental forces (Pallant, 2000; Rothbaum, Weisz & Snyder, 1982).

When I asked Alejandro what control he had over his academic success, he responded:

To me I have full control of my own success in the classroom, 'cause no one's going to baby me, no one's going to tell me to do this, to study for this, study for that. The professor's going to tell me we have a test tomorrow. He's not going to tell me, "Study for the test tomorrow." I don't expect him to, 'cause I'm going to study for the test tomorrow. So if I failed for something, it's because I didn't do myself.

Alejandro also had strong judgments of responsibility for his academic outcomes, which were influenced by his perceived controllability of the experience (Weiner, 1995, 2000), in this scenario an exam. Alejandro did not express a lack of ability to achieve; instead he expressed accountability for the effort he puts forth. Manuel also conveyed an obligation towards his academic outcomes. He explained, "I think I have all the control over it. To me it's a lot of self-responsibility if I'm not doing well in a class it should be on me." Although these students' self-responsibility and PAC may warrant positive self-regulated learning behaviors,

it's worthwhile to note the lack of accountability they placed on their instructors and institution as a whole. For example, Manuel said, "If that teacher is not teaching well, it's on me to either talk to the teacher, or get extra tutoring or... withdraw from the class and get in another class." Manuel articulated an understanding of self-regulated behavior, in particular help-seeking through both approaching his instructor and seeking out tutoring. He explained, "If I know I'm doing bad in some subject then I need more tutoring in that subject, I need to do that, I think it's all in my hands." It was hard to distinguish whether Manuel expressed an internal sense of commitment to yield or avoid an outcome, or whether his experience was a self-directed judgment of accountability (Lauermann & Karabenick, 2011), which may lead to feelings of guilt (Weiner, 1994). Pedro expressed his perceived academic control when he said:

I don't think I need anybody to succeed in college. But, you know there's always help along the way. I don't think really anybody needs anybody.

Because the only person that's [in] control of their own life is themselves. Since the experience was perceived as controllable, he was more likely to hold himself accountable for the outcome. However, self-accountability may also have been Pedro's masculine response of relying on oneself to be strong and work hard. Therefore, his perceived academic control and feelings of self-responsibility may have led to behaviors of self-reliance, including avoidance of help-seeking. Thus, it's important to understand Latino males' responses to their PAC and

strong sense of responsibility/accountability as it relates to the challenges they face.

Responding to Challenges

As previously noted, students' interpretations of past failures or successful outcomes can shape future achievement through affective reactions, anticipations for success, choice of task (such as seeking help), and persistence (Collins & Sims, 2006). For example, experienced academic failure in the college context may lead to students' loss of control (Perr & Magnusson, 1989) as well as changes in behavior, attitude, and perceptions of their ability to succeed in college. Therefore, this subtheme will focus on how participants responded to challenges, both inside and outside the classroom, including overcoming peer pressures.

Victor started off his college experience directly out of high school. Speaking of his initial perceptions, he said, "I thought I was going to come in here, finish two years, and be done, that was just the cocky side that didn't really have no motivation." After one semester he found himself on academic probation. He shared, "Got placed on academic probation. That still didn't give me motivation... to do better." Casual attributions can facilitate a variety of responses ensuing failure (Weiner, 1986). It seemed that Victor had attributed his failure to a more stable cause, such as lack of ability, which had led to his low sense of motivation and perceptions of lower academic control (Collins & Sims, 2006).

With low motivation and academic control, his attitudes towards academic probation status was seen as unchangeable, and subsequently led to his academic suspension the following semester. He explained:

When I got placed on academic suspension and...I took a break...I was at home not doing nothing and just sitting there playing video games all day. That's what impacted me, to give it a second chance and to come back.

That was the experience that I hated. The experience that keeps me going. Most college students are not successfully retained after probationary status, and even few return after suspension (Romano, 1995; Ryan & Glenn, 2002).

However, while on academic suspension, Victor experienced a shift in his drive to succeed in college. This change included a deeper intrinsic motivation to succeed in college and a belief that he could overcome challenges despite his previous academic failures. Furthermore, Victor demonstrated signs of having shifted in his goal orientation. He stated, "This is the funny part though. All those guys like left. You know, they're off to doing better and bigger things. And even though I'm still here...that doesn't depress me. It takes time for everyone, and it's taking time for me." Whereas previously Victor was concerned with his ability to perform in comparison to his peers, he was now focused on his personal progress and development as a standard for evaluating success.

After returning from academic suspension with a renewed sense of PAC, Victor experienced improvement in his academic performance and behaviors. He

explained, “My GPA’s been improving, from asking many questions in the lab. It has improved my GPA... my – ambitious to keep going.” His improvements have included a more exerted effort towards self-regulating learn behaviors, including help-seeking. Victor initially saw his academic failures, which led to his academic probation and suspensions, as a reflection of his ability. At the time of the interview, he understood these failures to be associated with the lack of effort he put forth and had changed his perception on failing in college. He said:

Now you’ve learned your mistakes and, you ...got to go to the writing lab now. This is the paper I need to pass. This is what I need to do to do point a, point b, point c so I can pass the class. So, making mistakes are a good thing, but learn from them so you won’t make the same mistakes again.

Victor now viewed his mistakes as opportunities to make adjustments, learn, and seek help along the way. He continued to return to the places he encountered success in seeking help. In particular, he found much success getting help at the campus’ writing lab. He shared:

Will I be using the writing lab all semester this semester? Yeah. Hell, yeah. I am. If I can go out of there with As on all of my papers and all that, then I can do it again this semester. It’s just I need to ask questions.

Victor emerged from being a statistic of Latino male community attrition to a young man who felt ready to take on the challenges he would face in college. His ability to resurface from academic suspension meant having a self-understanding

of his shortcomings. He stated, “I don’t see them as mistakes. I see them as a learning process...I see them as steps – as walking steps to get to that successful point.” His response to failure as a learning process provided him a level of security in seeking the support he needed to succeed. Victor had not become a straight A student, and he continued to struggle academically at times. However, he learned how to respond constructively and more proactively to his struggles. When asked about reacting to his academic challenges, he said, “You could make a D or F on your paper, but are you going to lie on concrete and make it your bed or are you going to get up and walk on it.” Thus, Victor owned his D’s and F’s, just as much as he did his A’s, and utilized all of his grades to make positive changes in his behaviors.

Many of the students embraced their challenges in a positive manner as well. For example, Rodolfo said, “And I say if you do something, don’t take the easy way. At least challenge yourself and see where you can get to.” He went on to say more about his response to academic challenges with in the following:

But sometimes when it’s in your head and then you actually put it on an exam or something, it doesn’t come out the way you thought it was going to be. And it’s something low or it just isn’t as good, it definitely makes me feel bad at first. But then I realize it’s just an opportunity to get better. And so I think that’s the way it affects me, because I know there is an

opportunity to get better in any aspect of what you do, whether it be math, English, science, history.

Like Victor, Rodolfo perceived academic failures as an opportunity for improvement. Others responded similarly with high PAC to situations with adversity. Manuel said, “I think it's really just knowing what works...fixing it that way, and improving it that way.” Similarly, Pedro said, “I don't see failures as a failure. To me that's not a word. I see failures as a learning lesson.” Manuel and Pedro both viewed failure as part of their learning process and as a mechanism for personal growth and enhancement of skills. However, in addition to overcoming academic challenges, some battled to gain control over peer pressures.

Overcoming Peer Pressures

Oscar spent much of his adolescent and adult life surrounded by negative peer influences that encouraged drug and alcohol use and selling, violence, machismo behaviors, and low academic aspirations. However, more recently Oscar was actively trying to escape such peer and environmental pressures in order to find academic and socioeconomic success for his family. In describing this pressure, Oscar said:

For example on friends, I think it's a source that can create failure because you want to go out that weekend ... you want to go with them... you want to be respected by other people that are around there, so you prefer to skip school.

This pressure was a social tool utilized to label cultural peers as “sell outs” for adopting mainstream cultural tendencies (Saenz, 2009). Therefore, young men such as Oscar felt pressured to not be labeled as a sell out and to remain respected by other Latino males by acting out false pursuits of not caring about academic success (i.e. skipping class). As a result, his male peers attacked his pursuit of education, stating, “Why are you in school, anyways? You’re gonna turn against us. You’re different from us, now that you’re here.” In addition, they criticized his occupational aspirations. He shared, “Why do you want to be a cop? You’re gonna hate all of us. You’re gonna just try to lock us up.” Feeling pressured back into a lifestyle he tried to escape, Oscar also feared another occurrence of retaliatory violence, such as the driving shooting his family recently experienced. Oscar described his feelings about his situation:

Man. What do I do? Should I just quit, then? Or, what? It’s cause, when all of your friends live a lifestyle that is totally different, you have complications. And what you want to accomplish is totally different from what they’re trying to live and be.

Although Oscar made firm his decision to leave behind the lifestyle of his past, he still had to confront the pressures of his peers that attempt to pull him back.

Yet, more recently Oscar was able to overcome the peer pressures he faced, which had often meant parting ways with challenging friendships. He said:

I have fewer friends, now. [Laughs] That's for sure. And, it made me stronger, mentally, very stronger, because now I can look at a real close friend. I can look at him dead in his face. And if he has something negative he wants to say about me, or what I do, I just tell him, "Just get lost."

Oscar found a sense of empowerment in overcoming the peer pressures that sought to keep him contained in their negative lifestyle and out of school. Furthermore, he explained, "I have that power, whether they're being a friend for a week, or ten years, I can tell, "You know what? I'm done with you. Just get out of here. Don't come around me anymore." With his ability to negotiate his peer relationships, Oscar felt more in control of his college experience.

However, previously Oscar did not feel this sense of empowerment in overcoming the stresses and influences his peers placed on him. Instead he said, "I was always just looking for that acceptance, and I guess to want to be part of a group, you do whatever the group is doing." He now viewed his peers' situations as a means to establish pride and promote pluralistic attitudes and not necessarily as a resistance towards success (Saenz, 2009). He shared:

They can lead you off to things that really don't matter. Sometimes they just want to see you fail, because they don't want to do it, because they feel like they can't do it. "Oh, oh, you can't do it, man." 'Cause that

person is scared to go do it...or to accomplish something, and they don't want to feel left alone, that they're the ones not doing something.

As Oscar noted, his Latino male peers did not want to feel left alone. Thus, they built perceived notions that values of success were White pursuits (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986). However, he built a counter narrative to this false perception, and along the way he continued to negotiate his relationships. This Latino male desire for a sense of belonging and community will be discussed later in this chapter.

Similarly, Victor encountered judgments from other males of color about his success at NTC. As member of the Men of Color Success program (MCS) at NTC and a work-study student, Victor often dressed professionally. Because of his attire, he was confronted by other males saying, "You're just some rich, preppy kids trying to be white." He also described the reception he and others received. Victor explained:

They see us as we're trying to be better than both of them. We're trying to be like white kids... – we're trying to take over the whites, by... the way we're dressing now, by the way we see ourselves now.

Thus, Victor and other males of color who were a part of MCS program faced their peers and notions that academic excellence was associated with "acting White." Victor went on to elaborate how familial sacrifices gave him the opportunity to be successful and break cultural norms that disassociated Latino males with academic success and professional occupations. Additionally, he also

recognized a changing norm for Latino males. He explained, “You see the successful Latino Americans out there now and– they need to get used to that ‘cause we’re rising up.”

However, like Oscar, Victor also found his way through college by negotiating peer relationships and stereotypes. He said:

It just depends on what type of stereotypes you want to see or what type of stereotypes that’s positive or negative that you want to hang around with.

Like if you have a group of friends and they’re always being negative stereotypes, I suggest you find new friends and make some positive stereotypes.

This negotiation was not always easy for Victor who had many friends that perceived his educational pursuits as unobtainable, a waste of his time, and “acting White.” However, upon returning from academic suspension, he was more in control of his relationships. Working on campus and partaking in programs such as the MCS provided him opportunities to cultivate positive relationships that supported his academic aspirations. For Latino males, the ability to negotiate positive relationships impacts their overall perception of academic control, which leads to self-regulated learning behaviors. Victor explained:

I was taught if the help could help you succeed, use it. It’s up to the Latino males to stand up and use the help that they have, to stand up and say,

“Okay. I need help. Forget about me showing off to the vatos over there. I need help.”

Thus, part of the help-seeking experience of Latino males entails their attitudes towards and ability to move away from machismo perceptions of help-seeking as a sign of weakness and notions of academic success as white pursuits. Manuel demonstrated this attitude when he said, “I'm not going to be swayed by what people tell me what I'm supposed to act like or tell me what I'm supposed to do.” He further shared his thoughts about help-seeking. He explained: “I don't think asking a question is showing a sign of weakness. I think it's showing a sign of intelligence, it's saying I need help to do better for next time.” Manuel demonstrated having control over his academic success by choosing not to be regulated by the pressures of others, nor influenced by society to act out machismo tendencies

Fulfilling Cultural Gender Roles

Cultural expectations, such as the strong commitment towards family, or familismo (Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009), results in Latino students' stress in adapting to a college environment that often emphasized individualism and commitment to personal goals (Torres, 2004). This commitment towards such behaviors as providing financial and emotional support to family (Marin & Marin, 1991; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez Orozco, 1995) played a role in the participants'

perceived academic control and ability to place adequate time and effort towards academic achievement. For example, Arturo said:

I failed a couple of classes. I failed two. And it didn't feel good. It's – and it was completely my fault on that one 'cause I didn't give it the 100 percent that I should have 'cause I was distracted by working too much and too many things going all at once that I couldn't make time for it.

Arturo, for example, worked 50 or more hours a week and, as noted above, paid the academic consequences. Yet, he also demonstrated self-responsibility for his actions and recognized that he needed to make adjustments in his work/school schedule to accommodate more studying time. However, he also faced cultural gender expectations that placed work before school. For example, Arturo had friends at work that saw him struggle to balance school and work, and told him, “Why you go to school? Man, just quit over there. We make like \$20.00 an hour right now. Just come and work. Just stay here.” He believed this pressure and work/school balance challenge was something many Latino male students faced. Still, Arturo also believed that he had the ability to control this balance, in part because of his motivation to be an engineer. He shared an example, stating, “They can both be attending school and both understand the material, but if one of them has no desire to actually be someone in life, he's going to come up with an excuse.” Arturo continued with this example describing the choices he and other Latinos must make to place school at a higher long-term priority.

“Okay. I can’t go today. I have to go to work and I’m not able to take the exam.” Where the other guy is like, “Okay. I can’t come to work today. I have something to do more important. I’m going to go take a test. They moved it to a different date.” And he takes the day off from work while the other guy is more focused on making money at the moment that he loses focus on school.

In explaining why Latino males often face these challenges, and how he planned to overcome them, Arturo said, “Back then it was more for my family ‘cause at first – as soon as I graduated from high school I’m like, alright. I’m going to go to a trade school. I’m going to study heating and air conditioning. And from there, I’m going to work as a HVAC technician.” However, after working in attics for a year he said, “Then I didn’t want to do that for the rest of my life. So, I decided to come back to school.” From this experience, Arturo garnered a sense of self-purpose in his occupational aspirations, which helped him place a greater importance on his academic success and long-term socioeconomic mobility. When asked why his coworkers didn’t see the value in education like he did, he responded, “They try to buy fancy clothes, brand new shoes all the time even though they can’t afford it and they’re paying every month on it. They want to show off what they don’t have basically to other people, which really makes no sense.” He went on to explain that hard manual labor could lead to quick financial gains, which these young men saw as the most assured vehicle to a better

economic situation. Today, Arturo continues to work both on-campus as a work-study student and off-campus installing HVAC systems. Yet, he now has a greater appreciation and self-responsibility for placing academic success ahead of work responsibilities.

Similarly, Pedro quickly made adjustments to his work/school balance and learned to manage his time accordingly. He shared:

Since I was working twilight shifts and I got off like around 12[am]...I didn't know the amount of homework that I had to do just outside of school. I was used to a different world in high school. So, I had to really prioritize my things. I was like...I have another option. I could work maybe weekends, but I need to get my studies done. So I got out of FedEx and then I started focusing more on school.

However, Pedro, unlike Arturo, had the financial support at home to focus his time completely on school. Although he spoke of finding a part-time job, possibly on campus, in the near future, he was most excited about growing from his college experience by joining a leadership program at the Downtown Campus this coming academic year. Therefore, not having to face the pressures of working, allowed him to take greater control of his college experience and focus adequate time towards academic and social achievements on campus. This education-first mentality was something Pedro was taught through the example of his uncle who completed college and successfully operated his own business. In addition, he

described this mindset as, “the mentality of you know not spending on things on a luxury because he would rather prioritizes his things.” His grandfather did not always support his uncle’s value of education over work. However, Pedro said of his grandfather today, “He saw the importance of that and he influences his grandchildren to go to school because of my uncle, because he didn’t quit on education.”

Again, for Latino males, gaining control of their collegiate experience means balancing the cultural gender roles that place work and providing for family first, with academic responsibilities. Santiago described this situation when he said, “They [Latino males] see themselves as more of a provider. I gotta work to provide for my family and my whole mindset’s the same way, except if I have a better education it’ll work out better for me in the long run.” Building this long-term mindset was something Santiago felt was very important, and had become a point of emphasis for him as he worked with Latino families as well as veterans in the Downtown Campus’ Financial Aid Office. For Gustavo, who arrived as a teenage immigrant from Mexico, this cultural gender norm towards work was often felt even stronger.

My father, he like contradicts himself, so he said that education is good and I still had to come college. But if he had to decide for me if it meant continuing in school or just working in my family business, He would prefer that I work more in the family business than study.

As a result, Gustavo was constantly torn between the responsibilities he felt towards supporting his family and his dreams of obtaining a college education. For Manuel, being a gay Latino male meant he was also confronted with these cultural and gender norms. About his experiences as a gay Latino male, he said, “It's more negative than in maybe a white community, you need to be a man, you need to work, you need to provide. So I think it's more negatively looked at in the Latino community.” However, to some degree each of these students were successful in self-determining how they would fulfill their roles as Latino men, and what value they would place on education, occupational aspirations, and long-term social mobility.

Latino Males’ Sense of Belonging

You know, I thought I was alone. But then when I come here and I speak to other students, they’re going through struggles that are similar to mine in nature, but they want to go to school and they want to do something with their life to progress and have a better future for themselves and their families.... It definitely gives me that idea that other people want this, so I need it. --- Rodolfo, Red Oak Campus

Through Rodolfo’s affiliation with other students that have experienced similar challenges, he has garnered a sense of social connectedness and fitting-in at NTC. Furthermore, ‘membership’ into the academic community does not only suggest participation or nonparticipation, but rather if students understand their

environment through multiple peer groups that support their development of the skills and means to succeed in college (Hurtado & Carter, 1997). Therefore, the focus of this section is on the critical peer-to-peer relationships Latino males develop that help them foster their sense of belonging as part of the college community, which in turn influences their perceived academic control.

Understanding the unique social affiliations Latino males experience with their peers and the surrounding environment was a vital piece of the participants' help-seeking experiences. Therefore, this section will highlight the multiple memberships (Hurtado & Carter, 1997) Latino males establish as part of their campus community.

Cultural Expressions and Community Memberships

The following subtheme seeks to identify the culturally informed behaviors, activities, and emotions that provided the Latino male participants a greater sense of affiliation with college life. Much of their expressed connectedness to college life was facilitated by their interactions with Latino culture on campus. For example, in describing the importance of building relationships with Latino peers, Luis said, "I guess impacted in a positive way. Because when you move from Mexico...[to] here, it's really different. You have different set of mind, because the people here have a different perspective about education than what we have in Mexico." When I asked what was different, Luis explained, "I feel like the way they teach is different. Their concepts on which

they focus on is different too.” As an example of the difference in academic content, Luis stated, “You know like here, I learned that for example in history, they always want to emphasize all the good things that the United States did. When you go back to Mexico and they did it, their history, it's the opposite.” As a result, having collegiate peers from Mexico provided Luis with the opportunity to engage in intercultural group conversations related to academics and college life overall.

However, Luis noted that not all Latino students were the same, saying, “like the perspective is that our people here, like we think they're gonna be the same as us like when they come from Mexico. Actually, their state of mind is also different.” Luis pointed out that there were differences between those individuals born in places like Mexico versus the United States, and at time those differences played a role in shaping relationships amongst peers. One very noticeable difference he pointed out was interactions between Spanish speakers and non-Spanish speakers. The experiences of Latino male students at NTC indicated a fostering of tendencies to fuse cultures, creating a new set of blended and often-unaccepted norms (Rotheram-Borus, 1993, Torres, 2003b). However, students such as Luis who were born in Mexico experienced this acculturation process as a lessening of their ethnic identity. For example, Luis said, “Because when you live in the United States, now you have to feel like you have to change yourself in a way. You know you have to adapt to the new cultures and the new tradition of the

place.” As a result, he indicated that Latinos have different degrees of mainstream culture orientation (Ramirez, 1983). Nevertheless, Luis learned to get along with all Latino students as he came to better understand and experience firsthand the bi-cultural tendencies of acculturation. Furthermore, Luis said of his experience on the Red Oak Campus, “I started off ...being nothing, just another student. But then I moved on to be [in] Latino Student Organization (LSO), went on to be [in] Student Government Association (SGA), then went on to be work study.” His participation in ethnic organizations served as a gateway for additional opportunities for cultural expression through community service, music and arts, and social activism. As his involvement will be discussed later, ethnic student organizations help facilitate and authenticate Latino male students’ membership into college life.

Similarly, Gustavo who at times struggled with his English said, “Before, I was afraid to speak a lot. Raise my voice.” However, now that he had become connected with other Spanish and non-Spanish speakers from LSO, he stated, “And now, with them, even though we are from different backgrounds and all that, we are all Latinos, and I learn from them daily.” In addition, these peer relationships were important to Gustavo in his help-seeking experiences, for which he said, “Being in college with them, they do help me. Like, in my English or my writing. If I’m stuck on something, I can tell them. I’m not afraid to ask them, I know them.” Gustavo expressed a strong level of confianza, or trust, in the

relationships he developed through LSO. This type of trust was nurtured through the interpersonal and familial connections he shared with LSO students. He shared:

Over there in Mexico, you get to know the person well, and they know your family, everything, the uncles, aunts, grandparents and same with them. I met them [LSO Students], I was just, sitting in meetings, listening. After a while I started understanding them and I met their uncles, grandparents and like that... I started to feel a sense of belonging, like I'm from here. I like being a part of there with them.

These strong cultural familial connections provided Gustavo the sense of belonging that is fundamental to a member's identification with a group (Bollen & Hoyle, 1990). Furthermore, these membership experiences fostered group cohesion that allowed the participants to mediate the effects of adverse climates and marginalities they may have encountered as part of the campus community.

Additionally, other forms of cultural expressions have been found to be important in Latino males' sense of belonging. For example, in recalling events from the Downtown Campus' Hispanic heritage month celebration, Oscar said, "If they were to come into a school where they see a Mexican flag hanging, or certain things of their background then, oh my God, I feel comfortable." He elaborated that it is important to help students feel welcomed, including genuinely valuing where they come from. Oscar explained:

They'll know that it's not just me, it's all of us here who feel accepting because they are understanding our background wherever it may be from. And that makes you feel more comfortable, being here, or any college, knowing that they're open to your background, your ethnicity, and who you are.

Much personal validation comes from these efforts to affirm Latino males' ethnic identity. Therefore, in order to garner Latino males' sense of belonging and affiliation with the campus social communities, it is critically important that authentic cultural expressions are seen as an institutional priority.

For Manuel, membership into the campus community was intrinsically connected to how he expressed and lived out his gender (Denzin, 2003). Although his sexual orientation may not have met conventional categories and "normal" values of masculine identity (Sullivan, 2003), Manuel found a campus community that validated his gender identity. Being part of the Downtown Campus Equality in Education (DCEE), an LGBT student organization, allotted Manuel not only the opportunity to make peer-to-peer connections, but it also empowered him to charter the development of a campus-wide LGBT pride week. He shared:

We had an event every day, and just to see my idea come to life, it just made me think wow; I can do a lot here on campus. And it just made me want to do more, and want to get involved more. I think that's what kind of lead me to be in SGA, was after seeing well, if I'm a senator and I can

do that, what can I do if I'm a vice president or president of student government?

Pride week was a significant experience for Manuel, especially given that it took place during a heightened time of awareness and development at the early part of his college experience. In turn, this led him to internalized feelings of belonging, as well as continued engagement on campus. In addition, his affiliation with campus life influenced his sense of academic control and, in particular, his confidence in seeking help. Manuel described this by saying, “I think being involved with so many organizations kind of brings you out of your shell to talk to people more. I think it's kind of helped me in that way too, just to not really be afraid to ask questions or to look for help.” By establishing early peer relationships and group membership, Manuel was able to navigate his new environment and manage what he called the “vulnerability of just doing something new or different.”

Connecting with Campus Resources & Intuition Agents

Other participants also expressed similar feelings of belonging through group affiliations with student clubs and organizations. However, not all participants made connections during their initial semester. For example, Santiago said, “I didn’t know anyone for the first semester so I just went, did my classes.” However, during his second semester Santiago made a vital connection with an institutional agent, saying, “I found out about the VA [Veteran Affairs] meeting

so I decided to just pop in one day and see what it's all about. That's where I met Will, the Director of Financial Aid. We started talking...and the first thing he said was do you want a job?" Santiago noted after this encounter things changed. He said, "At that point I started meeting all sorts of people. He got me in contact with all sorts of departments, kind of showed me around, showed me who was who, where to go, talked about the VA Work Study and that's how I got involved with that." Consequently, Will, a veteran himself, served as a bridge to the larger institutional support system Santiago would need to succeed at NTC. From his encounter with the Director of Financial Aid, he found a meaningful connection, stating, "Until I actually found other veterans and that's what brought me out, cause to me I didn't see a connection. I didn't feel welcome or anything until he came out and was like yeah, I was a veteran and we just started talkin' back and forth." Prior to this encounter, Santiago said of seeking help, "When I came here it was like I don't know anyone. I didn't want to get any help 'cause I didn't think I needed help, so I kind of just kept to myself, didn't even bother." However, those sentiments changed as he established a relationship with Will.

That's when it was just like okay, this is what I can do if I need help. I know where to go, and that's what he gave me. He's like if you ever need help come to me. I kinda just expanded when he sat there and he gave me his hand. He was like here, I'll help you out. Didn't ask for anything in return. He just told me as long as you succeed and you help others, he

goes I'll help out. And ever since then if he asked for anything I'm always on it so that's how I saw it.

Santiago's ability to establish a relationship with an institutional agent that acted as gatekeeper to institutional support networks added to his help-seeking orientation, networking and problem solving skills, and other helpful behaviors to overcome barriers (Stanton-Salazar, 2011). In addition, Santiago and Will established an informal contract that as long as Santiago helped others, in this case veterans and other financial aid students, the agent would continue to help him. This informal contract is as an important element to his affiliation with the Veterans Club and financial aid office he works in.

In addition, organizations such as the Red Oak and Downtown Campus' Latino student organizations and Men of Color Success program assisted students in developing a deeper understanding of their purpose in higher education and what it would take for them to succeed beyond NTC. For example, coming out of high school Luis recalled being taught the following: "They always teach you, all you had to do is go to school, make good grades, get your bachelor's and you're good. You can find a job, get married, buy a house, have a family, have a dog." However, being part of these programs helped Luis realize that these expectations did not apply to today's society and economy. He said, "You know that's not the case, because you have to make yourself different from everybody else. Because everybody else is following the same path of what they're teaching us." Luis

learned that his college education was not only about what he experienced inside the classroom, but perhaps even more so what he experienced outside the classroom and who he established relationships with, or his social capital. His experiences with MCS and LSO cultivated in him a sense of belonging and purpose, which he described saying, “In high school I wasn’t involved in anything. For the same reason I wasn’t secure with the people all the time. But in college, it was different, you know, because we’re here for a purpose.” Through MCS and LSO Luis not only engaged with other Latino and men of color peers, but he also engaged with institutional agents that served as student organization advisors and mentors (MCS). These organizations and agents served as institutional tools and advisors for navigating the college environment, and therefore increased the likelihood that Luis and other Latino males would benefit from social capital and institutional funds of knowledge (Stanton-Salazar, 2001). As a result, Luis was empowered by the messages he received through these organizations to become more engaged on and off campus, and this further affirmed his membership into college life.

The Importance of Peer Institutional Agents

This subtheme seeks to highlight the important role peers play, whether acting intentionally or unintentionally, and institutional agents in connecting participants to the college community. Student organizations or program such as the Men of Color Success program (MCS) were often used as vehicles for

establishing these peer-facilitated connections. For example, Pedro expressed the importance of peer relationships, saying, “If it wasn’t for that [peer influence], I would have never attended all these events or get involved in all these programs at school.” Pedro became involved with the campus community during his first semester at NTC’s Downtown Campus. When asked what drew him to get involved, he explained, “They attracted me because it was the United Latino Students Organization (ULSO), the only Latino name that I saw around out of all the clubs.” He first came in contact with ULSO during the Downtown Campus’ student club and organization fair. He said, “I went there and I talked to them. And they gave me a flyer and told me what they were about and I was like awesome. You know, sign me up. I’m definitely interested in this.” As a result of being involved with ULSO, Pedro said, “I was able to know of other things going on around campus. And then from there it just started spreading everywhere.” This meant that Pedro’s initial effort to establish an affiliation with ULSO led to subsequent relationships and connections, such as MCS and leadership programs on campus. Therefore, through his peer-to-peer relationships, Pedro was able to grow a network of support that garnered him a greater sense of academic control and multiple avenues for seeking help.

Likewise, Hector found early connections to campus communities. He shared, “Well luckily for me it was pretty much easy. There was programs out there and...my friends told me about it and they were like if you ever need help

there's Men of Color (MCS).” Thus, whether through a club and organization fair, or simply word of mouth, students who were already engaged with these campus communities also served as trustworthy peer agents for the institution. Hector went on to describe his MCS and ULSO communities, stating, “First, Men of Color and after that I met Manos y Manos, which was even a smaller family, but it supports more when people know you.” For Hector, who described himself as extremely shy and quiet, these organizations were safe places for him to cultivate his social capital and access and exchange institutional resources. Alejandro first described himself by saying, “I just go to college ‘cause, I just wanted to study and get a better job and that was it.” However, for Alejandro peer institutional agents also played a key role in igniting his engagement with the campus community. He said, “The first one that I joined was LSO, and I didn't really look for LSO. LSO kinda found me.” Thus, he suggested that peers facilitated his connection to the college community, in this case the Red Oak Campus' Latino student organization. In describing the facilitation of this relationship, he said:

He [club member] came to me and he told me, “You wanna come to LSO meeting?” And back then I was a very different kid, so I didn't wanna be involved in anything like that. But then the kid was like, “No, just come over here. We got pizza,” that's what actually made me go over there... But then I heard of what it was and what they were going to do, and it sounded a lot more fun.

Acting on behalf of the student organization, the peer agent located Alejandro at the Red Oak Campus Student Union and extended an invitation to him, thereby opening the door to membership with this campus community. Similarly, Oscar expressed, “Lot of help in United Latino Students Organization. You got your group together, that people that are even your age or close to it, it makes you feel good.” His affiliation with ULSHO provided him a sense of membership in the campus community with students of a similar age and background as him.

Arturo gained a sense of belonging to a campus community as part of a peer leadership program at the Downtown Campus. He shared, “I met a whole bunch of new students and [it] opened up a lot of new friendships that I would have never met... Also, I’m not as shy as I used to be.” Through this peer leadership program, Arturo had the opportunity to become a peer institutional agent, connecting with students through campus tours, new student orientation, and his weekly presence at the front counter of a key student area on campus. He described:

They are role models or try to be role models for the incoming students for the next year. So, they are people that the new students can go up for help in case they don’t want to go up to an adult. Someone that they can relate to at the campus. And they’re in charge of the new student orientations. They are the first people that they meet when they first start their experience in college.

By placing peers leaders at the front end of the college experience, NTC encouraged the development of early peer relationships and provided first-time college students with access to peer institutional agents they may encounter throughout key campus resource areas (i.e. Student Life Center, Advising & Counseling Center, Transfer Center). In return, Arturo gained access to institutional resources and training, as well as close relationships with staff and faculty agents. He described his interactions with peer, faculty, and staff agents by saying, “Then you meet new people – that just have the desire to help you achieve everything in life that you want to, and they support you...every process, every step of the way.”

Pedro also became a peer institutional agent, although not formally through a peer leadership program. His role was initiated by his involvement with ULSO and their efforts to educate the campus community on recent White House immigration executive orders such as Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents (DAPA) programs. Pedro said, “North Texas Dreamers came to talk about that [DACA & DAPA]. I didn’t even know that existed. So because of her coming and you know informing us about that, I was able to tell my friend about this program...and currently I think he’s going to apply.” As a result of his membership with ULSO, Pedro became an institutional peer agent. As an

institutional peer agent he was a bridge to institutional and external resources for undocumented students at the Downtown Campus and in his community.

Men of Color Programing

Finally, it's important to highlight in this section the impact the NTC's Men of Color Success (MCS) mentoring program had on Latino males' sense of belonging, relationship and membership building, and in facilitating connections with institutional agents and resources. Victor's transition back into the college community was bridged through a relationship he had previously built with a Downtown Campus administrator during his first year at NTC. Upon his return, this administrator and others welcomed Victor back to NTC and offered him an opportunity to be a student worker. Victor graciously accepted this opportunity, and the administrator/institutional agent immediately connected him with the MCS program. In describing the MCS program, Victor said, "It has really impacted me, to the point where I see other African-Americans or Latinos going through the same thing that I'm going and then we create a bond together." This peer-to-peer bond was an essential connection with the college community that Victor needed to successfully return from academic suspension. Furthermore, as part of the MCS program Victor was surrounded by a faculty, staff, and community mentor. He shared, "I see all mentors helping out to create that bond." He goes on to describe this bond with his MCS community in the following way:

The commonality is that we all know that at the end of the day we'll be friends and we'll be good friends. At the end of the day that we can go to each other and give advice to each other. That at the end of the day no matter happens, we will always be there for one another.

From this experience, Victor gained a strong sense of affiliation with the MCS program and the overall college community. He also developed a network of support that included other men of color, whether peers, faculty, staff, or external agents that provided him with a safe space for asking questions and seeking advice.

Alejandro also experienced positive relationship and membership building from the MCS program. However, at first he had to negotiate relationships with friends that did not have the same educational and life aspirations, about which he said, "These kind of friends don't work for me anymore, so I have to move on and find the friends who will help me expand." By joining the MCS program Alejandro said, "I had found that group of friends that would reinforce those attitudes and beliefs I have about college and being successful in life...I got to meet some people over there, and I was like, okay, these are the kind of friends that I need to look for." NTC's efforts to target men of color showed positive results in fostering a sense of belonging by providing an avenue for Latino males to gain affiliation with their campus community. This affiliation in turn allowed

the participants to develop key institutional peer and faculty/staff relationships that they could leverage during their help-seeking experience.

In conclusion, participants' social affiliations (MCS, LSO, ULSO) led to greater access to college resources, tools, and institutional agents that support their navigations through college. In addition, their perceptions of belongingness in terms of social group membership and connectedness to college life directly impacted their retention. Peers either acting intentionally or unintentionally as agents of the institution often facilitated these connections. Armed with a social connectedness to institutional agents and funds of knowledge (Stanton-Salazar, 2001), these men acquired a greater perception of academic control and openness to seeking help on their college campus. Contrarily, students being unable to attain a positive sense of belonging may lead to more undesirable consequences and outcomes (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Hausmann, Schofield, & Woods, 2007; Johnson, et. al., 2007). In addition, it is important that institutions maintain a non-hostile racial/ethnic campus climate that allows for positive interactions with diverse peers as it contributes to Latino students' sense of belonging (Hurtado & Carter, 1997; Hurtado & Ponjuan, 2005).

Latino Males' Mattering on the College Campus

It is during the first year of college that the most significant amount of attrition of students occurs, predominantly within the first six weeks (Tinto, 1993; Braxton, 2000). Thus, it is not only important that students quickly find a sense of

belonging on their college campus, but also that they feel significant to others who are concerned with their fate and experiences (Rosenberg & McCullough, 1981). Although these two constructs are similar and can be interrelated at times, perceived mattering to others is viewed as an internal subjective experience that differs from sense of belonging to a campus community (Schlossberg, 1989). Furthermore, these identifications of mattering demonstrate positive relations to higher self-esteem, lower depression, and better psychological well-being and overall wellness (Marshall, 2001; Taylor & Turner, 2001). This section will focus on the Latino males' mattering on college campuses, as it was revealed to play a meaningful role in their perceived academic control and overall help-seeking experience. Accordingly, the section includes the following subthemes: 1) societal mattering in the help-seeking experience, and intra-personal mattering in the help-seeking experience.

Societal Mattering in the Help-Seeking Experience

The first section of this chapter highlighted participants' perceived academic control (PAC), of which they expressed a high level, as well as self-accountability for their academic performance. Although they expressed high PAC, later in their interviews they also shared the importance of their relationships with peers, faculty, staff, family, and campus overall in terms of support and feelings of significance. Societal or general mattering, which has been described as a condition wherein social institutions foster feelings of

insignificance in people, results in individuals identification of themselves as irrelevant to society at large and their related social entities (i.e. college, workplaces) (Fromm, 1941). Therefore, it is important that we understanding how societal mattering impacts the help-seeking experiences of Latino males college students.

Xavier, who was the older “non-traditional” student in this study, described his first experiences at the Red Oak Campus. He said, “Nobody showed me anything. I pretty much just did it on my own and it’s not hard. You know, you read, use your common sense and figure it out, but for people that don’t know, yeah, I think they need that hand.” However, other participants, when asked if they needed others to succeed in college, expressed a fundamental need for the help and support of others. For instance, Oscar said, “You need people. You need help. You need that support. If you don’t have it, you will fail.” In his eyes, having someone that looked out for you was something everyone needed. He went on to explain, “I don’t care how smart you are, if you don’t have support from other people, even emotionally, depression wise, you will fail. It will eat you up to not have no one, to not have help.” For Oscar, seeking help also meant the vulnerability of sharing his needs and shortcomings. However, he acknowledged that if “you open up, and let them know, “Look, I need help. I’m trying to do this. Help me do it,” you’ll get the help,” and “Whether you’re a doctor or not, you always need help from somebody and that’s how you’re successful.” Thus, his

perception was that help-seeking was a necessity, and consenting you needed help was essential in reaching success in college and in life.

Furthermore, Rodolfo's help-seeking experiences that were rooted in meaningful relationships where he felt institutional agents were genuinely concerned about his success have been very fruitful. He described the outcomes of these relationships, stating, "I'm starting to get the tools to be successful. Like, every time somebody gives me good advice or they lead me to the right people or they help me out in the right environment, I think they give me the tools to be successful." The exchange of the tools he needed to be successful signaled to Rodolfo that his success mattered to his college community. In regards to the influence of others on his college success, Manuel shared, "The teachers and ...everyone that works at NTC, and my parents, my mom. I think I have my education in my hands, but these people can make that experience a lot easier." In addition, he admits that institutional agents have a large portion of the responsibility in making the campus welcoming and a place where he could succeed. With his comments, he acknowledged that through providing support, the institution and his family demonstrated their interest and concern with his success in college.

Therefore, it is important that institutions actualize their role in creating a welcoming campus culture that places students' belonging and mattering as a priority. If institutions fail in their effort, students could feel isolated, identify

themselves as irrelevant, and feel disenfranchised from the college community. For example, Gustavo's experiences at the Red Oak Campus have not always felt welcoming.

Of course over there in business services [bursars office], some of the women are mean. They're just like, "What do you want?" Kind of like, "What do you need?" All of this is what you need, now go away. I see that it is stressful and she has a lot of people to see and everything, but also you know they could have a little more patience because it kind of scares me to go over there to business services.

At NTC, the business services office was an amenity on campus every student interacted with in order to pay for his or her classes. For Gustavo, who may already feel marginalized as a male of color and for his lack of English proficiency, this experience resulted in further marginalization and feelings of insignificance.

Pedro described his previous experiences asking questions to instructors, stating, "The way they do things and their face expressions, just say something else. So whenever I see teachers like that, I've seen that a lot, I can see through that." Therefore, when he arrived at the NTC Downtown Campus he expressed sincere gratitude for the helpfulness of NTC staff. He said, "Because all the staff here, they really... would help me. So when I came here and they said that, and they mean it, I was kind of amazed." Similar to Arturo, Pedro expressed the

importance of getting assistance from someone that authentically cares. He shared, “Whenever I get good help I tend to go back and look for the same person.” More specifically, authentically caring help-seeking experiences are critical and lead to Latino males’ positive reinforcement of their help-seeking orientation. Rodolfo described the culture of authentic caring. He said:

It’s just people that come into my life and really want to help me succeed, and I want them to succeed. It’s just I feel that people who are here for me, they give me success. And it’s my family pretty much, like my friends who have been there from the beginning or people that I train with or my instructors, and people who genuinely want me to succeed. I feel that’s where I’m getting my success from.

Because others, including family, peers, and instructors, viewed Rodolfo as important and significant, showed a genuine interest in him, and were concerned with his success (Rosenberg & McCullough, 1981; Rosenberg, 1985), he received a feeling of mattering that contributed to his retention and success in college.

The continued maintenance of an authentic campus culture of caring is vitally important in assuring Latino males have a safe space for asking questions and establishing relationships that support their mattering. Alejandro expressed this institutional responsibility in relations to the role help-seeking played in his success in college. He said, “I would definitely say it’s seeking the help you need. And definitely a lot of times it’s on the college, ‘cause if the college had never

came to me, giving me the help, I don't think I would've ever been able to be what I am right now." Therefore, Latino males' confidence and perceived academic control towards help-seeking must be validated through efforts of institutional agents and the overall campus community to make a priority of aggressively building and sustaining meaningful relationships with them.

Interpersonal Mattering and the Help-Seeking Experience

According to Rosenberg & McCullough (1981), societal mattering and interpersonal mattering, or mattering to specific others, are both integral parts of individuals' self-concepts, and are experienced at varying degrees. Furthermore, in her work, Schlossberg (1989) described interpersonal mattering as, "The beliefs people have, whether right or wrong, that they matter to someone else, that they are the object of someone else's attention, and that others care about them and appreciate them" (Schlossberg et al., 1989, p.21). Therefore, since students transitioning into a new college environment often feel marginalized, establishing relationships that foster interpersonal mattering is crucial to their early adjustments. By forming these relationships, students establish a meaningful and resourceful connection to institutional agents and support, which in turn boosts their perceived academic control and effort towards seeking help. Therefore, the focus of this subtheme is on Latino males' experiences with interpersonal mattering as it impacts perceived academic control and related help-seeking experiences. This subtheme covers the role of culture, student-to-staff

relationships, working on campus, mentoring, and student-to-faculty and family relationships in interpersonal mattering

Culture and Interpersonal Mattering

In terms of building relationships that foster interpersonal mattering, participants expressed the benefit of being able to see themselves culturally reflected in other individuals. For example, Luis explained, “In my opinion, I’ll get a little bit more connected with my own race. Because we kind of share the same backgrounds, ... if there’s problems at home, you kind of have an idea of what they’re about.” On contrary he said, “If you go with another type of person, we might not share the same background and there might be that little gap in between.” Therefore, he valued the cultural similarities found in the interpersonal connections he made on campus, and admitted that not having these commonalities resulted in cultural dissonance. But Luis also pointed out that on the Red Oak Campus he does not see many Latino employees positioned to provide culturally relevant support to Latino students. Explaining what he saw, Luis said, “Particularly in Red Oak, we don’t have that much Hispanics helping. We don’t see that much Hispanics teaching. There is a limited number of teachers or professors. On the other hand, we see a lot of Hispanics doing the back paying jobs.” He went on to describe the immediate and long-term impact of not being able to develop culturally significant relationships with staff and faculty on campus. He stated:

I feel like we also have to incorporate for more Hispanics, or Latinos, or Mexican Americans, because I guess that's ... why some students drop off. Because they don't feel that connections with the professors, or they feel left out. So they're like maybe college is not for me. Because if this is how I feel right now, imagine how I'm gonna feel on the outside when I'm doing my job.

Encountering interpersonal mattering for Latino male students during this important time of personal development is critical for their long-term feelings of significance. Furthermore, relationships that result in validation from others create certainty about identity (Kohut, 1977; Josselson, 1998). In addition, without the interpersonal connections with others, students would not have a sense of mattering and self, nor fulfilled self-construct (Tovar, Simon, & Lee, 2009). Luis stressed the importance of cultural relevance in facilitating relationship that foster mattering, but also pointed out that not having these relationships leads to student attrition.

Arturo recalled, "Growing up, usually my parents were like always afraid of the white people. I don't know why. Maybe because they didn't know how to talk English." This led to his parents' partial disconnection with his educational experience, which he said, "They weren't able to communicate with most of my teachers in high school. And the same goes with college." As a result, Arturo found his effective communication with college peers, staff, and faculty to be

essential in his efforts to succeed in college. When he encountered Spanish-speaking peers, staff, or faculty on campus, he felt a high sense of personal connection with that person. Furthermore, Arturo noted that there was more to a relationship than just finding a linguistics connection, but that when cultural difference existed “it was harder a little bit to adapt to their lifestyles, which is usually different from Mexican culture.” Thus, in constructing relationships that fostered mattering, the opportunity to communicate in Spanish and find cultural connections was important to him.

In addition, communicating with peers, faculty, and staff that shared commonalities promoted a safe space for exchanging life challenges. This included familial challenges such as what Pedro revealed when he said, “Growing up, I would see my family, the struggles they would have to go through because they weren't born here. All the things they couldn't do this, they couldn't do that.” Not necessarily wanting to reveal issues such as familial or personal language barriers, immigration challenges, work experiences or academic challenges that might further the stereotypes of Latino males, finding safe outlets through shared commonalities was an important part of the participants' confidence in initiating relationships and seeking help. But, Oscar felt negatively perceived based on his appearance (tattoos, dark skin tone, clothing) and the use of Spanish or slang language. About this experience, he said:

There are some people that feel discomfort seeing somebody like me. But you know, you kinda get used to it, and you just blow it off, and before you know it, you don't even think about it anymore. You just kinda go with the flow and blend in.

The perceptions of others inevitably play a major role in constructing the types of relationship that are welcoming to Latino males such as Oscar. Furthermore, the perceived discomfort his appearance created served as a barrier between him and the faculty, staff, or peers and prevents the development of a sense of genuine concern and may facilitate feelings of insignificance.

Student-to-Staff Relationships

Interpersonal mattering relationships depend on the student interpretation of the quality of attending behaviors and the corresponding meaning and value they place on these interactions (Marshall, 2001). Some of the early connections participants had with staff on campus were meaningful and valued interactions that fostered mattering amongst the Latino male students. Upon Victor's return from academic suspension, he experienced a strong welcoming that demonstrated the staff's genuine concerns for his success at NTC.

When I came back, the experience of just knowing, hey, they still know you. They still remember you. They still want you to succeed. They still know who you are. They still know what you're capable of doing. Instead

of just failing and being at home being lazy. They still know that, they never give up on you.

The staff's authentic welcoming comments provided a sense of confidence in his return to NTC. Thus, Victor placed a tremendous amount of value on how institutional agents were concerned about his welfare on and off campus. These personal sentiments of honest caring transformed his attitude towards having previously academically failed. Describing these interactions, he said, "The experiences when I visited and came back. I was like, "Okay. I'm coming back." So, you know, that first semester back, I had my family back again. I was at NTC going good and I was ready." Victor had interpersonal mattering, and I know he mattered to me personally. Therefore, I was humbled during our interview when he acknowledged our conversations. He shared, "You've been part of my life since I've been at NTC. You know, we usually say, "Hi," and "Hello," and all that, but you know, that hi and hello really impacted me so far." Again, small authentic acknowledgments, like "hello," and perhaps a brotherly hug, led to Victor's sense of mattering. He continued by saying, "You've been seeing me mature more, and even though I've been at NTC for four years, I really respect that you know." Victor also received personal significance from having someone know his story and value his continued persistence towards his educational goals.

Like many of the participants, Luis said of his early experiences, "The first semester was hard. You know I didn't seek for help or anything." However, by

the second semester, he said, “That’s when I was like kind of adapting to the new environment. So that’s when I started joining some organizations. LSO first.” The student organizations provided an avenue for Luis to develop relationships with his student organization’s staff advisors. An outcome of these relationships Luis said was, “the advisors they introduced me to other things. Like for example, student services. So there was a little bit more help from there.” After gaining personal staff connections to student services, Luis said, “Then on my third semesters I was more involved. So I was like okay, now that I know that if I need help in this, I can go here.” In other words, his sense of belonging was first initiated through his affiliation with LSO. From there, he established relationships with LSO peers and staff advisors that brought him interpersonal significance. These networks in turn connected him to campus resources that better equipped him for success at NTC. Similarly, Gustavo made a personal connection with a LSO staff advisor, saying, “She helps me a lot...like to look for help, now I know where to go. Before, [I didn’t know], just walking by myself. And now that I know that if I go here they can help me. If I go there I can ask.” As a result, it’s important for institutions to understand the pathways, behaviors, and environments that help students like Luis and Gustavo make meaningful connections with their college campuses.

Rodolfo also successfully made early connections with NTC staff at the Red Oak campus. However, prior to attending NTC, he said, “I wasn’t too certain

that I was even going to go to college. Because in high school academics wasn't anything I was interested in." Then, after joining the National Guard, he explained, "In doing so I met a lot of people who attended college that didn't finish, but they told me their experiences and told me that it's something that I needed as a tool for my life to be successful later on. And so I definitely considered it." Rodolfo's non-commissioned officers were the extended support system he needed to have the motivation to attend college. However, upon arrival to the Red Oak Campus, it was a staff member working out of the Veterans Affairs (VA) Office that helped him transition into college. About his interactions with this staff member, he said, "She helped me out a lot to get all my situation correct and then to register for classes and everything. Then I just kept being more friendly with her. And she kept talking more to me because I kept coming in there and just making a friendship, a relationship." Weeks later when the Latina staff member Sofia moved to the campus' advising and counseling center, she encouraged Rodolfo to apply for a student work position there. After being hired, he shared, "Ever since then she has just helped me because she knew me before, so she knew the situation that I was in and what I need to go about college correctly to be successful." Again, this is another scenario where the development of student-staff relationship that fostered mattering led to additional access to institutional resources, in Rodolfo's case a student work position and opportunities to meet additional staff on campus.

Working on Campus

Many participants reaped additional benefits from working on their campus beyond their allotted salaries. For example, continuing with Rodolfo's experience, he said, "When I started working there, I think it actually impacted my academics positively because it forced me to be in an environment where I study, where a lot of academics is going on." In addition, he shared, "I can appreciate my experience [now] that I'm in college and actually already in the classes and that I can ask the teacher questions and I can be around other people who want to learn and want to help me be successful in my academics." He shared an additional outcome of working on campus: "I just enjoy school a lot more because I am around it a lot more." Being surrounded by institutional agents that wanted Rodolfo to succeed helped him grow more confident in his ability to ask questions and navigate college.

Equally, on the Downtown Campus, Manuel shared positive feedback and benefits about his experience working at the campus library.

When I started working here I had the library [staff] and those resources, just to be like, where's this place, where is that place? I think getting a job here too I had to get familiar with all the departments and stuff like that so I think that kind of helped me too, finding out where everything was ... knowing where to go and who to ask.

Working at the Downtown Campus' library placed Manuel at the center of the campus and connected him with library staff members who served as valuable resources. In addition, working at the front counter of the library allowed him to assist other students in navigating the campus. Therefore, he became very knowledgeable about campus resources and key institutional agents. By assisting other students, Manuel felt appreciated and valued on campus, and became concerned not only with his success, but also that of fellow students. Additionally, he said, "It gives me ...more entitlement to do something for the place I work for and the place I go to school." These feeling of entitlement also demonstrated the value he placed on the relationships he made in the library and the sense of membership he felt in the campus community.

Participants such as Santiago and Victor also experienced similar benefits from working on campus. Santiago, who worked in the Downtown Campus' Financial Aid Office, said of his experience, "It just gave me the sense that if I needed help it was there. I was at home and I had a question I couldn't go to anyone. At least I knew if I needed help, or if I needed a certain explanation, they would be there." Although Santiago often avoided seeking help (discussed in Chapter 8), these relationships were extremely meaningful for Santiago's feeling of significance and confidence in seeking help from trusted institutional agents. Similarly, Victor described his work on campus as having "impacted me very well in that I'm succeeding more in school because I work at campus and I go to

school here.” Therefore, for Victor, having his educational and work environments fused together benefited his success in college. In explaining how this experience shaped his academic success, he explained:

What happens is I don’t see home very often ‘cause I’m at the school all the time...So basically what I do is I would go to class, find some study time, and go to work. I would go to work or the offices around. And that helped me succeed [and have] a better opportunity to use the help more, like the writing lab and the math lab.

Leading up to his academic suspension, one of Victor’s struggles was the work schedule he had at a local downtown restaurant. This particular place of employment required him to work directly after class and often late into the evenings. Victor was also dependent on the local bus transportation system to get him back and forth from home, school, and work. Getting off of work past the bus operating hours meant he was often dependent on others for rides home.

Therefore, because Victor was tired from working late and, as previously mentioned, because he lacked motivation, he rarely utilized campus resources or had adequate time to develop meaningful relationships with campus staff. Having a job on campus was extremely valuable in allowing Victor to adjust his schedule and conveniently visit campus academic resources such as the writing and math labs. In addition, by working on campus, his NTC employers viewed him as a

student first, rather than solely an employee, and therefore placed a high value on his success in college.

Arturo also battled with the scheduling challenges of working off campus. As an HVAC systems installer, his work was done when the job was completed and not necessarily when he needed to attend class. About this conflict he said, “I was an HVAC worker. But, they didn’t want to work with my school schedule, so I had no choice but to find another job.” Fortunately, Arturo was able to secure work at the Downtown Campus as a tour guide for prospective students. Like Victor, he said that if he didn’t work on campus, “as soon as my class was over I would have left to go home.” Furthermore, working on campus provided Arturo with the opportunity to develop some of his closest friendships, including a group of aspiring engineers he studied math with. This work experience also afforded him the opportunity to establish close relationships with staff and campus administrators. He shared:

I met the people that work here. I got to meet the president, which I don’t think I’d ever met if I wouldn’t have worked here... I don’t think I would have went up to her. And now she met us, she even has a picture of our group and me in her on the NTC website. So, that’s pretty amazing.

Having what was sometimes exclusive access to campus staff and administrators provided Arturo with a special sense of purpose on campus. These interactions

allowed him to become known by multiple institutional agents on campus, who then periodically checked-in on how he was doing in school.

Mentoring and Mattering

Mentoring through the MCS program also led to mattering on campus.

Luis described the benefits of this program. He said:

Now that I know that I have a mentor, it's actually good because you can go and talk to them and tell them like okay, I'm going through this. It's really hard. I don't think I'm gonna make it through this semester. I want to drop off all my classes. But then sometimes you get that other point of view, the people who already went through the same thing.

MCS mentors opt to become a part of the lives of these male students of color. Many times they are themselves men of color, were first-generation college students, struggled academically, and/or even shared in common life circumstances such as a single-family household or immigration challenges. In Luis' case, his mentors had become a dependable resource for assistance. Even if he did not need their assistance, much comfort was gained knowing someone genuinely cared about his success. Luis, however, stressed the importance of having the opportunity to get to know his mentor, saying, "I don't want them to assign me a mentor that I don't know who it is. You know, that I'm never gonna talk to." Therefore, in describing his approach to finding a mentor, Luis stated, "I was like, okay, I'm really cool with Marisol. Me and her, our personalities are

much alike so I asked her, is it okay if you're my mentor." Having the space to get to know his mentor first allowed him the opportunity to find commonalities and establish confianza with them, a fundamental piece towards establishing a meaningful relationship.

Moreover, Victor's relationship with his MCS mentor was extremely important to his success. When asked about who impacted his success in college, he immediately responded by saying, "I have my Men of Color mentoring program that helps me a lot. My mentor, Eduardo, he pushes me 'cause he wants to see me succeed." In describing what the MCS program has done for him, he said:

Push me to be more successful. They [are] showing me how to stop making excuses for the reasons why I failed. They showed me it's okay to fail. It's okay to pick yourself back up and keep moving. It's okay to not be depressed. It's okay to be who you are. It's okay to be, just be you.

This mentoring relationship was built on Victor's valuing an interpersonal relationship that fostered mattering, which derived meaning from his mentor's sincerity in caring for his success. In appreciation for his mentor, Victor said, "He doesn't know how much I really care about him, but I truly do care. I could tell him, "Hey, bro. Thank you," but he doesn't know how much I truly care for him." Therefore, the MCS mentoring program was an avenue for fulfilling participants' desire to establish meaningful relationships with mentors. Furthermore,

participants demonstrated an ability to utilize the social connectedness of the mentor-to-mentee relationship as a mechanism for seeking help and coping with college challenges.

Student-to-Faculty & Family Relationships

Perhaps even more than mattering outside the classroom, mattering inside the classroom is important for Latino male students to feel confident in seeking help. For Arturo and his friends of aspiring engineers, mathematics was their greatest academic challenge. However when faced with asking questions, Arturo recalled the following event:

Instead of us stopping the teacher when we're completely lost, we just let her go on 'cause some teachers – I don't know. We ask questions, but the response we get from them – we might get the answer, but the response – how she said it – we didn't like it, so we didn't ask any more questions.

When I asked how she responded, he said, "It's like, "I already went through this and you still don't understand it," kind of way. So, we just let it go and we prefer to go to a tutor. We still get the help, but just from a different person." This feeling of insignificance and ridicule for asking questions had impeded any further attempts by Arturo to ask questions of this faculty member and perhaps future instructors as well. Fortunately, Arturo and his peers were able to find success through academic tutoring. However, initially Arturo said, "I never went to the math tutoring my first year." But, once he utilized this service, he

explained, “I liked the help. I liked the environment – how it was quiet. And that’s how I started going to the math tutoring.” Thus, because he received a better reception to his questions and a welcoming environment in the math-tutoring lab, he continues to go back.

A common academic theme for participants seemed to be their challenges with mathematics. Rodolfo described his experience in math class, saying, “Math is my subject where I struggle the most. Susan Lester was my instructor for my first math course here in college, and she just really opened my eyes to the idea that math is applicable in all things in life.” This interaction was important for Rodolfo as he realized, “Obviously math is very necessary [but] sometimes you think when am I ever going to use this? But, she actually kind of helped me get rid of those thoughts and that mindset.” He also maintained a significant relationship with his parents, who also served as a resource for support and beacon for his feelings of mattering in college. Initially, he described this relationship stating, “Like in the past it was just the parent/son relationship.” However, he shared, “Now it’s more like... kind of a friendship. Because I’ve begun to speak to them more and understand their lives more than I used to. And so I just ask them just like if I was asking a friend... whether it be about life, food, just anything.” Therefore, since Rodolfo’s familial relationships have matured over time, they remain a reliable route for him to seek help.

For those participants who were without an active father figure, such as Victor, Santiago, and Oscar, other male figures played a significant role in their lives. For example, Victor said, “The father figure that’s been in my life has been my pastor.” His pastor has served as a spiritual role model for him, and a consistently present source of help. Santiago’s Godfather and uncle were his father figures growing up and today. About what they taught him, Santiago said, “The whole taking care of his family, working hard, and my Godfather, he always sat there and told me, if you want better things you gotta work for it.” His family, including himself and his mother, experienced physical and emotional abuse from his biological father. Therefore, he also acknowledged that his acting father figures modeled for him that respecting women and taking care of your family was the most important part of being a man. It was also obvious that Santiago’s previous military experience and Department of Homeland Security aspirations were drawn from his uncle and Godfather’s experiences. About his Godfather, he said, “He went to school and he got his degree, joined the police department, he was military, as well, but he did it the smart way.” He described his uncle as “financially way better off than everyone in our family, but he still doesn’t have his degree, but he got it ‘cause the military.” Therefore, Santiago described his personal goals as both attaining his college degree and having the jobs he wanted in order to provide for his family.

Although Oscar felt that he had a high sense of academic control, he also expressed a need for the support of others. He stated, “If I didn’t have help from others to succeed in college, I would not be here.” In particular, his girlfriend has played a substantial role in his retention and success in college.

My girlfriend has been going to the same school with me ever since I started. And if it wasn’t for her, specifically, I would have quit 12 times ago. It’s like, if it wasn’t for her saying, “You know what? You could do it. Why do you keep on thinking you can’t? Look, you’re doing it.” If it wasn’t for her, I would have quit long time ago.

This familial relationship epitomizes the importance of Latino males’ sense of mattering in college. For Oscar, whose world was currently disrupted by the recent drive-by shooting his family experienced, having a significant other that was standing by him and encouraging him to move forward with his education was priceless. This young man seemed to contemplate his departure from college regularly, and he questioned whether his long-term dreams of financial stability and social mobility were truly attainable. His girlfriend provided constant reminders that he was important, if not to anyone else, at least to her and their children.

Conclusion

From these findings we can conclude that how Latino males experience help-seeking is shaped by their perceived academic control, and all the psycho-

sociocultural factors that influence it. These influences include their responses to challenges, fulfillment of cultural gender roles, their sense of belonging, and relationships that foster mattering. Participants expressed a high level of perceived academic control, which at times resulted in their employment of self-regulating learning behaviors, including help-seeking. In addition, they demonstrated self-responsibility, high personal expectations, and accountability towards their academic performance inside and outside the classroom. These men proved to have resilience in responding to academic and life challenges, and conceived failure as a means to learn, improve performance and attitude, and as a steppingstone towards reaching their goals. The challenges they faced were not only academic, but also social in nature. These issues included overcoming peer pressures that often emphasized machismo like tendencies and behaviors associated with acting out false pursuits of not caring about academic success. As a result, these students were faced with negotiating relationships in order to free themselves from negative influences.

Furthermore, the participants' obligation to fulfill cultural expectations, such as the strong commitment towards family, or familismo (Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009), resulted in their stress in adapting to a college environment that often emphasized individualism and commitment to personal goals (Torres, 2004). As a result, they placed much time and efforts towards such behaviors as providing financial and emotional support to family (Marin & Marin, 1991; Suarez-Orozco

& Suarez Orozco, 1995). In turn, their perceived academic control and ability to place adequate time and effort towards academic achievement was impacted. However, many participants, in recognizing the extended time needed to succeed in college, were able to successfully prioritize more time towards college life.

In addition, developing a sense of belonging on their college campuses was found to be paramount for participants early in their college experiences. Their “sense of belonging” was garnered through their membership in campus communities that included student organizations (i.e. Latino, LGBT, veterans, mentoring organizations) and opportunities for cultural expressions (i.e. speaking Spanish, social activism, Latino arts & history). Their sense of belonging was facilitated through peer and institutional agents, which also led to greater access and exchanging of institutional resources that benefited their help-seeking experiences. Lastly, developing both societal and interpersonal ‘mattering’ were found to be crucial to their retention and success in college. Although participants expressed high regards for perceived academic control (PAC) and self-responsibility and accountability, they also acknowledged their reliance on peers, staff, and faculty for support. Feelings of societal mattering were cultivated through authentic campus cultures of caring that provided welcoming environments. However, their feelings of societal mattering were not experienced throughout the entire campus (i.e. business services, inside some classrooms). Instead, they existed in societal entities, or sub-communities, which fostered safe

spaces for building relationships and resulted interpersonal mattering.

Interpersonal mattering relationships were predominately found between students and staff. Opportunities such as working on campus, participation in mentoring programs, and involvement with student organizations served as vehicles for the ignition and maintenance of these relationships. However, some interpersonal mattering was experienced through relationships with faculty and family members. A meaningful ingredient for producing interpersonal mattering included attention to cultural relevance and commonalties in experiences. The next chapter of this study's findings will center on the last component of this study's conceptual framework, which is help-avoidance.

CHAPTER 8

HELP-SEEKING EXPERIENCES: HELP-AVOIDANCE

This chapter highlights how Latino males experience the help-avoidance aspects of their help-seeking experiences. Help-avoidance has been considered a form of motivated behavior that occurs when the benefits to be gained from seeking help are outweighed by the cost of requesting help (Butler, 1998; Nadler, 1997). Such documented rationales for help-avoidance have included overconfidence (Yates & Collins, 1979), stereotype threat (Steele & Aronson, 1995; Steele, 1997), perceptions of help-seeking as threatening evidence to lack of ability (Karabenick & Knapp, 1988, 1991; Butler, 1998), and dependent behavior that conflicts with needs for autonomy (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Hence, the following account of the help-seeking experience of Latino males is divided into three sections, 1) controlled self-disclosure, avoiding weakness, and autonomy, 2) undoing negative inter and intra perceptions of ability, and 3) transitioning to new environment and responsibilities. The first section entails participants' uncertainty in disclosing their need for help as it conflicts with masculine tendencies of being strong and desires for independence. The second section involves the avoidance of help-seeking as a mechanism for disproving negative internal or external perceptions of their ability to succeed in college and life, which often led to anxiety and feelings of being misjudged. Lastly, the third section involves the

avoidance of help-seeking due to the challenges of adjusting to new environments and responsibilities, such as work/school time management.

Controlled Self-Disclosure, Avoiding Signs of Weakness, and Earning

Autonomy

As Collins & Sims (2006) point out, individuals who are less likely to seek help find self-disclosure of their present circumstances to be distressing.

Consequently, these individuals often bury issues of concern and remain hesitant of the outcomes resulting from seeking help (Collins & Sims, 2006). Furthermore, by regulating self-disclosure and manufacturing autonomy, individuals reinstate some control of their lives (Tang, et al, 2014). The following section describes the experiences of participants in their efforts to control self-disclosure, avoid signs of weakness, earn their autonomy, and as a result avoid help-seeking.

Controlled Self-Disclosure & Avoiding Signs of Weakness

When it came to avoiding help, participants had tendencies to protect themselves from disclosing any shortcoming. For example, Victor said, “I felt like there was times I could use a little bit of tutoring but, I didn’t get tutoring ‘cause I felt like...I had it down.” He further described this situation, saying, “I actually did it at the first semester, and it’s not really I seeked help. I would just go to the tutoring center and kind of just study more. I didn’t ask anyone for help.” Victor recognized that he needed help and could utilize the tutoring center, and even he didn’t believe himself when he said, “I had it down.” He further explained:

When I went in, I was like, “Alright. Cool. I’m about to ask all these questions. I’m about to ask, ‘Hey,’” all this. I didn’t ask nothing. I went in there. I was like sitting down, right? And I was like, “Alright. This paper looks good.” Like, “Let’s do this.” I did not ask enough freaking questions [Hits hand on table].

Nevertheless, even after arriving to the tutoring center he avoided asking any questions, something that he realized today was a missed opportunity. When asked why he didn’t ask any question, he replied, “If you don’t approach them at first, they’re not going to approach you at all, because unfortunately Latinos don’t really like to approach and ask for help. We like to think that we don’t need help or anything like that.” In his response, he also indicated the need for an institutional behavior change that asked tutoring and other campus resources centers to caringly and aggressively initiate the help-seeking.

Other students indicated similar response for avoiding help-seeking that revealed a desire to regulate self-disclosure and avoid signs of weakness. Explaining why he and other Latino males avoid help-seeking, Hector said, “Their pride. Some people are just like me and they have that problem with either confrontation, or pride pretty much.” Clarifying why he has this pride, he said, “Cause I guess that there’s like a feeling, that’s what they taught us when we’re little. Yeah, you’re a man. You don’t ask other men for help and I guess that’s how we have that barrier on education.” For Victor and other Latino males,

asking for help would be a sign of weakness, and would go against the dominant masculine narrative they were socialized in that promoted self-reliance and placed those individuals asking questions as inferior.

Similarly, Rodolfo said of his peers, “They don’t want to look weak. I’ll be honest with you. I think it’s more of like a machismo thing. A lot of my friends who are Latino and male, they just have this like hey man...I’m tough, I got it.” However, when he did asks questions, he said, “They look at the way I ask questions like, ah man, you need to chill out with that. [Laughs] But I’m like, all right, I don’t care. I’m going to keep asking questions.” Rodolfo had obviously discovered a way to navigate around the pressures of conforming to machismo anti help-seeking behaviors. He explained:

Because I’m not looking out for what other people are doing. I’m looking out for what I need to do. And I think they’re looking out for what they want to do. They want to feel that tough. They want to feel that I don’t have to ask questions because I got this. I know what’s going on. And like I said, if you don’t ask questions, you won’t really know.

Rodolfo’s goal orientation shifted away from the false narrative that Latino males don’t pursue academic success. Because of this, he was able to manage his personal need to succeed in long term with his behaviors, such as help-seeking.

Even Santiago, who worked in the financial aid office, described his early experiences with help-avoidance on campus. He said, “I wouldn’t have asked. I

never step forth like in financial aid, nothing, scholarships, never even thought twice about it and not even once. It didn't even come up." Even though he helped students all day as an employee in the financial aid office, he still admitted his natural tendency was to figure things out on his own. Likewise, Alejandro said of his early experiences, "I started off not seeking help and now looking back I think why I didn't seek help, and I guess I was involved with people who were too cool for school or things like that." Alejandro used to avoid help-seeking as a mechanism for evading disclosure of weaknesses that could impact his group affiliation and masculine identity as strong.

Xavier, who grew up in a different generation than the other participants, came across as highly influenced by machismo masculine tendencies to avoid signs of weakness. He seemed to even be avoiding showing these signs during his interview with me. When asked about facing challenges, he quickly responded, "Anything that comes my way, I'm not afraid to tackle it or take it head on, you know, one-on-one, because that's just who I am in my nature." He went on to say, "Anything that people throw at me I'm not gonna react or anything like I'm scared or something. I'm just gonna take it." When confronted as to whether he ever asked for help, he said, "I really don't, even outside of school, I don't ever ask for help. I just pretty much do it on my own. I'm not afraid to just do it." By suppressing any need for help, he afforded himself the opportunity to embody machismo strength and conceal any signs of weakness.

Earning Autonomy

Participants also placed a great value on earning their autonomy through self-reliance in meeting academic and personal goals. Since college is often a period of personal growth towards independence and a movement away from dependency on parents, it's not a surprise that this help-avoiding behavior arose. In connection with this theme, Luis said, "What personally motivates me? I guess it's the feeling I get.... Because when I do something, I feel good about myself. And it's because since I was younger, I always thought that I had to learn the things myself." Luis expressed a desire to grow from personal accomplishments through his own unassisted undertaking. This was another behavior that has become a socialized norm since he was an adolescent. He continued, saying, "I always learned to do things on my own. That's always been my mentality. I know it's bad in a way, but that's always been my mentality. You know, like if I done it all these years by myself, I feel like I could do it." He had a growing need to prove himself, and thereby earn his autonomy as a young man. About his early college experience Luis said, "I knew that help was there, but I didn't actually go ... I guess it was because sometimes...we don't seek for help because we think that we can do everything." Thus, his needs for autonomy built up his perception of self-reliance, and therefore led to his early averting of seeking help from available campus resources.

One area Luis needed help in was his writing, especially given that his first language was Spanish. In regards to this situation, he said, “When your first language is another language, it’s hard. Because you try to write it like how you usually write it in Spanish, but in English, it’s the opposite.” Nevertheless, knowing he needed help, he continued, “But I just haven’t got to that point. Because I feel like if I seek for help in those things, I feel that the grade is not my grade. What I deserve. Because that means somebody else helped me, so that’s their grade too.” Again, his response articulated a need for earned autonomy and a reliance based on self-effort for performing academically.

Victor expressed the same attitude. He stated, “If, for example, I write a paper and I get an A, it’s because it was my paper, my work. On the other hand if I would seek for help on that and I get an A, then that’s my A and this other person who helped me.” By being self-reliant Victor gained ownership of his academic performance. Victor also viewed the desire for his efforts in his own work to stand alone as selfish. He explained, “I guess that’s called selfishness. So I guess I’m selfish in that way.” Additionally, his desire for autonomy was more recently reflected in his efforts to transfer to a university, which included writing statements of purpose and essays for scholarship applications. Victor said:

That’s the problem you know because like I told you that I don’t want to feel that way... ‘cause if I get in, because I’m gonna be like okay, I did it on my own. I wrote this, I corrected it and it’s good. But if I do it with

someone, I'm gonna feel like ashamed in a way because they helped me.

And I feel like that's not my work.

Victor's need for autonomy was also a part of his personal journey towards independence. However, as unpopular as it may be to his desires, he was still in a place of dependency in college.

Furthermore, Gustavo also expressed a yearning to achieve his "sacrifices" independent from his father's through his own hard work. About this desire, he said, "I also want to do something for myself. Like, the sacrifice to get the things for myself. If I just follow my dad's path, it's like he left me everything and I wouldn't know what it feels like to sacrifice things to get things for myself." In voicing why he needed to do this, he explained that it would be important because "it would be me personally, like to be able to say, "I accomplished something. That's me.'" Gustavo's need to earn autonomy, much in the way his father did, was understood by him as a rite of passage towards his independence.

Santiago described how he responded to challenges. He said, "Kind of keep to myself if something's bothering me or so forth...so right now to me it's I'll stay up late, I'll go ahead, work – do what I gotta do." Upon his arrival to NTC, Santiago said, "I didn't know anyone and there was no point in me asking for help." He also discussed his help avoidance experience within the classroom context. He explained: "Other than that one professor that I had, I've never spoken to any of the professors. [I] kinda just go to class, pay attention, read what

I need to read, but I really don't speak to any of them. Don't ask for any advice or anything." Prior to attending NTC's Downtown Campus, Santiago served 6 years in the U.S. Marines, an experience in which he learned to do things right the first time, and thereby avoid asking questions. However, Santiago's help-avoidance habits also came from his upbringing. He described his mom as "strong-headed and she doesn't want help from anyone. Anyone that gives her help, she gives it back to show that she didn't need it, or that she'll give back more than what you gave her." Santiago implied that his help-avoidance was a learned behavior from his mother's example. Her example showed to have a profound impact on his attitudes to help-seeking today. He explained.

She didn't want to go to my grandparents at one point when we were little, when she had broke up with, my father after he would beat us and stuff, we lived in a car for about two, maybe three months 'cause she didn't want to ask for help and I think that's where I get it from. You can do it yourself and that's how she always is.

Even without meeting his mother, I sensed the amount of respect Santiago had for her. As a mother, she raised her children through quite a few difficult situations and instilled in them not only great fortitude, but also the mentality that they could accomplish whatever they needed on their own if they just worked hard enough. Santiago went on to explain that growing up, English was his weakest subject. He described the ways in which his mother pushed him academically and

taught him about autonomy. He shared, “She wouldn’t let him [older brother] help me, so she would sit there and tell me there’s the dictionary. She punished us. We do exercises with it and then afterwards ... we had to define it, use it in three or four different sentences.” Thus, he was taught to be self-reliant in overcoming and finding solutions to life’s challenges, including academic situations. As result of his upbringing he said, “So now when I go about school, if I don’t understand it, I better read it three or four times. If I don’t know a word I better go look it up.” He was taught to exhaust all the resources he could self-employ, and if he still didn’t find the answer, he needed to work harder and do it again. Furthermore, he explained, “So about help, I guess another reason why I don’t ask is ‘cause she’s’ – if you don’t understand it go look it up, the answers in the dictionary.” Thus, Santiago’s help-avoidance was the product of the self-reliance he learned from his mother that shaped his approach to seeking help.

Undoing Negative Inter and Intra-Perceptions of Ability

The situational pressure not to confirm a negative stereotype that exists about one’s group, or stereotype threat, in turn causes adversity in performance (Steele, 2010) and help-avoidance (Collins & Sims, 2006). Secondly, viewing help-seeking as a threat towards competence and perceptions of ability also results in help-avoidance. Therefore, the focus of this section will center on participants’ experience confronting negative inter- and intra-perceptions of ability that led towards help-avoidance.

Undoing Negative Inter-perceptions of Ability

Many negative inter-perceptions of ability have their roots in societal labels, prejudgments, and stereotypes about groups. They have resulted in such effects as stereotype threat, or when a negative stereotype about a group becomes self-relevant (Steele, 1997), and help-avoidance in order to prevent further imbedding of such stereotypes. For example, there are negative inter-perceptions that some groups are less capable of succeeding academically than others (Steele & Aronson, 1995). As a result, if Latino males need support in college, seeking help could, in their assessment, validate a stereotype that they are less capable (Collins & Sims, 2006). Therefore, the threat of being seen as less capable can disengage them from campus resources, or result in departure from college (Collins & Sims, 2006).

While seeking help at the Red Oak Campus, Rodolfo experienced the stereotypical perceptions others were placing on him and Latino males overall. He stated:

Well, sometimes, I try to ask questions to certain people, and they just kind of put me in this category. You know? They obviously always assume that I play soccer, or they always assume that I don't know, like I work on houses when I'm not at school, or I'm only taking a few classes, and in college.

In this scenario, the perception of those institutional agents situated to provide support was that as a Latino male, Rodolfo was less capable, less focused, and more dedicated to work than school. In turn, his engagement in seeking help was halted by this institutional gatekeeper.

Similarly, Pedro said others had viewed him and Latino males as “ not very smart, this and that. We just come here to work. I think come here to take jobs. All we do is work. We’re never gonna get farther in life.” The institutional agents’ tendency was to react silently towards these perceptions, although internally they may cause pain. For Pedro, these encounters reminded him of what his stepfather experienced daily. He said, “My step-dad, he works at a gas station because he’s undocumented. Well, his boss treats him like the way he wants to. Just because he’s undocumented, he’s not gonna report any violations as a worker because he’s undocumented.” Through his stepfather’s experiences he further confronted the disenfranchisement of Latino men and societal alienation of him and other Latino men. Furthermore, he internalized these stereotypes and attacks towards his ability, saying, “It impacted me ‘cause at some point in my life it was true ‘cause my parents didn’t have any papers. I thought they couldn’t apply for the jobs that they wanted, so they were stuck cutting grass or working at a restaurant making very little money.” Having to hear these stereotypes in a college setting places a mental barrier in the mindset of Latino males. These barriers included doubts towards their ability and fears that their futures may be

predetermined and limited by societal perceptions and constraints. However, they have been confronting these negative perceptions towards their ability not only in college, but also throughout their lives. For example, Pedro said:

In college or in high school, and growing up as kids, they would be like, that kid, he looks like he's never gonna do anything in life. He looks like he's gonna be up to no good. Why bother helping him out...I would say sometimes they take us for granted.

Pedro described societal perceptions of Latino males as not able to succeed, trouble makers, and good for cheap labor. These societal sentiments are deeply rooted into our community's history and socioeconomic stratification. In addition, societal perceptions influence the struggles Latino males face in seeking more education and opportunities for social mobility. Therefore, these inter-perceptions can become internalized barriers towards engaging in seeking help.

Being Judged

Additionally, these deeply internalized societal perceptions are experienced inside the classroom and can garner feelings of judgment and bias. Therefore, although much of the community college agenda has justifiably shifted from a conversation about student access to one of student success, it's worthwhile to remember that for students such as Oscar, accessing the college classroom is not only a huge step, but also an overwhelming feeling. When asked what motivated him inside the classroom, Oscar responded, "I still remember the

first day I went to college, ...I was telling myself, 'I'm outta here. I'm gonna quit. This is not for me. Who do I look like, sitting up in here when I could be out there doing something.'" As a young man who grew up in a rough environment and who had many visible tattoos, he was highly self-conscious of perceived and actualized judgments he received from peers and faculty. About this experience, he said, "I'm worried about what people think of me too much. I worry about just walking into the room, just going to the door, just that right there is enough to worry me for the rest of that class, just what people would think of you. And it's not right." Oscar had not found his sense of belonging inside the classroom and constantly felt that others were profiling him as not college material. As a result, he felt less comfortable asking for help from faculty and students who had a perceived marginalization of him inside the classroom.

However, these were not only perceived judgments on Oscar's part, but actualized through the behaviors of his peers as well. He described this experience, saying, "Once or twice in an actual classroom, where even your presence, just being, sitting down, somebody would actually get up and move just because you're sitting there, and they don't want to sit next to you. And, you know, it can be troubling sometimes." The actions of his peers left him feeling isolated and marginalized inside the classroom. Furthermore, he experienced these judgments from his instructors as well, saying, "I've even had an instructor who thought the worst of me, and demanded me to sit in the front seat, right in

front of him, because he thought I was doing something that I wasn't even doing. Like, just because he thought that I was like that." Oscar was not the only student profiled that day as a potential troublemaker. Thus, having been judged by his peers and instructor, Oscar felt he had no avenue to seek help or succeed inside this classroom.

Oscar went on to say, "People think that sometimes... that you don't know English. They think you know nothing but Spanish. They think you don't have anything. They think like you're the lowest of low sometimes. I did. When he asked me to move, I did." Being judged as someone with low ability and low potential to succeed had a profound impact on Oscar's self-esteem and self-efficacy. I personally remember running into a frustrated Oscar in the hallway that day. I stopped him in regards to something else at first, but immediately sensed his frustration and hurt. He explained to me what happened, just as he did in his interview. I advised him to speak with one of our academic Deans, and directed him that way. During his interview he explained:

But 30 seconds later I got up and walked out. And, I didn't care what he said. I went to the director and I talked to them. They had a talk with him. And after that, no one ever bothered me anymore. Everything went well. Passed the class. No trouble, no problems.

In response to this experience Oscar was prepared to not only walk out of the class, but NTC altogether. He had already walked into the class feeling

overwhelmed by being inside a college classroom environment. Thus, having to experience the prejudgments of his peers and instructors was the tipping point that could have led to his departure from college. However, unintentionally he ran into an institutional agent he knew and trusted that connected him with a solution to his classroom situation. Nonetheless, the incident left him feeling embarrassed and even more guarded about how others perceived him as a college student. He went on to say, “A lot of people say, ‘Who cares what people think of you? Just be you,’ you know? And it’s difficult for me like that.” Having this mindfulness that others were constructing judgments of him made it difficult to gain trust from relationships from which he might have otherwise sought help. In regards to the cautiousness and distrust, he said, “It makes me wonder like, ‘Are you just putting a front up, just to talk to me,’ Is this person being for real? ... Are they okay with who I am, how I look, what I’ve been through?” Although others had advised him not to care about what everyone else thought, he admitted his suspicion of the judgments of others continued to be something he struggled getting past.

Therefore, his experiences left him extremely closed off from anyone else outside of his girlfriend who also attended NTC and was a strong source of motivation for him to keep going. Continuing with the description of Oscar’s experience, he said, “Like in school...one of the barriers is having people look at you like needing help. They look at you like, ‘Oh, he can’t catch on yet. He still doesn’t know it.’ And it... can get to you sometimes.” As a result, this negative inter-perception of

his abilities discouraged any pursuits of seeking help as it may have confirmed the stereotypes and predispositions about his ability to succeed in college.

Undoing Negative Intra-perceptions of Ability

Beyond confronting negative inter-perceptions of ability, participants also experienced the challenges of having to undo negative intra-perceptions of their ability. Similarly to inter-perceptions, negative intra-perceptions of ability encouraged their behavior to avoid seeking help, as it could also be viewed as evidence of their lack of ability. Perhaps making them even more concerning, intra-perceptions are self-evaluating and can deeply internalize and root self-concepts.

Whereas Oscar's negative perceptions of his ability were highly facilitated by his interactions with others, Arturo's appeared to be self-evaluative in nature (Collins & Sims, 2006). He encountered these perceptions during the early stages of his college experience, stating, "Back then, I was too shy to ask for help. I was not shy, but just didn't want to seem dumb or, not being able to understand it 'cause it was simple math back then." For Arturo, whose goal was to not have to continue working in the extreme attic heat of installing HVAC systems, but to instead be a mechanical engineer, struggling in math was a wake-up call as to whether he had what it would take to succeed. Although he knew where campus math tutoring resources were, he said, "Intermediate math – I understood it, but I got stuck sometimes, which it was frustrating for me. I'm like, 'If I go ask for

help for this, I feel dumb asking for help. I should already know this.” Therefore, Arturo’s believed that seeking help would reflect poorly on his academic ability and self-efficacy, and could confirm the doubts he had about succeeding in college. Furthermore, struggling at the early stage of developmental intermediate math as a student whose academic goals placed several math courses in his pathway was a discouraging experience for Arturo.

In sharing his thoughts on how to address these negative intra-perceptions and the resulting help-avoidance, Arturo said, “Telling them where they can get help, it’s not really good enough. They actually have to take them there ‘cause most of them – even though they know where to get help, don’t go get help unless either your friends or teacher, actually takes them in there.” Arturo suggested the need for institutional agents or peers to act as bridges for connecting Latino males to the support they needed. Furthermore, he noted that, too often, students are merely directed to support in hopes that they reach their destination, feel comfortable seeking help, or even know what to ask. He further described this by saying:

It’s not ‘cause of pride, but they actually don’t go by themselves. They have someone that already went and has the experience, and walks them through there ‘cause the first time is always the scariest one ‘cause you’re like, “Well, I’m new here. I don’t want to feel dumb or I really don’t

know what I'm doing." So, having that someone just there supporting them through the way.

Arturo alluded to the opportunity to utilize peer-to-peer support, which connected students to someone who has recently experienced similar situations the student is seeking help for. Having peers disclose their own challenges in transitioning into college allows Latino males to become more comfortable in continuing to seek help and viewing it as a normal college behavior. This type of peer-to-peer support is exactly what Arturo does today as a peer leader, leading students through campus tours and new student orientations. Therefore, help-avoidance may be less associated with negative perceptions about ability and more associated with the challenges of transitioning into a new environment, which will be discussed in the next section.

Others such as Rodolfo and Santiago had similar experiences. For example, Rodolfo said, "I don't say the right things all the time, or most of the time. But, I just don't want to say it so much where people lose respect for me in terms of like, that guy doesn't know what he's talking about ever... So that's why I don't like asking." Rodolfo feared seeking help due to the perceptions of others that he was not capable of succeeding in college. Furthermore, given he was the first in his family to ever attend college, he felt enormous responsibility to succeed. Likewise, Santiago often avoided seeking help in order to not confirm a perception of lack of ability. He said, "Say they explained it to me, I didn't know

it, I was like yeah, okay. I didn't want to ask 'em again 'cause I was afraid they'd be like, all right, well like you are dumb." Santiago experienced strong sentiments that asking questions added to the perceived notion of others that he was unable to complete a specific task or succeed in college. Although he rarely did ask questions, typically Santiago noted that he would wait until after class to do so in order to avoid his peers' judgments.

Expressed Anxiety

Participants also expressed anxiety in battling self-perceptions of their ability and seeking help. For instance, Oscar said, "Seeking help and support, it can be rewarding, you know, overcome that barrier of being scared and anxiety. I have major anxiety. I mean just coming here, to talk to you today, my heart was at a million beats a minute." Although his anxiety may have also explained his need to reschedule his interview a few times, I was curious as to what cause his experienced anxiety. With teary eyes he described that seeking help positioned him in a place of vulnerability, which made him panic and remain uncertain of the situation or his college environment he was in. Similarly, Alejandro said, "I think a lot of people have that feeling, you get anxious about something, and instead of facing what it is that you don't know, you decide to just live in your bubble instead of having that feeling, 'cause sometimes it's really uncomfortable." By staying in his place of comfort he detached himself from opportunities to seek help and have access to additional campus resources. However, early on in his

college experience he felt avoiding the unknown was the better option than experiencing the anxiety and discomfort he felt in new environments and relationships.

In his initial response, Hector did not feel he had barriers to overcome in seeking the help and support he needed to succeed in college. However, he immediately followed it by saying:

I guess it's just me, I guess my feelings towards this seeking [help]. I guess my anxiety or you know not being able to confront people about it. Like I wouldn't go up to a person – hey, can you help me with this problem? I would actually like, I don't know, take it slowly and wait for them to ask me. I'm not the person to ask questions.

At this point in the interview Hector showed signs of anxiety through his speech and perspiration from talking about this topic. In addition, he indicated the need for others to approach him first, otherwise it would be very unlikely for him to ask for help. He went on to say, “I don't really know. I feel like it's like I can't even speak in front of people that I get nervous, so I guess, I don't like confrontation.” This anxiety also spilled over into his speech class, where he said, “I didn't ask any help. I didn't seek [help]. That's how much I disliked it and I had so much anxiety goin' in that class and comin' out of the class 'cause you had to speak in front of people.” His anxiety also led to physical responses that included loss of breath and body shaking. Although academically Hector had performed well

during his first year of college, his self-perceptions of his ability to confront people have led to anxiety, as well as help-avoidance. However, he admitted that help-seeking, as well as speaking in front of people, is something he will need to continue to improve on in order to succeed in college.

Therefore, I found that negative inter- and intra-perceptions towards ability have profoundly impacted the help-seeking experience of participants. Furthermore, these perceptions, whether coming from others or self-evaluative, have led to their help-avoidance, feelings of judgment, and expressed anxiety. Some of their responses could also be attributed to their experience transitioning into a new environment. Therefore, in the following section I discuss the impact of this transition on their help-seeking attitudes and help-avoidance tendencies.

Transitioning to New Environments & Responsibilities

The following section describes participants' experiences with help-avoidance in regards to their transition into their new college environment. This transitional experience included changed relationships, routines, assumptions, and roles (Goodman, Schlossberg, & Anderson, 2006). These changes, whether expected or unexpected, can produce stress, coping difficulty, and struggles balancing new expectations.

Navigating New Environments

It's important to meet all students where they are, especially those individuals who are the first in their families to attend college. These students

may feel marginalized or disfranchised in a college setting and help-seeking in this context may be an unfamiliar behavior. Therefore, this section will address participants' earliest experiences on NTC's Downtown and Red Oak Campuses.

Most participants communicated that they had difficulties upon their initial arrival to campus and throughout their first semester of transition, and often failed to or struggled with asking for help. For example, Arturo said, "When I first started at NTC, I got lost. I was lost around the third floor trying to find my math class. And it took me 30 minutes before I even asked for help 'cause I was completely lost. My math class ended up being in another building." Upon Arturo's initial arrival to the Downtown Campus, he was challenged with navigating the confusing physical environment of the campus, which included building levels that did not match up from parking garage to building and to the next building where his classroom was located. Although there were likely many students who were lost their first day of class, Arturo's sense was that he was alone in his situation. Santiago described his arrival at the Downtown Campus saying, "Kind of just kept to myself, didn't know anyone, kind of just do what I got to do and then just leave, really had no affiliation. Like I didn't know where to start. I didn't want to speak to anyone." Santiago had no sense of belonging or affiliation with the college upon first arrival as he does now with the financial aid office and the veterans' student organization. Therefore, he did as many community college students do, and traveled from his car to class, and then back

to his car, never engaging or having been engaged by another student or institutional agent. Furthermore, this transitional experience initially felt overwhelming for Alejandro. However, after becoming involved on campus and working on campus, Alejandro said, “Help is there, it’s standing right in front of your face.” However, upon arrival to NTC’s Red Oak Campus, he said, “I didn’t know that either until it came to me, and I think mostly it’s ‘cause of fear, especially ‘cause things are new to you, college was new to me. I think that’s probably why I didn’t go seek help.” Perhaps still in his high school mindset, he said, “I think I was too cool for it, and maybe I actually did fear knowing things that I didn’t know about. I was too used to what it is I knew, and I don’t want to know something else that I wasn’t aware of or, I didn’t know existed.” Alejandro feared the “unknown” and all the rules, expectations, physical spaces, and new people he had to familiarize himself with. His apprehension meant that early in his experience he did not become acquainted with campus resources, until they found him.

Similarly, Manuel avoided seeking help upon his arrival to the Downtown Campus. He shared, “Coming here I didn’t know where to go to get help, or who to ask about anything.” He noted that many of his early hesitations towards seeking help were related to being in a new environment and wanting to avoid looking foolish by going to the wrong place on campus. Manuel went on to describe his early experiences on campus. He said:

In the beginning I didn't really use the resources or anything we had on campus. Even as welcoming as the Downtown Campus is, because I think we did a great job at that. But, it's just you're in a new environment and you don't know a lot of people and you're scared to ask questions and you're scared to go to certain places and it's all new to you.

As Manuel suggested, however welcoming the Downtown Campus was, the feeling upon arrival to a college campus for the first time is overpowering. His response suggested that more could be done to break down the anxiety and initial fears students have in navigating their new environments and in seeking help to do so. Participants' effectiveness in coping with their transition depends on their ability to connect with resources and develop strategies to manage stress and their perceptions of control over the situation. Noticing a number of "W's" or withdrawals on an early semester of his transcript, I asked Manuel what issues were going on during this time. Since he was leery of seeking help in his new environment, he dropped classes he struggled with early on. He explained, "I just didn't want to mess up my academic standing, so I just kept on dropping or withdrawing." However, he said he was never told, nor did he completely understand, the total implications of dropping classes. About these actions, he said, "I honestly didn't know what classes to take," nor did he understand he had a limited number of drops throughout his entire undergraduate career in the state of Texas. In hindsight he regrets dropping many of those courses. However, he was

adjusting to the new responsibilities placed on him as a college student to navigate NTC's enrollment processes, including course registration and withdrawal. With that said, more could have been done on the institution's end to assure he was aware of the full implications of withdrawing.

Gustavo said of his first days on campus, "It was difficult... because I didn't know where to go." Although he was able to take advantage of a campus tour, he shared, "But during the tour they left me in the Subway [cafeteria]. I didn't know what was going on so I just left. When they didn't tell me where to go and they left, well I left too." Many participants such as Gustavo were challenged with transitioning to college, which included navigating physical spaces and new relationships. Although many of them would eventually adjust to their new environments and make connections with support networks, early on they struggled in seeking the help they needed.

New Responsibilities and Time Management

In addition to being susceptible to help-avoidance while adjusting to new environments, participants also struggled with adapting to new responsibilities as college students. Rodolfo described his experience with time management adjustments. He said, "The only obstacle is time. You know, sometimes I think I stretch my schedule too much. I try to do too much in one day." Similarly, Victor said of his first year at NTC's Downtown Campus, "When I went home, I only had time to study for about two hours until somebody would say, 'Hey, can you

help with this?’ When I’m here [NTC], I can’t help family, which I love to help.” However, now that Victor worked on campus, he described his ability to manage time differently. He shared:

I would leave campus to go to work. I wouldn’t stay on campus. Now, I stay on campus to go to work and go to school. Now I have to look at the time and say, “Hey. Okay. I’m about to go to work. I have about two hours. I need to study or I need to find some time to keep going.” So, working at school and going to school is like the best experience that I’ve had for this past year and a half.

For Victor, working off campus was a time management challenge, especially given his dependency on public transportation. However, it also pulled him away from opportunities to seek help from campus resources and placed him at home more frequently where familial commitments took up time he felt could have been used towards academics. Nevertheless, working on campus was a positive solution that added flexibility to his time management, fostered meaningful relationships, and increased opportunities to connect with campus resources.

Santiago had a hectic schedule as a full-time student with full-time employment and responsibilities as a new father. His schedule left him limited time for studying, and even less time for seeking out any help he might need from campus resources. He stated:

That's the whole thing, trying to manage time. Every time I go home I want to spend all my time until she [daughter] falls asleep and then when she falls asleep I have to stay up and do my work and that's the hardest part 'cause she'll probably go to sleep 9:30, 10:00.

For Santiago, the challenge with time management was associated with his adjustment to being a new a father. In describing his schedule, he said, "At that time I go ahead and I start doing my work, 6:00 I'm up so I could start going back to work so that's how it's kind of been like. I don't know how I'm gonna do this. Long days but, hopefully, it'll be worth it." Santiago appeared tired and stressed as he spoke of his schedule, but he also seemed highly motivated by his new role as a father. However, given Santiago's very self-reliant and giving of himself behaviors, he may have been in need of an outlet to maintain his effectiveness with his busy schedule. Thus, we find that help-avoidance was also a consequence of participants' adjustment to managing their time and new roles and responsibilities, such as academic, work, and familial commitments.

Conclusion

The following account of findings suggests that the help-avoidance was experienced by Latino male participants as a result of, 1) controlled self-disclosure, avoiding weakness, and autonomy, 2) the undoing of negative inter- and intra-perceptions of ability, and 3) their transitioning into new environment and responsibilities. The first finding suggests that participants who found self-

disclosure of their present circumstances to be distressing were less likely to seek help. Therefore, these individuals often suppressed issues of concern and remained apprehensive of the outcomes resulting from seeking help (Collins & Sims, 2006). Such outcomes to be avoided included displaying signs of weakness that went against machismo masculinity. Furthermore, by regulating self-disclosure, participants were able to sustain a sense of needed autonomy and independence and thereby reinstated some control of their lives (Tang, et al, 2014).

Secondly, I found that participants' negative intra-perceptions of ability encouraged their behavior to avoid seeking help, as it could also be viewed as evidence of their lack of ability. In a similar outcome, negative intra-perceptions of ability encouraged their behavior to avoid seeking help, as it could be felt as self-evaluative evidence of their lack of ability and internalized self-concept. Lastly, I found that participants' experiences with help-avoidance were a response to their transitions into their new college environment. These transitional experiences included adjustments related to navigating new physical spaces, roles and responsibilities, and demands on time, which, whether expected or unexpected, can produce stress, coping difficulties, and struggles balancing new expectations. In addition, I also found that help-avoidance was a result of Latino males' adjustment to managing time and new roles and responsibilities, such as academics, work, and familial commitments. Therefore, I found a need to undo

machismo tendencies that often impede help-seeking. In addition, there are opportunities to leverage new constructs of gender role identity that take advantage of Latino males' need for autonomy and independence, but that place the end goal/strength on achieving interdependence. Lastly, there is a great need for institutions to focus on the earliest experiences of Latino males' college adjustment, including the navigation of physical spaces.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

In this chapter, I provide concluding remarks, which include findings and implications for future studies. However, I open with an overview of this research study. I continue by highlighting the major findings that emerged from my study. Based on my findings, I then discuss implications for policy, research, and practice. I conclude this chapter with limitations of this study and my final thoughts.

Overview of the Study

On a national scale, Hispanics are the fastest growing segment of the population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). Similarly, in the state of Texas the Hispanic population is projected to grow by 15.45% between 2011 and 2015, thereby making Hispanics the largest racial/ethnic group in the state (THECB, 2012). However, Latino males continue to be underrepresented in U.S. institutions of higher education. Although, the THECB (2013) data for Hispanics reveals gains in success and participation rates, much of these gains have occurred in large part due to the success Latinas have found in higher education. According to the THECB (2013), in the state of Texas males from all three of the major racial/ethnic groups (e.g. African American, White and Hispanic) lag behind females in higher education participation. Accordingly, of the total Hispanic population in the fall of 2012, only 4.1% of males participated in college

compared to 5.8% of females (THECB, 2013). Therefore it has become a national, economic, and social imperative to address the postsecondary participation and success gaps facing the Latino male population by examining how they experience college to better understand the successes and challenges they encounter in persisting towards degree completion.

Previous literature demonstrated how cultural (i.e. ethnic identity, cultural congruity), social (i.e. familial funds of knowledge), and psychological factors (i.e. self-efficacy, self-esteem), many of which are not visible at the surface and others which are structured within the fabric of our institutions, have impacted the college experiences of Latino students (Gloria & Rodriguez, 2000). However, only recently has there been an emergence of literature that takes into account the distinctive experiences of Latino males in college (Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009, 2012; Noguera, Hurtado, & Fergus, 2012), and the undoing of myths of sameness about Latino male identity as machismo (Torres, Solberg, & Carlstrom, 2002; Arciniega, et al., 2008). This machismo gender identification has been attributed to Latino males' resistance to seeking help (Gloria, Castellanos, Scull & Vilegas, 2009, Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009; Saenz & Bukoski, 2014). However, others have moved towards a more balanced narrative of machismo that is being described as a paradigm in which some machismo tendencies exist alongside positive characteristics, and is often referred to as caballerismo (Casas, et al., 1994; Mirande, 1997, Neff, 2001, & Arciniega et al., 2008). Scholars have shown that

while Latinos were more likely than the general population to value education as highly important (Alonso-Zaldivar & Tompson, 2010), and therefore aspire to earn a college degree, many fell short of their aspirations to complete that degree (Contreras, 2011).

Unfortunately, much of the attrition we see from college takes place at the community college and amongst Latino males. However, the attrition that takes place is not due to lack of ability or desire to succeed, but instead, the challenges experienced in seeking, engaging, and leveraging the support needed to complete the college journey. Researchers have pointed out that Latino males and other males of color have struggled with seeking help for reasons usually associated with pride and stereotype threats (CCCSE, 2014; Harper & Harris, 2010; Harper, 2014; Saenz & Ponjuan, 2012). However, much remains to be discovered about the help-seeking experiences of Latino males. In an effort to uncover more about this help-seeking phenomenon, this study took an anti-deficit approach in understanding what and how Latino male community college students experienced help-seeking.

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the help-seeking experiences (e.g. meeting with academic advisor) of 12 Latino male community college students who attended North Texas College (NTC), more specifically the Downtown and Red Oak campuses. The guiding research questions for this study included:

- 1) How do Latino male community college students experience help-seeking?
- 2) What influences support and hinder their help-seeking experiences?
- 3) How do their help-seeking experiences shape their persistence in college?

A purposeful sampling method was utilized to select 12 participants who met the following criteria: 1) self-identified as Hispanic/Latino males, and 2) currently or having recently attended a NTC Downtown or Red Oak Campuses, with recently attending being enrolled within the previous two main academic semesters (Fall and Spring).

The focus of this study was centered on developing both a textural (what was experienced) and structural (how it was experienced in terms of conditions, circumstances and context, description) (Creswell, 2013) of participants' help-seeking experiences. In accomplishing this, various methods of collecting data were used in this study, including: 1) demographic information form, 2) semi-structured face-to-face interviews, 3) face-to-face or over the phone follow up interviews 4) documents and artifacts 5) analytical and reflective memos, and 6) observation field notes. However, the demographic information form and semi-structured interviews were the main sources of gathering information. The demographic information form included their personal, familial, and educational backgrounds. This information revealed that roughly half of the participants were

born outside the United States and that almost all participants' parents were first-generation college students. Most of the participants were also between the ages of 18 and 26, did not have children, identified socioeconomically as working class, worked on- and/or off-campus jobs, attended college full time, and had aspirations of transferring to a university. Most of the participants were involved on their college campus, whether through student clubs and organizations or through student employment on campus. Additionally, most agreed that engaging in help-seeking was not a natural behavior for them, or other Latino males. However, most participants themselves did engage in help-seeking and did find ways to leverage institutional resources to support their success in college. Thus, this study supports a counter narrative to the often deficit laden descriptions of Latino males' college experiences.

As a first-generation Latino male college graduate, my interest in conducting this study was both professional and personal. Therefore, it was necessary for me to identify my position in the study. Through my own experiences as a community college practitioner, son, father, husband, tío (uncle), padrino (godfather), and community organizer, I was invested in understanding the perspectives of Latino male college students.

Key Findings

In guidance with this studies theoretical framework, the Model for College Student Help-Seeking Experiences (MCSHE), the findings of this investigation

are focused around the integrated themes of motivation, academic-control, and the basis for help-avoidance in the college environment. After a thorough qualitative data analysis, three major action-oriented findings emerged through the review of literature, demographic information form, interviews, documents and artifacts, reflective memos, and observation field notes. The findings reflected the unique experiences and perceptions of Latino male community college students as they defined and expressed their experiences seeking the help they needed to succeed in college. By telling their personal stories, participants disputed the repressive dispositions that are deficit focused, and instead revealed an often-latent narrative of their strengths, strategies, and perceptions of succeeding in college. This is not to say that they did not encounter intrinsic or extrinsic barriers and challenges, but instead that they told counter narratives that challenged commonly prescribed machismo tendencies, stereotypical behaviors and attitudes, and attitudes lacking motivation or desire to succeed. The three major findings of this study reflect an integrated approach towards understanding the help-seeking experiences of Latino male community college student that is in accordance with the MSCHE framework,

Key Finding #1: Leverage Latino males' goal orientation as an asset for engaging in achievement-related behavior and constructing meaningful gauges toward reaching success.

I found, as it is true with other students, Latino males' engagement in achievement related behavior, such as help-seeking, was informed by their goal orientation, which served as a motivational variable and disposition towards cultivating or validating their ability in achievement situations (Collins & Sims, 2006; VandeWalle, 1997). In addition, I found that Latino males model mastery goal orientation and instrumental help-seeking attitudes, which suggested that they were motivated through learning and understanding. They had a motivational disposition towards utilizing self-regulated learning behaviors that were conducive to learning, such as help-seeking. Therefore, their goal orientations and related motivations had the potential to serve as obstacles or leverage in help-seeking and other achievement-related behaviors (Collins & Sims, 2006). Whether their motivation can be leveraged will depend on the inferences and causal perceptions institutions and students make about the causes of these behaviors (Weiner, 1986, 1992).

Participants highlighted that their reasons for remaining in college came largely from familial encouragement and expectations, positive relationships with faculty, staff, and peers (Hernandez, 2000), self-fulfillment of gender roles and ideologies, and a desire to break down barriers and stereotypes. Furthermore,

participants in this study inherited a masculine script of attitudes, values, and characteristics that impacted their motivation and persistence in college, which too often was a hegemonic masculinity script focused on the leading narrative of machismo (Connell, 2008; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). However, institutions and students have an opportunity to leverage the alternative forms of masculinity that often exist in the margins, such as *caballeros*, that promote problem solving, ethnic identity, and a positive group orientation (Arciniega, Tovar-Gamero, & Sand, 2004).

Similarly, if perceived as a valued part of their collegiate experience and self-concept, other Latino male motivational assets, such as familial encouragement and expectations, can be leveraged by integrating them into multiple campus support systems (i.e. career services, academic advising, financial wellness). Leveraging their expressed value for positive relationships with faculty, staff, and peers can be done through opportunities for engagement with Latino leaders on campus and in the community, fostering early (i.e. orientation, welcome centers, outreach efforts) peer-to-peer relationships, and creating a sense of community and positive identity amongst men of color on campus through efforts such as NTC's MCS program. Additional findings suggested that the institution, through its institutional agents (staff, faculty, peer leaders), more often initiated these supportive relationships by being aggressively welcoming in their effort to connect with Latino students. By leveraging their

goal orientations and preexisting intrinsic motivations, institutions can begin to bring Latino males out from the margins where they too often exist with other men of color in higher educational institutions.

Key Finding #2: Utilize Latino males' perceived academic control to build early meaningful relationships with peers, faculty, and staff that foster belonging and mattering and lead to improved help-seeking and access to institutional resources.

Findings suggested that Latino males' help-seeking experiences were informed by their perceived academic control (PAC), or a person's intrinsic beliefs that they can intentionally influence and impact outcomes in their environment (Perry, 1981; Perry, Hall & Ruthig, 2005; and Skinner, 1996). Additionally, their PAC was experienced through how they responded to challenges, fulfillment of cultural gender roles, and their sense of belonging and mattering on campus. Furthermore, participants often expressed self-responsibility and high personal expectations and accountability towards their academic performance, while demonstrating resilience in responding to academic and life challenges. These challenges included negotiating relationships that emphasized machismo like tendencies and behaviors associated with views of caring about academic success as "acting White." Participants placed much time and effort towards such behaviors as providing financial and emotional support to family (Marin & Marin, 1991; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez Orozco, 1995), and as a

result their perceived control and ability to place adequate time and effort towards academic achievement was impacted. However, many participants were able to gain control and successfully prioritize more time towards college.

In addition, it was found to be paramount that Latino males developed a sense of belonging on their college campuses early in their college experiences. Their 'sense of belonging' was garnered through their membership into campus communities such as student organizations (i.e. Latino, LGBT, veterans, and mentoring organizations) and opportunities for cultural expressions (i.e. speaking Spanish, social activism, Latino arts and history). Although participants expressed high regards for PAC and self-responsibility and accountability, they also acknowledged their reliance on peers, staff, and faculty for support. Participants' feelings of societal mattering existed in societal entities, or sub-communities, which fostered safe spaces for building relationships and resulted in interpersonal mattering. Opportunities such as working on campus, participation in mentoring programs, and involvement with student organizations served as vehicles for developing and sustaining these relationships. Additionally, since both belonging and mattering were commonly facilitated through peer and institutional agents, their relationships with participants resulted in greater access and exchanging of institutional resources that benefited their help-seeking experiences.

Therefore, overall I found that when participants responded to challenges with a positive PAC, they felt in harmony with their gender roles, established

membership into campus communities, and felt significant from the genuine concern of others. They were more successful and likely to seek help and gain access to additional institutional resources and support. However, when participants sensed not being in control, experienced gender role conflict, and felt unwelcomed and marginalized in their campus community, they were less likely to seek help and gain access to additional institutional resources and support. Therefore, leveraging Latino males' perceived academic control to build early meaningful relationships with peers, faculty, and staff that foster belonging and mattering can lead to improved help-seeking and access to institutional resources.

Key Finding #3: Leverage new constructs that frame gender role identity as a continuum of personal growth towards interdependence, thereby undoing machismo tendencies that impede help-seeking.

I found that participants occasionally suppressed their issues of concern and remained apprehensive that the outcomes of seeking help could validate signs of weakness that went against gender norms of masculine strength and toughness. Consequently, Latino males avoided help-seeking as a result of restricted self-disclosure. However, participants also regulated self-disclosure as a means to gain a sense of needed autonomy and independence, and thereby reinstated some control of their lives during their college experience (Tang, et al, 2014). This need for control came at time in which they were transitioning into college and were faced with many new circumstances that required modifications in behaviors

and expectations. These adjustments were related to navigating new physical spaces, roles and responsibilities, and demands on time, which could produce stress, coping difficulty, and struggles balancing new expectations. Furthermore, some Latino males identified help-seeking as confirming negative inter- and intra-perceptions of their ability to succeed in college.

Given these conclusions, I found that there are opportunities to leverage new constructs that frame gender role identity as a continuum of personal growth towards interdependence, thereby undoing negative machismo tendencies that impede help-seeking. This continuum of personal growth should create a pathway of transformational learning (Mezirom, 1991, 2000) that leverages Latino males' natural tendencies to seek autonomy and independence, and focuses on their self-identified purpose, motivations, and goals to succeed in college and life. By focusing on their personal values, students can build stronger and more meaningful self-concepts that serve them more equitably than today's so often institutionally scaled-up "one-size fits all" strategies. Additionally, framing the overarching goal as "interdependence," which implies mutual reliance amongst two or more groups or people, provides opportunities to leverage Latino males' value for family, ethnic identity, and other group/community affiliations. The role of interdependence has been well documented in feminist research on the ethics of caring (Noddings, 1984, 2005; Gilligan, 1982) and described as a hidden fact in a male-dominated society. Nevertheless, given that today we find Latinas and other

female groups greatly surpassing their male counterparts in educational attainment, feminist approaches should be taken into account in addressing male educational success. In the next section, I will detail how these findings impact future policy, research, and practice.

Implications for Policy, Practice, and Research

Researchers, policymakers, and practitioners across the country have gradually initiated efforts to address the inequities in the educational attainment of men of color, with emphasis on Black and Latino males. However, the most notable and influential in shaping the implications for this study have resulted from the works of such organized efforts as the Texas Education Consortium for Male Students of Color (TECMSC), the Center for Community College Student Engagement's (CCCSE) special initiative – Improving Outcomes for Men of Color in Community Colleges, along with the great work of Dr. Shaun Harper through the Center for the Study of Race and Equity in Education at the University of Pennsylvania. Each of these initiatives demonstrates collaborative research efforts that are action oriented and intentionally designed to inform and develop supportive policies and practices geared towards increasing the educational success of male students of color. Likewise, this study's outcomes contribute to the assembling of knowledge on the educational experiences of Latino males as to impact policy, practice, and research agendas. Therefore, the

following frames how the significance and implications of this study contribute and align with efforts to assemble such a collection of knowledge.

Implications for Policy

It is important that researchers, practitioners, policymakers, the students themselves, along with all community stakeholders, play a part in shaping the agenda for influencing the participation and success of male students of color in higher education (Harper & Harris, 2012). Foremost, a policy-supported collective agenda must continue to harvest collaborative efforts that emphasize research which: 1) brings greater awareness and understanding to educational attainment gender gap, 2) informs the development of best and promising policies and practices for targeting men of color, and 3) stresses the importance of institutional and systemic change that brings equity to the forefront of institutional planning.

Striving for such equity first means an institutional culture change in how inequities in higher education participation and completion are addressed. For instance, policies at the federal, state (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board), and institutional level must support the collection of data on the race/ethnic-gender inequities facing Latino males and other male students of color. Moreover, community colleges, especially those serving high enrollments of students of color, should join efforts such as Achieving the Dream (ATD) that have become a leading advocate and vehicle for community colleges to

implement an institutional culture change that emphasizes the success of students of color. This cultural change includes shifting the focus of community colleges' efforts beyond a college access agenda, and towards one focused on utilizing data informed decision making to move ALL students towards successful completion of their degrees.

Similarly, on a national level, I believe there is a need for an enhanced national database that can be utilized to study the educational progress of Latino males throughout the P-20 educational continuum (Saenz & Ponjuan, 2012). By allowing the data to speak to the racial/ethnic and gender differences facing Latino's access and success in higher education, there is a strengthened ability to bring a larger awareness to this issue (Saenz & Ponjuan, 2012) and encourage policies and practices that promote equity (Harper & Harris, 2012). Moreover, efforts must be courageous, supported at an impactful scale, and conceptualized beyond the customary inclination to rely on special programs to address achievement gaps (CCCES, 2014). For example, Harper & Harris (2012) first called for policymakers to match the taxpayers' annual cost for incarceration with investments for educational initiatives for young men of color. The result was an annual \$43 million dollar investment into the Young Man's Initiative (YMI) launched in New York City by the Mayor's office (Harper, 2014). I believe this study brings awareness to the challenges and overall experiences of Latino males

in the community college setting, and further encourages the investment in and sustainability of equitable policies that support the success of Latino males.

Implications for Practice

On similar lines, this study has implications for institutional practices. By unpacking the help-seeking experiences of Latino male community college students, this study has uncovered opportunities to leverage the assets these students bring to their college experience. However, first there is great demand on educational practitioners to have a paradigm shift away from deficit-mindsets that often plague institutional settings by devaluing the social, intellectual, and cultural capital men of color and other marginalized communities bring to their college experience. Therefore, this study encourages an asset-based approach towards developing supportive practice targeting Latino male students.

Some of these assets include their mastery goal orientation, familial encouragement and expectations, motivation to break down stereotypes and barriers, as well as their ability to create positive relationships with faculty, staff, and peers. These assets all have the potential to be leveraged in support of their help-seeking experiences and overall college success. Therefore, a recommendation for practice would be for institutions and students to have an opportunity to employ the alternative forms of masculinity that often exist in the margins, such as *caballeros*, that promote problem solving, ethnic identity, and a positive group orientation (Arciniega, Tovar-Gamero, & Sand, 2004).

Additionally, practices should integrate Latino males' motivational asset of familial encouragement and expectations into multiple campus support systems (i.e. career services, academic advising, financial wellness). Furthermore, their expressed value for positive relationships with faculty, staff and peers, should be encouraged through opportunities for engagement with Latino leaders on campus and in the community. Additionally, relationships should be fostered through early (i.e. orientation, welcome centers, outreach efforts) peer-to-peer relationships, and creating a sense of community and positive identity amongst men of color on campus, through efforts such as NTC's MCS program. In addition, student leaders often directly connected Latino males to institutional resources or institutional gatekeepers of resources. Therefore, institutions should consider increasing the amount and influence of a diverse set of student leaders as institutional peer agents to connect students to resources, opportunities for collegiate affiliations (i.e. student organizations), and in foster relationships encourage mattering. Finally, institutions and practitioners should utilize Latino males' high-perceived academic control and need for autonomy and independence in developing practices that frame gender role identity as a continuum of personal growth towards interdependence. This approach would emphasize the strength found in utilizing multiple perspectives in developing something greater than any individual could (Covey, 1989), and thereby deconstruct negative machismo tendencies that impede help-seeking. Validating Latino males' need for

independence, but also encouraging them to build a path towards interdependence, promotes collaboration, relationship building, and the advantages of seeking help and support.

Implications for Research

The data gathered from this study will add to other recently emerging research on the experience of Latino male community college students (Saenz & Ponjuan, 2011, 2012; Saenz & Bukoski, 2014; Noguera, Hurtado, Fergus, 2012) and will expose any misconceptions that continue to exist about their help-seeking experiences. Some implications for research emerged directly from the participants' voices, while others were obtained through data analysis. My hope is that this study provides insights that can inform efforts of future researchers in their endeavors to add to the field of knowledge.

The fact that Latino males do bring many assets that can be leveraged to encourage help-seeking and other self-regulated learning behaviors that lead to the accessing and exchanging of resources, as well as retention, opens the opportunity for each of these assets to be explored more in depth. Additionally, this discussion could provide the opportunity to understand in-group differences that exist amongst Latino males such as generational status, socio-economic backgrounds, or sexual orientation. In addition, this study strongly supports the taking into account of multiple versions of masculinity, such as *caballerosismo*, in

order open a wider discussion of the marginalization of these versions across multiple context.

Lastly, given the steady increase in the gender educational attainment gap, researchers should consider feminist approaches and theoretical constructs such as the ethics of care (Noddings, 1984, 2005; Gilligan, 1982) in addressing male educational success. Put simply, as society moves further into a post-feminism world, were females of all ethnicities continue to find greater success in higher education and continue to emerge in leadership roles across the public and private sectors, much can be learned from what works for women, whether in practice or research. For example, this study encourages the future exploration of the role of interdependence, a concept frequently found in feminist research, as a means for constructing Latino male identity development and self-concept. In support of the use of feminist theoretical frameworks and research approaches, a more robust effort should be made to ignite a movement in masculinity research, thereby exploring new tools, paradigms, and experiences to be explored, as well as redefining outdated hyper-masculine dogmas.

Taking into consideration all these implications, it is evident that this study's investigation into the help-seeking experiences of Latino male students is a fraction of the research needed to unpack this phenomenon completely. However, this study will contribute to a collection of knowledge on the Latino males' college experience that is taking place throughout other entities.

Furthermore, this study encourages similar studies on help-seeking experiences utilizing different methods, data sources, and environments, which will bring a deeper understanding of phenomenon and validation of research findings.

Nonetheless, this investigation undoubtedly contributes to the larger effort of addressing institutional cultures, policies, and practices that create conditions of equity and success for all students.

Limitations

Limitations, or boundaries, of the study deal with the characteristics of the design or methodology of the study that I as the researcher have established.

Furthermore, limitations identify strengths and/or weaknesses of the study that affect interpretations of results (Creswell, 2013). The first limitation is that this investigation is limited to a small number of community college students in the North Texas region. So, statewide or national broad view conclusions are not possible given the geographical boundaries of this study. Secondly, my investigation was solely focused on the experiences of Latino males at community colleges, and therefore does not take into account the experiences of Latino males attending 4-year public, private, or for-profit universities. In addition, all of the participants except one were of Mexican origin, with the one having one parent of Puerto Rican decent and the other from Mexico. Although this was not an intentional focus on my part, Latinos of Mexican origin do make up 64.6% of the Latino population in the United States, and 88% of the population in the state of

Texas (Pew Hispanic, 2013). Nevertheless, it warrants that findings may have been different if the study also included Latinos from other ethnic groups (i.e. Cuban, Honduran, El Salvadorian, Dominican, etc.). However narrowed the focus of this study, it does provide a foundation for future research.

Final Thoughts

My interest in this phenomenological study as a dissertation topic emerged after reading Saenz and Ponjuan's (2009) *The Vanishing Latino Male in Higher Education*, after which I became alarmingly aware of the national epidemic facing Latino males' attrition from K-12 and higher education. The continued marginalization and disenfranchisement of Latino males was apparent in my home town in North Texas just as it was across the nation, from the *barrios* of New York to the borderlands of the Southwest. As a graduate student and male of color, I was truly inspired as I attended what was then known as the Latino Male Symposium at the University of Texas at Austin. Being in a space with other Latino males just as concerned about this topic provided me with the courage and intellectual inspiration to research these inequities in our educational system.

However, as I immersed myself into this work, I quickly realized how much my study was not about my own educational aspirations. Instead, I became fully aware that I was gifted the opportunity and the privilege to be a co-participant with the 12 students who graciously shared their stories. At times there were tears, other times laughter, and some frustration, but nevertheless it was

authentic. Therefore, as I began my part of the journey in sharing their experiences, I did so with great admiration and respect for each of them.

Many of their stories reminded me of my own, both the joys and, in particular, the struggles. However, many of them overcame much greater barriers than I had ever faced, not only as a student, but also as sons, fathers, and husbands. These 12 are not the ones who so frequently end up as attrition numbers, although some very well could have. For some, community college was their first choice, and others their only and last. As they entered college, many hoping to be the first in their families to graduate, they were quickly impacted by the challenges of navigating their new environments. Nevertheless, although they experienced academic and social struggle at times, these 12 men have thus far persevered.

Some participants shared their experiences absent of any biological fathers, for which they found other role models, or utilized the negative attributes of their fathers as road maps of “what not to be.” However, most had great admiration for their parents’ sacrifices and hard work, and sought desperately to pay these sacrifices forward. Consequently, they bring with them to college an enormous amount of motivation, determination, as well as social, cultural, and intellectual capital. They bring with them an understanding that although this world may tell them to be themselves, they are still a reflection of so much more. Although your roots don’t define who you are, whether good or bad, they provide

you strength for who you will become. Too often, Latino males are painted under the monolithic umbrella that they are, we are, machismo. If machismo is strength, intelligence, a sense of duty towards family, a desire to master skills, self-responsibility for actions, an aspiration for social justice, and self-determination to work hard for what they earn, then I guess we are machismo, for this is what I found in my research of these men. For that reason, it's evident that there remains a tremendous need for a dialogue on masculinity, one that is embraced by researchers, educational practitioners, students, and people of all races, ethnicities, genders, and sexual orientations.

As men we are often challenged by seeking help for even things as minuscule as driving directions. Through understanding the experiences of these 12 participants, along with other males I interact with on a daily basis, I do sense a shift in this masculine tendencies that have been used for so long to define male gender roles. For as Oscar says, "You start realizing, 'Hey. It's okay to ask for help. It's okay to need advice on stuff.'" The more males realize we have the ability to be independent and still interdependent, the greater capacity our society, communities, and families will be able to achieve. Realizing it is ok to seek help seems like a minor detail amongst the many things in life you must learn, but it is one that connects us as human beings and is at the core of our nature. Oscar goes on to say the following:

And then, when you see the response, and how people care about you, and some of them don't even know you, you know, that helps out a lot. It heals you inside, from all the mistrust you've ever had, from all the not being able to speak to people in the past, or being isolated from other people. It makes you get away from that. It makes you build that trust with people.

Young men like Oscar give me hope that this shift is actually happening, as he realizes the benefits and strengths of seeking help. In comparison to his neighborhood environment where being quiet and tough was the norm, he said, "In school it's different. You speak up because you want people to know who you are. You want them to be able to describe you to other people." Therefore, as Latino males become more accustomed to seeking help, not only will they benefit from the resources acquired, but all of us will gain from having the opportunity to see them for the caballeros they are.

Appendix A

Key Terms

Key Terms

Achievement Goals Theory pertains to the reasons that students engage in achievement related behavior, as well as the standards that students use to assess their advancement towards reaching goals (Collins & Sims, 2006). In achievement goal theory, dichotomy for a student's achievement related behavior is characterized as either mastery goal orientation or performance goal orientation.

Attribution Theory is a motivational framework that is concerned with how individuals understand events and how it relates to their thinking and behavior (Weiner, 1985). It is a way to describe how students' interpretations of past failure or success outcomes can indirectly shape future achievement through affective reactions, anticipations for success, choice of task, such as seeking help, and persistence (Collins & Sims, 2006).

Cultural Competence is having an awareness of one's own cultural identity and views about difference, and the ability to learn and build on the varying cultural and community norms of students and their families. It is the ability to understand the within-group differences that make each student unique, while celebrating the between-group variations (NEA, n.d.).

Cultural Congruity is the cultural fit within the college environment (Gloria & Kurpius, 1996).

Cultural Dissonance is the experience of dissonance or conflict between one's own sense of culture and what others expect (Torres, 2003a).

Deficit Thinking Model is an endogenous theory – positioning that the student who fails in school does so because of internal deficits or deficiencies. Such alleged deficits include limited intellectual abilities, linguistic shortcomings, lack of motivation to learn, and immoral behavior (Valencia, 1997).

Executive Help-Seeking refers to those occurrence in which the student's objective is to have someone else answer a problem or achieve a goal on his or her behalf (Nelson-Le Gall, 1985), but consequently leads to the development of dependency on others to provide solutions to subsequent problems of a similar nature (Collins & Sims, 2006).

Help Avoidance has been considered a form of motivated behavior that stems from when the benefits to be gained from seeking help are outweighed by the cost of requesting help (Butler, 1998; Nadler, 1997).

Help-Seeking Experience is the phenomenon of securing the resources, privileges, and tangible support (Stanton-Salazar, 2001) necessary to navigate an environment (i.e., college).

Help-Seeking Orientation is defined as a person's proclivity to resolve personal and academic problems through the seeking of social support (i.e., coping by seeking help) (Stanton-Salazar, 2001).

Instrumental Help-Seeking refers to instrumental help-seeking as acquiring only the support essential to achieve a task independently, as to increase proficiency, competence and a stronger self-reliance in facing similar challenges moving forward (Nelson-Le Gall, 1981).

Intercultural Competence is the skills that facilitate cultural interactions (Torres, 2009).

Mastery Goal Orientation describes students' who are focused on learning and understanding, utilizing their progress and improvement as criteria for evaluating success (Collins & Sims, 2006).

Performance Goal Orientation describes students who are focused on their ability to perform in comparison to others (Collins & Sims, 2006).

Social Capital is the intentional effort of actions by actors within a network to develop norms of behavior and expectations for network affiliation (Coleman, 1988).

Self-Efficacy is the belief in one's capabilities to succeed in a specific situation, including the ability to develop and implement a course of action to carry out the steps necessary to achieve a goal (Bandura, 1977).

Self-Regulated Learning describes a process of taking control of and evaluating one's own learning and behavior (Ormrod, 2009).

Social Network Closure The closer the ties in a network, the higher the probability members would hold each other accountable for norms of behavior (Coleman, 1988)

Social Stratification can be defined as the hierarchical organization of social inequalities, with access to resources and social rewards allocated to groups differently based on their position in the hierarchy (Stanton-Salazar, 2001, pg.288)

Stereotype Threat is the situational pressure not to confirm a negative stereotype can cause people to significantly underperform (Steele, 2010).

Appendix B
Participant Recruitment Letter

Participant Recruitment Letter

Dear Future College Graduate,

My name is Serafin Garcia and I serve as the Director of Campus Strategic Planning & Effectiveness at the North Texas College (NTC) – Downtown Campus. I am also a doctoral student in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies (ELPS) in the College of Education at the University Texas at Arlington. My experiences working with students at NTC has motivated me to work on a dissertation study that examines the help seeking experiences (*e.g. seeking help from your academic advisor*) of Latino male community college students.

In order to gather a deeper understanding of these experiences, I will be collecting data utilizing the following methods: 1) a demographic information form, 2) face-to-face interviews, 3) follow up interviews 4) documents and artifacts 5) analytical and reflective memos (i.e. notes written before, during and after the collection and analyses of data) and, 6) observation field notes. The core of the data collection will include the participation of Latino male students in a 60 to 90 minute face-to-face interview. A 30 to 60 minute face-to-face or over the phone follow-up interview may also be required to obtain additional information based on the initial conversation. The interviews will occur at a location that is most convenient for the student. Also, the interviews will be audio-recorded to ensure I capture responses accurately.

Students are asked to **voluntarily** bring an unofficial transcript to the first interview. Additionally, during the interview I may be prompted to ask the student to **voluntarily** bring other documents and artifacts such as class work, flyers, brochures, and degree plans from support service offices or programs (*e.g. Student Life Center, Career Services, Transfer Center, Men of Color Mentoring Program, Academic Advising*) leveraged during their help-seeking experiences, as they are valuable in composing a rich and holistic description of their experience. All items such as unofficial transcripts and class work that may contain identifiable information (*e.g. name, college ID number, social security number*) are requested to have such information thoroughly marked out to the point that such information is **illegible**.

If you decide to participate, you will receive a \$10 gift card to their campus bookstore at the end of the study. Participation in this research study is voluntary.

Students have the right to decline participation in any or all study procedures or quit at any time at no consequences and still receive the \$10 gift card.

Your participation in this study will be confidential and a pseudonym name (*i.e. fake name*) will be used to protect your anonymity. In addition, your participation is voluntary. Refusal to participate or discontinuing your participation at any time will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

If you are interested in participating in this research study, please contact me by phone at (817) 797-6959 or via email at serafin.garcia@mavs.uta.edu.

Thanks for your time and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Serafin San Juan Garcia, M.B.A
Doctoral Candidate
The University of Texas at Arlington

Appendix C

Recruitment Email to NTC Colleagues

Recruitment Email to NTC Colleagues

Greetings NTC Colleague,

My name is Serafin Garcia and I serve as the Director of Campus Strategic Planning & Effectiveness at North Texas College (NTC)– Downtown Campus. I am also a doctoral student in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies (ELPS) in the College of Education at the University Texas at Arlington. My experiences working with students at NTC has motivated me to work on a dissertation study, which examines the help seeking experiences (e.g. seeking help from your academic advisor) of Latino male community college students.

In order to gather a deeper understanding of these experiences, I will be collecting data utilizing the following methods: 1) demographic information form, 2) face-to-face interviews, 3) follow up interviews 4) documents and artifacts and 5) analytical and reflective memos (i.e. notes written before, during and after the collection and analyses of data), and 6) observation field notes. The core of the data collection will include conducting face-to-face interviews with Latino male students at NTC. A 30 to 60 minute face-to-face or over the phone follow-up interview may also be required to obtain additional information based on our initial conversation. The initial interviews may last between 60 to 90 minutes and occur at a location that is most convenient for the student. Students will be asked to voluntarily bring an unofficial transcript to the first interview. Additionally, during the interview I may be prompted to ask the student to **voluntarily** bring other documents and artifacts such as class work, flyers, brochures, and degree plans from support service offices or programs (e.g. *Student Life Center, Career Services, Transfer Center, Men of Color Mentoring Program, Academic Advising*) leveraged during their help-seeking experiences, as they are valuable in composing a rich and holistic description of the phenomenon. Items such as transcripts and class work that may contain identifiable information are requested to have such information thoroughly marked out to the point that such information is **illegible**.

I will recruit at least 10 Latino male NTC students and no more than 14 total from the Downtown and Red Oak campuses. Therefore, I'm hoping you can assist me in identifying potential participants for my study. Participants will need to be currently or recently enrolled at either campus, with recently enrolled meaning having taken classes in the previous long semester (Spring 2014).

Participants will receive a \$10 gift card to their campus bookstore at the end of the study. Participation in this research study is voluntary. Students have the right to decline participation in any or all study procedures or quit at any time at no consequences and still receive the \$10 gift card.

If you know of a good candidate for this study, please share with them the attached recruitment letter and/or have them contact me directly at (817) 797-6959 or via email at serafin.garcia@mavs.uta.edu.

Thanks for your time and assistance with my study.

Sincerely,

Serafin San Juan Garcia, M.B.A
Doctoral Candidate
The University of Texas at Arlington

Appendix D

Email Response to Willing Participants

Email Response to Willing Participants

Dear (Insert Student Name),

First, thank you for your willingness to participate in my research study. Your time and interest in sharing your experiences is greatly valued and appreciated.

It is my intention to have all participant interviews completed before the end of Winter Break. Therefore, I would like to schedule an interview with you at your earliest convenience. Again, the interview will require approximately 60-90 minutes and take place at a time and location that is convenient for you. However, a place without too much noise or distractions is ideal for the interview experience and audio recording.

In addition, I'm asking that you complete the attached Demographic Information Sheet and return it to me at least one day prior to our scheduled interview. Furthermore, on a voluntary basis, please bring with you to the interview an unofficial transcript with all identifiable information marked out. Additionally, please voluntarily bring with you to the interview documents or artifacts, such as classwork, campus event and student organization flyers, and any other items that reflect the services you have utilized for academic or social support while at NTC.

Please provide me a few dates and times in which you are available and I will work my schedule around them.

If you have any questions, comments and/or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at (817) 797-6959 or via email at serafin.garcia@mavs.uta.edu.

Again, thank you for your participation.

Kindest regards,

Serafin San Juan Garcia, M.B.A
Doctoral Candidate
The University of Texas at Arlington

Appendix E

Email Response to Extra Participants

Email Response to Extra Participants

Dear (Insert Student Name),

First, thank you for your willingness to participate in my research study. Your time and interests in sharing your experiences with me is greatly valued and appreciated. However, at this time I have reached the maximum number of participants for my study.

With that said, I hope to see you around campus and if the opportunity arises, I would enjoy the chance to get to learn more about your college and career aspirations. If I could ever be of assistance to you at NTC (INSERT CAMPUS), please don't hesitate to contact me.

Kindest regards,

Serafin San Juan Garcia, M.B.A
Doctoral Candidate
The University of Texas at Arlington

Appendix F
Informed Consent Document

Informed Consent Document

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

Serafin San Juan Garcia
College of Education
Department of Educational Leadership & Policy Studies
serafin.garcia@mavs.uta.edu
(817) 797-6959

FACULTY ADVISOR

Dr. Ifeoma Amah
College of Education
Department of Educational Leadership & Policy Studies
iamah@uta.edu
(817) 272-0991

TITLE OF PROJECT

Understanding the Latino Male Community College Student's Help-Seeking Experiences

INTRODUCTION

You are being asked to participate in a research study about Latino males' help seeking experiences (e.g. meeting with academic advisor) at North Texas College. Your participation is voluntary. Refusal to participate or discontinuing your participation at any time will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled at North Texas College and the University of Texas at Arlington. Please do not hesitate asking questions if there is anything you do not understand.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to examine the help-seeking experiences (e.g. meeting with academic advisor) of Latino male community college students as they navigate North Texas College.

DURATION

You will be asked to participate in a one-on-one interview that will last approximately 60 to 90 minutes. Shortly following the interview, you will be contacted via phone and/or email in order to clarify and review for accuracy the notes from the interview. Additionally, if deemed necessary, you will be

contacted via phone or in person in order to respond to a few follow up questions that provide further description of the experiences.

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

The number of anticipated participants in this research study is 16.

PROCEDURES

Prior to the interview you are asked to complete a demographic information form, which provides a snapshot of your personal, familial and educational background. The demographic information form will include items such as age, years in college, the degrees or certificates you are seeking, your intent to transfer, ethnicity, place of birth, employment status, marital status, number of children, parents educational attainment and ethnicity. No identifiable information will be requested on this form. However, instead a pseudonym name (i.e. fake name) and participant number will be assigned to you as a point of reference for the data obtained from you throughout the research process.

Furthermore, you are asked to **voluntarily** bring an unofficial transcript to the first interview. Additionally, during the interview I may be promoted to ask you to **voluntarily** bring other documents and artifacts such as class work, flyers, brochures, and degree plans from support service offices or programs (e.g. Student Life Center, Career Services, Transfer Center, Men of Color Mentoring Program, Academic Advising) leveraged during your help-seeking experiences. All items such as unofficial transcripts and class work that may contain identifiable information (e.g. name, college ID, social security number) are requested to have the information thoroughly marked out to the point that such information is **illegible**.

Next, you will participate in a 60-90 minute face-to-face interview where you will be asked about experiences seeking the help you need to succeed in college. This interview will include questions pertaining your motivation and willingness to seek help, your experiences handling success and failure in college, stereotypes of Latino males as it relates to their impact on seeking support, and your sentiments towards what it takes to succeed in college. You may also be requested to participate in a 30-60 minute face-to-face or over the phone follow-up interview at another date if additional descriptions or clarity is needed about your experiences. The interview will be audio recorded. After the interview, the recordings will be transcribed, which means they will be typed exactly as they were recorded, word-for-word, by the researcher and/or professional transcriber. Shortly following the interview, you will be contacted via email in order to clarify and review for accuracy the notes from the interview. The recordings will be kept

with the transcription for potential future research involving the understanding of the Latino males' college experiences. The recordings and transcripts will not be used for any future research purposes not described here.

POSSIBLE BENEFITS

Societu will benefit from having a better understanding of Latino males' community college experiences. With the exponential increase in the U.S. Hispanic population, along with the gender achievement gap amongst Latino and Latina college students, there is both social and economic imperative to understand Latino males' experiences navigating college. This study could potentially uncover a deeper understanding of this experience and allow for meaningful changes in student development and classroom practices, policies, and institutional environments. Therefore, it is the intention of this study to contribute to the collection of knowledge on the Latino males' experiences as to encourage and support the development of practices that focus on the recruitment and retention of Latino male students. Furthermore, the study seeks to inform the development of policies that target men of color and promote institutional and systematic change that brings equity to the forefront of institutional planning.

POSSIBLE RISKS/DISCOMFORTS

You have the right to quit any study procedures at any time at no consequence and may do so by informing the researcher. There are no perceived risks or discomforts for participating in this research study. Should you experience any discomforts, please inform the researcher you have the right to quit any study procedures at any time at no consequence.

COMPENSATION

You will be compensated for your participation in this study with a \$10 gift card to your college bookstore.

ALTERNATIVE PROCEDURES

There are no alternative procedures offered for this study. However, you can elect not to participate in the study or quit at any time at no consequences.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Participation in this research study is voluntary. You have the right to decline participation in any or all study procedures or quit at any time at no consequences. Should you choose not to complete all study procedures, you will still receive the \$10 gift card noted above.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Every attempt will be made to see that your study results are kept confidential. A copy of this signed consent form and all data collected, including transcriptions/tapes, from this study will be stored in the Department of Educational Leadership & Policy Studies (Trimble Hall 103J) for at least three (3) years after the end of this research. The results of this study may be published and/or presented at meetings without naming you as a participant. Additional research studies could evolve from the information you have provided, but your information will not be linked to you in anyway; it will be anonymous. Although your rights and privacy will be maintained, the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, the UTA Institutional Review Board (IRB), and personnel particular to this research have access to the study records. Your records will be kept completely confidential according to current legal requirements. They will not be revealed unless required by law, or as noted above. The IRB at UTA has reviewed and approved this study and the information within this consent form. If in the unlikely event it becomes necessary for the Institutional Review Board to review records, the University of Texas at Arlington will protect the confidentiality of those records to the extent permitted by law.

CONTACT FOR QUESTIONS

Questions about this research study may be directed to Serafin Garcia (serafin.garcia@mavs.uta.edu) or Dr. Ifeoma Amah (iamah@uta.edu). Any questions you may have about the rights as a research participant or a researcher-related injury may be directed to the Office of Research Administration; Regulatory Services at 817-272-2105 or regulatoryservices@uta.edu.

As a representative of this study, I have explained the purpose, the procedures, the benefits, and the risks that are involved in this research study:

Signature and printed name of the principal investigator or person obtaining consent & Date

CONSENT

By signing below, I _____ (Print name) confirm that I am 18 years of age or older and have read or had this document read to me. I have been informed about this study's purpose, procedures, possible benefits and risks, and I have received a copy of this form. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions before I sign, and I have been told that I can ask other questions at any time.

I voluntarily agree to participate in this study. By signing this form, I am not waiving any of my legal rights. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled. I may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits, to which I am otherwise entitled.

SIGNATURE OF VOLUNTEER
DATE

Appendix G

Participant Demographic Information Form

Do you have children? Yes No
If yes, how many? _____

FAMILIAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Where were your parents born?

Father: _____ Mother:

Father's ethnicity:

- Chicano/Mexican-American Latino Native American
 - Caucasian/Anglo/White

 - Black/African American Asian American/ Pacific Islander Other
- _____

Mother's ethnicity:

- Chicano/Mexican-American Latino Native American
 - Caucasian/Anglo/White

 - Black/African American Asian American/ Pacific Islander Other
- _____

What was your family's social economic status growing up?

- Low income Working Class Middle Income
- Upper Class

Are you the first person in your family to attend college? Yes No

If no, which members of your family have attended college?

Father's highest level of education attained: (Check one)

- Some Elementary Elementary graduate Some Middle School/
Junior High School Middle School/ Junior High School Graduate
- Some High School

- High school diploma/GED Some College Associate's Degree
 Bachelor's Degree Graduate/Professional Degree Unknown

Mother's highest level of education attained: (Circle one)

- Some Elementary Elementary graduate Some Middle School/
 Junior High School Middle School/ Junior High School Graduate
 Some High School
 High school diploma/GED Some College Associate's Degree
 Bachelor's Degree Graduate/Professional Degree Unknown

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION

What colleges have you attended?

Which college campus do you currently attend?

Do you currently attend college part-time or full-time?

Year in college: (Circle one) 1st 2nd 3rd
 4th 5th
 Other _____

What degree, certificate, and/or area of specialization are you seeking?

Do you plan to transfer to a 4-year college? Yes No
 Unsure.

IF YES, what university(ies) do you plan to transfer to?

IF NO, what do you plan to do after you graduate?

How are you paying for college? (check all that apply)

- Financial aid
- Grants
- Work Study
- Scholarship (academic, athletic, etc.)
- Loans
- On campus Job
- Off campus Job
- Familial Support
- Military benefits
- Other

Are you involved in any programs and/or activities on campus? YES NO

If yes, please list them:

What are your future aspirations?

Appendix H
Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol

Pseudonyms:

Date:

Time Interview Started:

Location:

Time Interview Finished:

Reminders

- Prior to interview have the participant complete the consent and demographic information forms.
- Research Question
 - 1) How do Latino male community college students experience help-seeking?
 - 2) What encourages and hinders their help-seeking?
 - 3) How do their help-seeking experiences shape their retention and persistence in college?

Read the Following

Thank you for consenting to this one-on-one interview. I will audio record our session and take notes to accurately capture your responses. If at any time, you would like me to stop recording, please ask and I will do so. I will be following an interview protocol, but I may also ask you to clarify or elaborate. Also, I do ask that I might have an opportunity to follow up with you later to clarify my notes or verify their accuracy.

I am interested in learning about your college experiences. The purpose of my study is to explore how Latino male college students navigate their community college experiences and seek help when needed. Do you have any questions before we start?

Introductory Question

- 1) Tell me about yourself and what brought you to NTC (e.g. familial, personal, educational background)?

- 2) Questions based on information received from the Demographic Information Sheet, which will be returned to me at least one day prior to the scheduled interview.
- 3) How has your experience been at NTC been so far?
 - a. What do the documents and artifacts you brought today to share tell me about your experience?
 - b. What experiences have had the biggest impact on you academically, personally and/or socially?

Interview Questions

- 1) What personally motivates you to succeed in college?
 - a) What motivates you to achieve academically in college?
 - b) How your motivation played a role in your academic achievement (e.g. increased ability, confidence, or direct actions taken in overcoming challenges or obstacles that may impede academic success)?
- 2) How would you describe your experience seeking help or support during college?
 - a) In seeking help, what was your goal(s) and/or expected outcome(s)?
 - b) Outside of college, would you consider seeking help a normal behavior for you? If so, why? If not, why not?
- 3) How have your previous experiencing seeking help shaped/ influenced your willingness and/or ability to seek help now?
 - a) Have you always felt able to seek the support you needed in college? If so, why? If not, why not?
 - b) Have there ever been barriers to your pursuits of help and/or support in college? If so, can you tell me about the barriers? If not, why do you think there have not been any barriers for you?
- 4) How have you handled experiences with success vs. failure during your college experience?
 - a) What do you see as the source or cause of these successes? Can you share an example of these successes with me?
 - b) What do you see as the source or cause of these failures? Can you share an example(s) of these failures with me?
- 5) What do you think are some stereotypes about Latino males in college?
 - a) How have these stereotypes shaped/ influenced your college experiences?

- 6) What control do you think you have on your overall college success?
 - a) What control do you think you have on your success in the classroom specifically?
 - b) What else and/or who else have an influence on your success in college?
 - i) How do these other influences shape your ability to succeed in college?

- 7) How would you describe characteristics and/or skills it takes to succeed in college?
 - a) Do you believe you have what it takes to succeed in college? If so, Why? If not, why not?
 - b) Do you need others to help you succeed in college? If so, Why? If not, why not?

- 8) What about a question about suggestion and/or recommendations about how to improve the experiences and outcomes of Latino male community college students? Opportunities to seek help on campus?

- 9) Do you have any additional comments/thoughts that we may have not discussed in this interview?

Closing Remarks

Thank you for willingness to participate in this interview. Again, I do ask that I might have an opportunity to follow up with you later to clarify my notes and/or verify their accuracy of the interview transcripts.

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Biographical Information

Serafin Garcia was born and raised in Fort Worth, Texas. After graduating from Crowley High School, he attended Texas A&M University in College Station, Texas. During his undergraduate career he worked for the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) as an employee and intern through the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities' (HACU) National Internship Program. Upon receiving a bachelor's degree in Geography, he studied abroad in Nicaragua. After his undergraduate experience, he served domestically as an AmeriCorps member with Habitat for Humanity (HFH), which also afforded him the opportunity to build homes for HFH in Costa Rica. Prior to starting his career in higher education he worked for the USDA and National Archives and Records Administration. In 2007, he began his career in higher education at Tarrant County College. After receiving a Master's degree in Business Administration from Columbia College, he was promoted to coordinating community outreach, service learning, and fostering community partnerships for one of the college's five campuses. More recently, he has moved into a new role directing his campus' strategic planning and institutional effectiveness efforts. Garcia entered the Ph.D. program for Educational Leadership & Policy Studies at the University of Texas at Arlington in 2011. His research interests focus on the experiences of communities of color, with an emphasis on the intersectionality of gender and ethnicity in the community college setting.