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The Influence of Identity on Academic Performance for Latinx Students

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This thesis, written under the direction of the candidate's thesis advisor and approved by the program chair, has been presented to and accepted by the Department of Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Education.

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The Influence of Identity on Academic Performance for Latinx Students

by

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Abstract

The Latinx population within the United States of America is growing and their academic gap is expanding which impacts the school system. Although various support systems in public schools assist Latinx students' academic performance, many of them continue to underperform in comparison to other non-Latinx students. The literature also revealed that identity has a significant impact on academic performance. There is a direct relationship between Latinx students' perceptions and values influencing their academic performance. By analyzing a focused range of Latinx student perspectives, this study examines whether and to what magnitude Latinx student's identity is influences their academic performance. This phenomenological study was informed by a constructivist worldview and followed a qualitative design by asking open-ended interview questions of 3 Latinx males who did not complete high school and two experienced teachers from Northern California Findings suggest Latinx students developed the identity of being "the other" that has led them to believe that school is not meant for them, which was reinforced by the ǂ lack of transitional support for Latinx students leaving an E.S.L programs. The purpose of this work is to lead to better academic outcomes for Latinx student and in order to improve the academic performance of Latinx students, school systems must cultivate and create better communities and systems of support within their district.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In our educational systems, the academic gap for Latinx students is widening and the population of Latinx students in the educational system is increasing. Latinx students are less likely than their non-Latinx peers to complete high school (Burkham, 2017). The high school graduation rate for white students is 75%, only an estimated 53.2% of Latinx students and Latinx students are less likely than their non-Latinx peers to complete high school (Kohler & Lazarin, 2007). The Latinx school-age population, ages 5 to 17, will increase by 166%, from 11 million in 2006 to 28 million in 2050 (Fry & Gonzales, 2008). The larger the Latinx population grows within the United States of America, the larger the Latinx student population becomes within schools and U.S. Schools' academic success will reflect more of the Latinx gap.

As a father of Latinx children, I am concerned for the future of my children. Earning a diploma and post-secondary degrees can provide them with better living conditions. However, the academic gap for Latinx students weighs heavy on my mind. I am concerned about the conditions that are attributing the current academic gap for Latinx students and how it may apply to my own children.

Statement of Purpose

The educational field seeks to ensure all students achieve and leave the K-12 system with the skills and competencies needed to enter the workforce and higher education. Unfortunately, with a growing population of Latinx and the pre-existing academic gap the goal for the educational field continues to become more difficult, as well as, the possible negative impact on the workforce grows (Kohler & Lazarin, 2007).

The purpose of the research was to discover whether and to what magnitude Latinx student's identity influences their academic performance. The areas of focus were on the perception and values Latinx students had while attending high school. This research sought to understand the existing beliefs Latinx students had about themselves in relation to their own

learning. From the findings of this research, the identity of Latinx students have a significant influence over their academic success. Their perception about themselves being "the other" and the low value they associate with schoolwork led to their academic failures.

There is an overwhelming body of research to understand the academic gap of Latinx students (Fry & Gonzales, 2008). A review of the literature revealed the history of the Latinx academic gap and the environmental factors that exist to attribute to the gap, as well as, the analysis of the cultural value system of Latinx around self-identity. The theoretical framework of "othering" provided a basis to understand how Latinxs perceive themselves. When applied to education, the theory of "othering" provides insight into Latinx identity and how it negatively influences their academic performance.

Overview of the Research Design

Informed by a constructivist worldview, this phenomenological study employed a qualitative design (Creswell, 2018) in asking open-ended interview questions of 3 Latinx males who did not complete high school and two experienced teachers from Northern California. The interviews with the adult Latinx males occurred in cafes located near them and the interviews with the veteran school teachers occurred in their own classroom located in Santa Rosa, California. All participants are associates of the researcher.

The research questions explored how Latinx students' existing beliefs about themselves affect their own learning; what Latinx students value; and what strategies or techniques were used to improve Latinx students' academic performance?

The transcribed data of the interviews were read and analyzed to identify common phrases and assign codes to describe the essence and meaning of the responses of the participants. Coding is a way of indexing or categorizing the text in order to establish a framework of thematic ideas about it (Gibbs, 2007). Through the process of concept mapping,

the researcher categorized the codes of the participant's responses into themes to reveal the relationship and pattern between the codes.

By participating in this research, the adult Latinx were given the opportunity to reflect on beliefs about themselves or other entities within their environment. Bringing those beliefs to the surface will provide them with self-acknowledgement that will help them personally. The veteran teachers were provided an opportune chance to think critically about their students' needs and how to encourage learning in their classroom.

Positionality

The researcher is a white professional educator and a father to young Latinx children. The concerns of the widening academic gap for Latinx students weigh heavily on his mind. The result of this biased perspective could impact the process of coding.

Significance of the Study

After concluding this study, the sense of being "the other" had a significant impact on the Latinx participants. Their belief that school was not meant for them created a separation between them and school. Their values holding precedent over completing their schoolwork only exacerbated their disconnection from their school. The lack of transitional programs from an E.S.L. program and the difficulty Latinx students had when they were not being assisted by an E.S.L. program continued their belief that school was not meant for them.

The sense of being "the other" created separation between Latinx students from school. The belief that school was not meant for them provided Latinx students with the justification for not completing school. For the educational system to lessen the academic gap for Latinx students, they must change the perception of school. In addition, schools need to reach out to their surrounding communities to solicit more involvement and communication between families and the educational system to encourage a sense of belonging.

Research Implications

The findings of this study suggest that Latinx students are academically impacted negatively from the sense of being "the other." The theory of "othering" studied how groups were negatively impacted in society whereas, this thesis looks at how "othering" is taken on as an identity which negatively impacts academic progress with Latinx students. Through the creation of programs to have Latinx families to be involved in their child's school activities and formation of transitional programs to assist students after graduating out of an E.S.L. program would provide the opportunity for schools to make connections with Latinx students and reinforce the belief that school is for all students.

Through the process of involving community businesses, organizations, and families in the school environment the belief being the other would be lessened within Latinx students creating an opportunity for academic success. With the lessening of the academic gap for Latinx male students, the inequality that exists in the school system would be lessened for Latinx students. With an opportunity for academic success, a higher percentage of Latinx students will graduate high school allowing them to move onward to higher education and better-paying jobs. With the growing population of Latinx and the lessening of the academic gap, the U.S. school system and our society workforce will be positively impacted.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This literature review seeks to understand the growing academic gap of Latinx students in comparison to non-Latinx students within the United States of America. This is important for the field of education to help Latinx students achieve academic success on an individual level, as well as, for the United States of America as a whole due to the growing population of Latinxs nationally.

There is an overwhelming body of research to understand the academic gap of Latinx students (Fry & Gonzales, 2008). This review will examine the history of the Latinx academic gap and the possible environmental factors that may exist to attribute to the gap, as well as to understand the possible reasons with an analysis of a cultural value system around self-identity. In addition, the effectiveness of strategies to increase academic performance among Latinx students to lessen the gap will be assessed.

Defining Latinx

The term Latinx is utilized to define a population within this research. Latinx is a gender-neutral term used to refer to people of Latin American culture in the United States (Salinas & Lozano, 2017). The neologism of Latinx aims to transcend the gender differences of Latino and Latina through the intersectionality of a suffix endowed with x (Herlihy-Mera, 2018).

Growing Latinx Population and the Academic Gap

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, by 2050, one in every three U.S. residents will be Latinx (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008). The Latinx school-age population, ages 5 to 17, will increase by 166%, from 11 million in 2006 to 28 million in 2050 (Fry & Gonzales, 2008). The larger the Latinx population grows within the United States of America, the larger the Latinx student population becomes within schools and thus U.S. Schools' academic success will reflect more of the Latinx gap (Fry & Gonzales, 2008). The educational field seeks to ensure all students achieve and leave the K-12 system with the skills and competencies needed to enter

the workforce and higher education (Kohler & Lazarin, 2007). In addition, the socioeconomic situation of Latinx families within the United States of America attributes to the deficiencies in academic progress for Latinx students (Reyes & Jason, 1993). The median yearly income for Latinx families is US$37,766 versus US$56,470 for White, non-Latinx households (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008). The correlation between the academic gap for Latinx students can be seen in the income gap between Latinx families and White families (Kohler & Lazarin, 2007). With a growing population of Latinx, the pre-existing academic gap, and socioeconomic factors, the goal of the educational field continues to become more difficult, as well as, the possible growing negative impact on the workforce within our society (Kohler & Lazarin, 2007).

Historical background of the Hispanic academic gap. Latinx students are less likely than their non-Latinx peers to complete high school (Burkham, 2017). The dropout problem is significant and widespread, it is the most serious among urban minorities. Racial and or ethnic minority members are much more likely to drop out of school than white students (Rumberger, 1987). The high school graduation rate for Latinx students is 53.2% in comparison to the 75% for white students, as well as, Latinx students are less likely than their white peers to complete high school (Kohler & Lazarin, 2007).

Another factor that should be considered in the Latinx academic gap is the enrollment and graduation from postsecondary education institutions. Latinx students are underrepresented in enrolment in postsecondary education institutions and there is low enrollment in Junior Colleges and 4-year Universities are attributed to multiple factors (Burkham, 2017). Academic obstacles are not among the primary reasons for relatively low Latinx student enrollment (Burkham, 2017). The underrepresentation of Latinxs can mostly be explained by the high cost of university education for lower-income families, especially those from high-poverty neighborhoods (Burkham, 2017). Latinxs currently lag behind other groups in terms of bachelor's degree attainment with no significant changes in higher education that could alter graduation rates for this minority group (Fry, 2004; Llagas & Snyder, 2003).

The cost of postsecondary education for Latinx students is a discouraging factor that leads them to not go to a University or have them drop-out from a University (Burkham, 2017). When the cost of postsecondary education is increasing at a faster rate than inflation and real wages remaining stagnant for most workers, working-class families of Latinx are finding it hard to finance their children's education (Burkham, 2017). Latinx families are likely to experience these economic challenges at a higher rate than the majority White population because they, as a group, have lower-incomes, and are therefore more likely to live in higher-poverty neighborhoods.

Latinx socioeconomic factors. The students' home has an impact on the students' academic performance (Reyes & Jason, 1993). According to Reyes and Jason (1993), better-educated parents positively influence their children's educational motivations, in turn leading youngsters to pursue higher educational levels. Students with parents with a post-secondary degree were more than twice the rate to earn a postsecondary degree in comparison to students with parents with no degrees (Reyes & Jason, 1993). In addition, studies have found that children from single-parent homes leave school at twice the rate of students living with both parents (Neill, 1979). According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 40% of the Latinx population within the United State of America were a single parent household whereas non-latinx white population had 24% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008). The absence of a parent in the household can result in inadequate parental supervision, increased family demands, or both (Fine, 1986). Without this needed support, children from single-parent homes are less likely to obtain the encouragement to stay in school (Delgado-Gatan, 1988; Howell & Frese, 1982; Masters, 1969). In contrast, better-educated parents may spend more time with their children around educational activities, thus potentially affecting children's ability and educational level interest (Reyes & Jason, 1993).

Identity

   The study of identity in the context of education is important. One's identity has a major influence on how they perceive others, their self-esteem, self-confidence, aspirations, motivation, and effort expended in various aspects of their life (Smith, 2016). When schools do not account for the identities of their students, there are negative consequences which attribute to lower academic performance (Smith, 2016). The values of students, the perceptions about themselves, and group-based perceptions that present within our society all contribute to the student's identity.

   The value of earning a diploma. Academic success is often credited to the completion of secondary school through the process of attending and graduating high school and earning a diploma. The value of earning a high school diploma has no significance with some Latinx students (Fry, 2004). Parents have significant sway over their children's perceptions and what they value (Reyes & Jason, 1993). Parents of Latinx students who have not attained a high educational level or who have dropped out of school may have an apathetic attitude about education and graduation is not a necessity for their children (Reyes & Jason, 1993). In addition, research has shown that some Latinx students have the belief that a high school diploma will not affect their economic situation (Berndt, 1990). This in turn often results in a higher value toward learning trade skills in construction, auto-mechanics, and other skilled labor (Reyes & Jason, 1993). Research through interviews and surveys shows that some Latinx students believe that postsecondary education is unattainable and to strive to obtain a postsecondary degree will be fruitless (Berndt, 1990).

   Self-perception has an influence on academic performance. The perception of oneself has a significant influence on one's academic performance (Duncan, Strycker, & Chaumenton, 2015). Research on the construct of Social-Normative Expectations Bell, White, Hatchimonji, et. al. (2017) stated, "Student perceptions of school-wide norms about achievement expectations for their peers and themselves, have an influence on their academic

performance" (380). It is important to understand that identity and social-norms can encourage and discourage student participation and academic success. For instance, the identity of students who play sports in school can lead to feeling positive about oneself which will lead to academic success. Research on Latinx student participation in school sports has displayed a positive correlation to self-perceptions and academic performance (Duncan, Strycker, & Chaumenton, 2015). Furthermore, research has shown that when Latinx students are enrolled in secondary school college preparatory classes and have the involvement of their parents in their college preparatory class, there is a higher rate of graduation and postsecondary enrollment (Abi-Nader, 1990). However these programs are not broadly available for enrollment or inclusive (Duncan, Strycker & Chaumenton, 2015).

The process of Othering impedes Belonging. There is a positive correlation to students' perception of belonging at school with successful academic performance (Duncan, Strycker, & Chaumenton, 2015). Students that feel that they belong at their high school achieve higher grades than students that do not feel that they belong (Bell, White, Hatchimonji, et. al., 2017). Within the United States of America, Latinx individuals are discriminated against due to their ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and skin tone creating a sense of separation from mainstream society (Mendoza-Denton & Perez, 2018). "Othering" is a term that encompasses the many expressions of prejudice on the basis of group identities (Powell & Menendian, 2018). The categorical distinctions created through the process of "othering" provides a clarifying frame that reveals a set of common processes and conditions that propagate group-based inequality (Powell & Menendian, 2018). While "Othering" processes marginalized people on the basis of perceived group differences, "Belonging" confers the privileges of membership in a community, including the care and concern of other members (Powell & Menendian, 2018).

Strategies and Interventions

Widely accepted definitions of academic success are neither adequate nor meaningful for many ethnic minority students (Reyes & Jason, 1993). Having courses geared towards Latinx interests and culture which incorporates lessons from other subjects has shown to be successful (Smith, 2016). Trade skill classes such as auto shop, woodshop, and home education may encourage more class participation from Latinx students (Reyes & Jason, 1993). These classes encourage more participation due to their perception of having direct use outside the high school.

Cultural relevance. A study at Oklahoma University on the Miss Hispanic Pageant displayed increased participation and better academic results when the course was geared towards the interests of the Latinx female students. The Miss Hispanic Pageant was created by a group of faculty in the Business Administration Department at Oklahoma University to encourage Latinx enrollment into their program (Smith, 2016). The faculty of Business Administration created the Miss Hispanic Pageant based on the popularity among Latinx seen at County Fairs and other events within Oklahoma (Smith, 2016). The Miss Hispanic Pageant is a semester-long course incorporating aspects of business administration and accounting through the guise of being a pageant (Smith, 2016). The Miss Hispanic Pageant fulfilled requirements for the Business Administration degree and the pageant participants were more successful in graduating from Oklahoma University in comparison to the non-participants (Smith, 2016).

Parent participation. There is also a positive correlation between parent participation with their child's academic pursuits and higher academic performance (Hernandez, 1995). The Latinx Mother-Daughter Program of Texas provided insight on how parent's participation influenced their child's academic success (Hernandez, 1995). More involvement from the parent resulted in increased academic success for their child. Hernandez (1995) stated, "Academic achievement overall has proved mostly stable, and marked improvement has been observed in

individual instances. Teachers and school counselors have reported more parental involvement on the part of program mothers and greater confidence and success on the part of daughters, including a selection of college preparatory curriculum and advanced coursework."

Researchers found the more educated the parents are, the more time they spend with their children around educational activities, affecting children's ability and educational interests (Beck and Muia, 1980). The impact of parent participation appears to be significant in their children's academic success and even more so according to their educational level. Parents with a postsecondary degree were three times more likely to enroll their child in extracurricular activities (Berndt, 1990). Research on Latinx student participation in extracurricular activities have shown a positive correlation to self-perceptions and academic performance (Duncan, Strycker, & Chaumenton, 2015).

Parent participation is difficult to achieve for Latinx families. Parents of Latinx families have active schedules, limited transportation, limited English language skills, and or they are intimidated by the process to participate (Abi-Nader, 1990). However, it is important for schools to include parents with their child's education. According to Abi-Nader (1990), the establishment of support groups for Latinx families within school facilities and locations outside the school for both students and parents, have shown more parental involvement, provide a network for the students and parents to get assistance, and have produced higher academic results. Support groups eliminate the difficult factors for Latinx families and increase academic performance for Latinx students (Abi-Nader, 1990).

Connection between student and teacher. The relationship the teacher develops with their students can have a significant impact on the students' academic success, and positive reinforcement may lead to positive outcomes (Beck and Muia, 1980). When students felt that their teacher really wanted them to succeed and they had positive encouragement from their teacher, students strived to do better (Berndt, 1990). In addition, when teachers display honest concerns for their students and assign work for learning with little punitive repercussions it

conveys to their students their desire for them to learn (Steinber & et al., 1982). The strategy of developing relationships of positive encouragement and honest communication between teachers and students appear to have higher success in Latinx student graduation in comparison to the United States of America average (Berndt, 1990).

  After school programs. The academic assistance of after school programs provided for Latinx students has shown to increase in academic performance in normal school curriculum (Fry & Gonzales, 2008). When a Latinx student is enrolled in an after school program their homework completion rate and classroom participation both increase (Fry & Gonzales, 2008). The additional assistance Latinx students receive in an after school program provides them with the much needed help and time to complete assigned school work (Abi-Nader, 1990). After school programs can provide to Latinx students a place to do their school work along with assistance from a trained individual (Fry & Gonzales, 2008). In addition to the assistance of school work, after school programs can provide opportunities for school and families to connect. The authors of *Engaging Young Adolescents in Social Action Through Photovoice* used the method of Photovoice in an afterschool program to engage youth in social change as they take photos capturing strengths and issues in their environment and used it as the basis of critical dialogue and collective action plans (Dasho, Martin, Minkler, & et al., 2007).

Conclusion

  In recent years as dropout rates climb and the problems in our nation's schools continue to worsen, researchers have been exploring the phenomena with greater attention, noting the correlations between various at risk and marginalized populations (Reyes & Jason, 1993). Studies have analyzed the data around poor academic performance and dropout rates of Latinx students linking the deficiencies to socioeconomic factors and identity (Smith, 2016). Although schools and teachers have little to no control over the socioeconomic factors affecting Latinx families there are strategies to improve academic performance (Advani, Archibeque, & Buser,

2015). Programs to provide assistance and encouragement for parent participation have shown to improve the performance of Latinx students that are from a low socioeconomic status (Abi-Nader, 1990). After school programs have shown to provide needed assistance and a location to complete school work for Latinx students that may not have the resources or assistance at home (Fry & Gonzales, 2008). The values of students, the perceptions about themselves, and group-based perceptions that present within our society all contribute to the student's identity. When schools do not account for the identities of their students, there are negative consequences which attribute to lower academic performance (Smith, 2016). Burkham (2017) argued that despite the amount of research that has been done, "More needs to be done, both in terms of research and outreach, to understand and address the obstacles that Latinx students face on their educational journeys."

      Purpose of research. The purpose of this research is to explore and examine the experiences and perceptions of academically unsuccessful Latinx students and veteran high school teachers to identify major themes and patterns to develop strategies and interventions. This research seeks to learn what tools and approaches positively impact Hispanic male students' identity to encourage academic performance for academic achievement.

Chapter 3: Methods

The purpose of this study was to examine and identify characteristics that are associated with the individual identity of Latinx students and how they negatively influence their academic performance. Identity is shaped by perception. It is how one wants to be perceived by others and how they are being perceived. Specifically, this study sought to understand Latinx students' perceptions about themselves and the reasons for them not finishing high school. In addition, the perspective of veteran practicing high school teachers were gathered to understand the characteristics of Latinx students from the perspective of an educator. The perceptions from Latinx adults that were not successful in earning a high school diploma compared to educators' perspectives of this population can provide a cross-examination of the identity of Latinx students and how identity influences Latinx students' academic performance.

Research Questions

This study focused on responses from interview questions from adult Hispanic males that were not successful in earning their high school diploma and veteran high school teachers. The interview format was implemented to create a close and personal environment for comfort and ease for the participants. The interview session questions were formed and based on the following central research questions:

1. What are Latinx students' existing beliefs about themselves in relation to their own learning? How does their identity influence their learning?

2. What do Latinx students value and how does it influence their learning? Do Latinx students value something other than traditional education?

3. What strategies or techniques were used to improve Latinx students' academic performance? How effective were those strategies and how were they implemented?

Research Approach

This phenomenological study of identity of Latinx students, was informed by a constructivist worldview and followed a qualitative design by asking participants open-ended questions (Creswell, 2018). The qualitative design and phenomenological approach allowed the research participants to explore and describe their own lived experiences providing opportunity to reflect and critically think about their actions from the past. The role of the researcher in this worldview is to listen carefully to the respondent's views and interpret the findings based on their background and context of life experiences (Creswell, 2018).

The rationale for a constructivist worldview in this research is to identify trends and patterns through the interpretation of perception of identity of Hispanic male students and its influence on academic performance and academic identity. This approach provides insight through the process of asking the essential question of why.

Research Design

The design of this research was to gather qualitative data from interview sessions with Latinx adults and veteran high school teachers. Open-ended questions were presented to the participants to reflect on their past experiences and critical thinking about Latinx identity.

Sites and entry to the field. Three adult Latinx males who were not successful in earning their high school diploma and two veteran high school teachers were invited to participate in this study. All of the invited participants in this study agreed to participate and to preserve anonymity, all names in the thesis are pseudonyms. The three adult Latinx males attended different high schools in Sacramento, California and Santa Rosa, California at different periods of time and all of them were not successful in earning their diploma. The veteran high school teachers are social science teachers from a high school in Santa Rosa, California. All the participants in this study have pre-existing relationships with the researcher. The interview

sessions were conducted individually with the research at the location of the participant's choice.

Participants and sampling procedures. The participants in this study are of varying ages; however, they are all adults with an age above eighteen years old. The sample used for this study consists of three Latinx males who were unsuccessful in earning a high school diploma, one high school teacher that is a Caucasian female, and one high school teacher that is a Caucasian male. This study relied significantly on qualitative data gathered from interview questions and the sample size was desirable due to the amount of time required to conduct the interview, analyze the data gathered, and the time frame in which the study and research had to be completed.

All participants were introduced to the study and information about the research via email and provided further detail verbally over the phone. An email was sent out to the three Latinx males that consist of a consent form for participation, rationale for the purpose of the study, procedures of the study, and the rights that the participants have before, during, and after the study.

Methods. The interview session the participants experienced was an in-person interview with the researcher which consisted of open-ended questions (see Appendix C and Appendix D for interview questions). The interview sessions took no more than 45 minutes to complete for each participant. The topic of the interview questions focused on the identity of Hispanic males and how it may influence their academic performance

All interview sessions were recorded on Mr. Jordan Lewis' (the researcher's) phone or computer, both of which are password protected. In addition, the researcher took notes during the interview session. Written information did not include any names or identifying information (e.g., addresses, phone numbers, and personal references).

Data analysis. The transcribed data of the interviews were read and analyzed to identify common phrases and assign preliminary codes to describe the essence and meaning of the responses of the participants. Coding is a way of indexing or categorizing the text in order to establish a framework of thematic ideas about it (Gibbs, 2007). Through the process of concept mapping, the researcher categorized the preliminary codes of the participant's responses into themes to reveal the relationship and pattern between the preliminary codes.

As the final step of the data analysis, the researcher narrowed and focused the preliminary codes into the final codes to clarify findings. The mapping concept process of categorizing the preliminary codes to final codes provided a pathway for the researcher to understand the similarities and differences displayed in the responses between the veteran high school teachers and the Latinx adults.

Validity and reliability. As an educator it was in my best interest to obtain accurate information during the study to create strategies to develop success for all students. To conduct myself in an unbiased way may not be possible due to my position as an educator and an individual who wants to create success. Two strategies were used by the researcher to enhance the validity of the findings. The strategy of member checking (Creswell, 201) was used to confirm information and interpretation was accurate from the participant and the strategy of peer debriefing (Creswell, 202), the process of having a colleague in the educational field involved, was used to confirm and expand interpretation of the information gathered. The two strategies provided validity and reliability of the data gathered and interpretation of the information.

Research Positionality

The researcher is a father of Latinx children. He has many personal connections to individuals who are Latinx. Although the researcher is not Latinx, he identifies the growing need to better understand the academic environment in relation to Hispanics for their success in school and life. This gives the researcher a significant bias towards helping Hispanic students to

succeed academically which could lead to potential consequences during the process of coding. Interpretation of the student experiences and beliefs may be inferred differently from intended communicated information by the students, and thus misinterpretation of the results of the research. The researcher's awareness of this positionality was factored in the approach during data collection and analysis to limit or control personal bias.

Chapter 4: Findings

This study sought to discover whether and to what magnitude Latinx student's identity influences their academic performance. The areas of focus were on the perception and values Latinx students had while attending high school. This study sought to learn from Latinx students who were not successful in graduating from high school, and from veteran high school teachers. After concluding this study and assessing the interview responses, the findings display patterns of perceptions and values that are not conducive to a learning environment and are detrimental to their academic achievement, and which consequently affect their long-term educational trajectory. The perception the Latinx former student interview participants had of themselves and the academic environment around them by their own claims created an inability to perform well in school. The values beholden by Latinx students furnish obstacles that limit the progress in their academic studies.

Through the use of open-ended coding and focused coding on the interview responses, three overarching themes emerged. The first theme was the sense of "the other." Latinx students identify themselves as being different from other students and that they did not perceive themselves to be a part of the student community within the school. Latinx students believe that school was separate and was not intended for them. The second theme is the value of "family" and how it holds precedence over schoolwork. Latinx students have to choose often between supporting their family (which takes on a variety of meanings) and doing schoolwork. Finally, the third theme that emerged through the analysis was that there is a lack of transitional programs for E.S.L. students. This often created difficulty for Latinx students to become academically successful once they graduate out of an E.S.L. program.

The Identity of Being "The Other"

Based on the finding Latinx male participants expressed beliefs that high school is not meant or designed for them. For instance Jose stated, "School was not for me, it wasn't meant

for me." This sense of being disconnected from their school created the perception of having an identity of being "the other." The Latinx participants frequently used phrases such as "school was for other kids, "school wasn't for me," and "I wasn't good at school." They had a perception of themselves as different from other students in their school and they expressed that their school and its curriculum were not designed for them. As Carlos stated, "I didn't try in school. I didn't understand some of the stuff that they were teaching us and I didn't want to understand. I will rather be doing something else because it was boring." The frequency of "wanting to do something else" was prevalent in many of the Latinx participants' responses, as well as the expressed understanding that they were not connected to their school's curriculum. The lack of connection was also expressed by veteran high school teachers. As Mr. Smith stated, "I have seen many in my years of teaching Latino students that will come into my class shut off from making a connection. They seemed to be already checked out and they were going through the motions because they had to." The sense of being "the other" for Latinx students has negative impacts on their academic performance.

In all of the interviews with the Latinx participants, they expressed that they did not belong at their school. A belief that school was designed for other students and not for them was commonly repeated. For example, "School is for white kids. There is not much future for me in school. I am Mexican." Gangs provide the opportunity of being a part of something, as well as, offering a sense of belonging for Latinx students. In all of the responses from the Latinx students, they expressed at one point in their life they were in a gang and the reason for being in a gang was for the sense of belonging. For instance Juan stated, "Being a part of a gang made me feel like I belonged. Going to school meant that I could see my brothers in the gang." There are many benefits of being a part of something, however, being a part of something can create distance from other things. Veteran school teachers express concern for gang activity among Latinx students due to cultural isolation. Gangs can create an environment in which the participants socialize only amongst each other creating cultural isolation and reinforcing the

sense of not belonging at school. Mrs. Perry stated, "What I have seen, students that socialize and collect in a more diverse group or have friends that are more diverse appear to do better in school."

There are many difficulties Latinx students go through in the United States of America. The dominant culture's tone in the United States of America is negative towards Latinx individuals and this tone is championed through political rhetoric from President Trump. When Donald Trump launched his campaign to run for the office of President in 2015, in his speech he labelled Latinx individuals to rapists, murderers, and drug dealers (Staff, Washington Post). The publicized ICE raids have a negative impact on how LatinX students' beliefs about themselves and the environment around them. As stated by Mrs. Perry, "I have heard that some students fear that their family may get deported and this unknowing of violence directed at them being Hispanic has an impact on them making them feel not a part of our society." LatinX participants used phrases such as, "the President hates Mexicans" and "it's tough to be a Mexican in the U.S." to articulate the sentiment that they consider themselves to be "the other." As one LatinX participant states, "I feel hatred from Trump. The wall built on the Mexican border and not on the Canadian border." The dominant cultural tone is set from the top up and at the moment President Trump perpetuates this tone of separation for LatinX individuals through his statements. However, this negative tone began before President Trump took office. A history of systemic racism against Latinx individuals has created a sense of being "the other" for generations (Powell & menendian, 2018). In 1994 Proposition 187 was put onto the ballots in California which was an attempt to limit the growing political strength of the Latinx communities through the purview of citizenship (California Proposition 187, Illegal Aliens Ineligible for Public Benefits, 1994). Given the history of racism, it has impacted how Latinx families interacted with schools and government facilities only continuing this belief of being "the other." As Mrs. Perry stated, "I could imagine that this open hostility to Hispanics may prevent parents that may be here illegally to be involved with their children's school. If they fear being deported, they may not

want to expose themself to government facilities." The sense of being "the other" has hindered Latinx individuals from participating in society and to celebrate their culture amongst other cultures. Stated by Jose, "I definitely feel being Mexican is different from being Irish. I mean, if you are Irish you are still white and it is ok for you to be proud of your culture. You can have your flag up and you would not be viewed as being not American." Overall, the sense of being "the other" has created obstacles within school limiting academic success for Latinx students.

The Value of "Family" as Taking Precedence over Schoolwork

Latinx students have to choose often between supporting their family or doing schoolwork. The importance of taking care of family members holds precedence with Latinx students even if it interferes with schoolwork. As Jose stated, "when I got home I couldn't do my homework and I couldn't study. I had to watch my brothers and sisters and make dinner many times. My parents worked long shifts and often got home late." The choice between supporting the family versus schoolwork creates many obstacles for Latinx students whose family is in need of an extra source of income for the household and or a babysitter. As Carlos states, "I got a part-time job while I was in school to help out. I mean my family could use the extra money and I would like to have some extra money to spend. It could have had an impact on my school work." Juan had to take on the role of a parent for his siblings as he states, "My parents both worked and I had to take care of both my siblings when I got home from school. I didn't have much time to do homework." Latinx students hold the value of family as a priority due to their belief that family will provide them with their own survival. For example, "My family has my back and I have theirs too. I mean I would do anything for them. I give them anything." In the United States, the overall Latinx household incomes are comparatively less than other ethnic groups' household incomes (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008). The need for an extra source of income or a free babysitter is prevalent in Latinx households creating the opportunity for them to choose to help with the family or do their schoolwork.

For Latinx students, the value of earning an income from manual labor work is viewed to be greater than receiving an education and earning a diploma and or degree (Fry, 2004). Rooted in beliefs from family, working a manual labor job is valuable as it provides a steady source of income for the family. As Carlos stated, "My dad told me that I should become a mechanic. There will always be a need for a mechanic." It was repeated multiple times by the Latinx participants that a high school diploma is not needed to be employed in a manual labor job. As Juan stated, "There was no reason for completing school. I mean, I could get a construction job and get paid the same if I did or did not have a high school diploma." The effort that was required to earn a high school diploma was more difficult and not rewarding than the effort of working a manual labor job and receiving an income. As Carlos said, "School was too hard. I wanted to work and make money." For many Latinx students, the possible financial income increase from earning a high school diploma and or a higher education is irrelevant. Latinx students do not view that they will have an increase in their income from a high school diploma and any further education past high school is not seen to be a realistic future. Mr. Smith stated, "I could imagine that some students may not see the value of a High School diploma when it may not be needed for construction or auto mechanic jobs. Those jobs pay a decent wage and a degree from a college or university may be viewed as unattainable."

For many Latinx students, gang participation was as important to family participation. Asserted by the majority of the Latinx participants, being a part of a gang was like "a home away from home" and "an extended family." The value of the gang for Latinx students was more important than school. As Jose expressed, "I wasn't at school for school. I was there to be for my brothers. They were my family." Being a part of a gang requires many Latinx students to participate in activities that disrupt and interfere with school participation. "Man, the amount of trouble I got into when I was at school. The majority of it was from being in a gang and getting respect. I got suspended and eventually expelled," as Jose stated. It was vital to the Latinx

participants to be involved even at the cost of failing school. As Jose stated, "Looking back now, it looks silly but being in that gang was like my life when I was in school."

A Need for Transitional Support

Transitional support in primary and secondary schools is needed for academic success for Latinx students. Latinx students often come from Spanish speaking households and are placed in E.S.L. programs throughout their time at primary and secondary schools. During their time in elementary and junior high school Latinx students that are enrolled in an E.S.L. program miss out on essential learning skills that would be needed later in high school. As Mr. Smith states, "What I have witnessed, many E.S.L. students are taken out of classes and or lessons that do not pertain to S.T.E.M. to go to their E.S.L. class. These classes and or lessons that they are removed from cover tools and skills that will be needed for their future academic success. So, when many of these previous E.S.L. students come to high school, they often do not have the skills or tools to succeed." A support program that teaches academic skills and tools to E.S.L. students are needed to increase the academic success of Latinx students transitioning from primary to secondary school.

Latinx students are provided with assistance in high school and are tested regularly and often students "test out" or "graduate out" of an E.S.L. program before their high school stint is over. The two veteran high school teachers emphasize a need for a transitional program for Latinx students that leave the E.S.L. program while they are in high school. As Mrs. Perry states, "When E.S.L. students graduate out of their E.S.L. program they have nothing to assist them in their education. There is no transitional program to help ease these students into normal course work without any assistance. I have noticed that E.S.L. students with assistance do better in my class than students that graduate out of the E.S.L. program." Transitional support is needed for Latinx students to normal unassisted coursework. Many statements from Latinx participants emphasize a need for a transitional program with phrases such as, "no more help

for us" and "it was a lot harder" when they left the E.S.L. program. As Juan responded, "Yeah, I was an E.S.L. student when I was a freshman but I got out my junior year. It kind of sucked because I didn't have people helping and school felt a lot harder." Transitional support is needed for Latinx students that "graduate out" of an E.S.L. program.

Conclusion

The data collected have clear and repetitive patterns of Latinx students having the perception of themselves being different creating a sense of being "the other." This sense of being "the other" creates obstacles that ultimately hinder Latinx students from performing well in school. Latinx perception of the high school curriculum being created, developed, and implemented for students that do not appear nor act like them is their perception of being "the other." The belief of being "the other" creates a belief of being excluded which supplies Laintx students with a reason to participate in the educational system.

The value of family holds precedent over the value of schoolwork. Latinx students place a greater significance on the family over the importance of completing schoolwork and or earning a high school diploma. For the Latinx student, the family is the support structure in which furnishes them with a way to live and flourish within our society. Family supplies Latinx students with a sense of belonging and acceptance in contrast to their school. The preservation of their family and the wellbeing of their family members take priority often creating a situation where Latinx students have to choose from the two. Getting a job to help with bills, babysitting younger family members, and other activities to help their family create obstacles for Latinx hindering their opportunity to complete their schoolwork. It is often not the family interfering with the academic progress for the Latinx student, rather, it is the indirect cause of supporting the family with struggling economic issues which is more prevalent with Latinx families.

The lack of transitional support in schools for E.S.L. Latinx students create situations where schoolwork becomes difficult and confusing. E.S.L. programs provide much-needed

assistance to learn English for many Latinx students but often it takes away lessons during the time in primary school that teach academic skills and tools that are needed in high school. A transitional program is needed when they "graduate out" of an E.S.L. program. This creates a dilemma for many Latinx students when they are required to perform at the same level without the support they normally receive from the E.S.L. programs. The decision to push forward with hard schoolwork with no support is often not the choice of many Latinx students.

Chapter 5: Discussion

The findings of this study display clear and repetitive patterns of Latinx students having the perception of themselves being different and creating a sense of being "the other." This sense of being "the other" creates obstacles that ultimately hinder Latinx students from performing well in school. In addition, Latinx students often, based on the findings of these preliminary interviews, place a greater significance in investing time and effort on the family over the importance of completing schoolwork and or earning a high school diploma. Getting a job to help with bills, babysitting younger family members, and other activities to help their family create obstacles for Latinx toward completing their schoolwork. Furthermore, the lack of transitional support in schools for E.S.L. Latinx students create situations where schoolwork becomes difficult and confusing. A transitional program is needed when students "graduate out" of an E.S.L. program.

In the discussion, similarities will be expressed between the findings of this study and the theoretical framework presented in the literature review. The theory of "othering" from Menendian and Powell provides the basis for the identity of the Latinx participants (Menendian, S & Powell, J. A., 2019). Many of the Latinx participants in this study believed that they were separated from the school they attended. This belief follows the theory of "othering" by applying the concept of group-based exclusion on Latinx students (Menendian, S & Powell, J. A., 2019). Even though compulsory laws for attendance force Latinx students to go to school they still exhibit the belief that they were excluded from school in the form that it was not designed and implemented for them. The value of earning a highschool diploma or a G.E.D. has no significance with some Latinx students (Reyes & Jason,1993). In this study, Latinx participants iterated the same theory by using phrases to undermine the value of the highschool diploma. For example Jose stated, "I can't do anything with a high school diploma. It's not needed for the work I do." It was stated multiple times that a high school diploma had no value for them and that they did not need it for the work that they are going to do. This perspective placed a greater

value in learning trade skills for their foreseeable future of employment in a blue-collar position such as in construction, auto-mechanics, and other skilled labor (Reyes & Jason, 1993). As provided in the findings many Latinx participants placed the precedence of family over school and providing for one's family often leads them to jobs with a foreseeable future. In addition, the absence of a parent in the household can result in inadequate parental supervision, increased family demands, or both (Fine, 1986). This was similar to the value of family taking precedence over schoolwork. Latinx students' participants in this study had to become the babysitter for their siblings often making it difficult for them to complete school work resulting in a lower academic performance.

Implications for the Literature

The data analyzed in this study displayed consistencies with the theories covered in the literature review, however, differences were discovered. Menendian and Powell's theory of the "othering" focused on group identities, whereas, in this study, it examines the theory of "othering" and its impact on academic success for Latinx high school students. The "othering" or as stated in this thesis, the sense of being "the other," created a divide between Latinx students and the school they attended, making them disinterested in participating in school work and activities. The literature on the theory of "othering" highlighted the nature of group-based exclusions (Menendian, S & Powell, J. A., 2019). Starting the research, I assumed that schools were not complicit in these group-based exclusions. From the E.S.L. programs, school rallies, and other activities and events to encourage school spirit and unity, I naturally assumed that the theory of "othering" was not present in the relationship between Latinx students and their high schools. From the findings, contrary evidence shows Latinx students felt like "the other" while attending their high school. This thesis adds to the literature about the "othering" and the academic gap of Latinx students by combining the two.

In addition, the need for transitional programs after Latinx students graduate out of an E.S.L. program was not present in the available academic literature. This study discovered Latinx male students felt school work was extremely difficult without the assistance they received while they were in an E.S.L. program. In the literature review, an assortment of programs was presented to help and assist Latinx students with academic performance. Programs like the Oklahoma University's Miss Hispanic Pageant (Smith, 2016) and the Hispanic Mother-Daughter program (Hernandez, 1995). These programs consist of work done by Latinx students outside of school and never addresses the need for assistance after graduating out of an E.S.L. program.

Given the findings from the study conducted in this project, this thesis argues that the identity of Latinx students of being the "other" negatively impacts their academic performance. This thesis adds to the conversation on the academic gap for Latinx men the theory of "othering" and how it impacts Latinx students. In addition, this thesis argues the need for more research to be conducted. It is important to understand how identity influences school performance and a continuous study is needed to document the ever changing forms of identities.

Implications for Practice and Policy

In this study, the sense of "the other" was a repetitive theme. Latinx students felt disconnected from their school and the curriculum being taught to them. For teachers, this study highlights the need to create connections with their Latinx students to limit their perception of being "the other." Teacher-student interactions can be impactful on the student's perception of the classroom and school. While teachers' schedules are active and limited on time, it is important to have one-on-one conversations with poor performing Latinx students. Requesting time to discuss their performance, providing them with extra time to complete assignments, and providing them with extra time and assistance during class time will have an impact on their sense of being "the other." Having anonymous feedback from students might provide the

teacher with the opportunity to understand how he or she is connecting with their students. Providing surveys with open-ended questions asking about the curriculum will provide students with the opportunity to voice their opinions without consequences. The information gathered from these forms of anonymous feedback can assist teachers with their connections with their Latinx students.

For many Latinx students, English is their second language and they are often placed in an E.S.L. program. In some cases, Latinx students graduate out of an E.S.L. program while attending high school. Once out of an E.S.L program they are left with no assistance with their school work from trained professionals often creating a difficult hurdle for them to overcome. To alleviate this hurdle, teachers should provide an opportunity for Latinx students to come into their classroom for one-on-one assistance, as well as, provide extra time to complete assignments.

This study provides the opportunity for schools and school districts to understand how Latinx students view themselves within their educational system. The strategies schools might take to address these deficits include the incorporation of cultural appreciation events involving the community. These events might provide Latinx students with a sense of "belonging" diminishing their sense of being "the other" at their school. Aforementioned, Latinx students have many hurdles to overcome to complete schoolwork and provide time when school in session will help with missed work. Creating a period within the school schedule dedicated to students to make up work and or provide a time to study might improve the academic performance of many Latinx students.

There is a need for policy within the United States of America educational system to promote "belonging" to impede "othering" within the school system. Policy is needed to reinforce schools to reach out to their community to promote a sense of "belonging" for all students. Schools must provide to the community and their students a meaningful voice and opportunity

to participate in the design of social and cultural structures. Belonging means having the right to contribute to, and make demands on the school system (Powell & Menendian, 2018).

This study highlights three fundamental issues that are attributed to the academic failures of the Latinx participants. Social change occurs when the issues are brought to notice by the community. Social justice is provided when a community enacts policy to provide fairness. This study and its findings provide the academic community with three issues that need to be addressed to provide an equitable learning environment. In addition, this study provides an opportunity for Latinx participants to voice their feelings and opinions. To give them a forum to communicate with educators to encourage change. The need to shorten the academic gap for Latinx students is a need for all Americans. With the growing population of the Latinx ethnic group and the paralleled trajectory of Latinx students' high school dropout rate, it is imperative for our society to have educated individuals for our economy to flourish.

Limitations of the Study and Future Research

There were several limitations to the study conducted for this thesis project. First, the data collected was from a small sample group. A total of five participants were used to gather data. Out of the five participants, there were three adult Latinx who did not graduate high school and two veteran high school teachers. Expanding the sample group with more participants of adult Latinx adults and veteran high school teachers would provide more data about Latinx students which would lessen the possibility of outlying data.

Secondly, the sample group only consisted of two kinds of participants. It was designed to cross-examine the data from adult Latinx students and veteran high school teachers. Adding more kinds of participants such as adult Latinx students who graduated high school and Latinx students still in high school who are on the trajectory of graduating and who are failing high school would provide more results to compare and contrast. It is unknown if similar results

would be found across a larger array of participants, however, one might assume with different perspectives would provide different results.

Third, the sample group was limited to a certain geographic location of Santa Rosa, California and Sacramento, California, where ideas and perspectives are on the progressive side on the political spectrum (US Census Bureau, 2008). It is possible that the findings might have been skewed to a politically progressive outlook and findings from other locations that are not politically progressive might have different results.

Fourth, I am a father of three Latinx and I have friendships with Latinx. The close proximity to Latinx individuals might have contributed to favorable interpretations. It is possible that the process of coding themes might have been chosen to label Latinx as being victims of the system rather than victims of their own doing.

Future Research

For future research, exploring the belief Latinx students have about their school not being meant for them would be progress towards diminishing the sense of being "the other." Understanding how the belief of the "othering" was developed would provide insight to lessening the academic gap Latinx students have in the United States schools. In addition, future research should be conducted to further understand the impact of transitional programs for graduating E.S.L. students. The Latinx students and veteran high school teachers that participated in this study expressed a need for a program to continue to provide assistance with school work.

Other future research in this area might explore the impact of economics on the Latinx student's perceptions of oneself and how it relates to their performance in school. Many Latinx students attributed the lack of schoolwork completed outside of school was due to their family's need for them to get a job or a need for them to work or babysit. These are all areas of

economics that have the potential to be explored. Understanding how Latinx families' economic situation impacts Latinxs and their school performance.

Further research might also explore the consequences of co-curricular opportunities for inclusion such as sport participation providing a sense of "belonging" for Latinx in high school. The sense of "the other" and the sense of "belonging" are often attached concepts and exploring the sense of "belonging" might provide insight on the sense of "the other" for Latinx students in high school.

Conclusion

The research outlined in this study demonstrates the disruptive presence of being "the other." This thesis has explained that being "the other" for Latinx students has created a disconnect from school and lessens the value of a high school diploma. Other themes were present in this study that played a factor to hinder academic progress for Latinx students. The value of family taking precedence over school work and the need for Latinx students to assist in providing for their family impacted the academic performance. Taking care of one's family was important to all the Latinx participants even though it prevented them from completing their school work. Another hurdle for Latinx students had to overcome was the lack of a transitional program when graduating out of an E.S.L. program. They felt left behind when there was no one to help them anymore.

All the Latinx participants identified as being Latin and American. They identified that their school was not meant for them and taking care of their family by providing an extra income or helping with babysitting was more important for them. The veteran school teachers recognized the need for a transitional program for Latinx students graduating out of an E.S.L. program. The Latinx students identified as being English language learners. The identity of Latinx students influences their academic performance.

This thesis proposes the creation of a transitional program in schools to assist Latinx students that graduated out of an E.S.L. program, as well as, a community outreach office within schools to develop cultural appreciation and to create a relationship with communities surrounding the school. This thesis proposes further research to be conducted on the "othering" and its impact on Latinx students' academic performance. Further research will isolate and corroborate influential factors that lead Latinx students to believe that they are "the other" which would lessen the academic gap.

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Appendix A: IRB approval letter.

December 5, 2019

Jordan Lewis

50 Acacia Ave.

San Rafael, CA 94901

Dear Jordan,

On behalf of the Dominican University of California Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Participants, I am pleased to approve your proposal entitled *The Influence of Identity on Academic Performance for Latinx Students* (IRBPHP application ######) has been approved.

In your final report or paper please indicate that your project was approved by the IRBPHP and indicate the identification number.

I wish you well in your very interesting research effort.

Sincerely,

Randall Hall, Ph.D.

Chair, IRBPHP

Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Participants

Office of Academic Affairs ● 50 Acacia Avenue, San Rafael, California 95901-2298 ● 415-257-1310   www.dominican.edu

Appendix B: Consent for Research Participation Form

DOMINICAN UNIVERSITY of CALIFORNIA

CONSENT FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPATION

Purpose and Background

Mr. Jordan Lewis, a graduate student at Dominican University of California, is doing a study to understand how identity of Hispanic male students influence their academic performance. The information collected from this study will add to the collective data of Hispanic academic gap to assist in future improvements of instruction that may empower Hispanic male students in their learning experience. Academic success can improve when students understand their own perceptions about themselves, their environment, and their peers. The process of this study is to learn through interviews the perceptions of academically unsuccessful Hispanic male students and the perception of veteran teachers of academically unsuccessful Hispanic male students. You are being asked to participate because have you insightful knowledge and experience that may in that area of focus.

Procedures

If I agree to participate in this study, the following will happen:

1. I will participate in 45-minute sessions with Mr. Jordan Lewis.
2. These interview sessions will ask you how your thoughts, feelings and academic support systems have influence or discourage academic performance.
3. All identifying information will be kept confidential.

Risks and/or discomforts

1. Participants may become uncomfortable during the 30-minute conversation. If this happens, Mr. Jordan Lewis will listen to your concerns and remind you that participation is voluntary and breaks are offered; as well as, you may choose to withdraw yourself from participation if needed.
2. All information will be kept confidential and no identifying information will be used in the articulation of all research data including written responses and audio recordings.
3. All research data will be destroyed after one year after project completion.

Benefits

There will be no direct benefit to you in participating in this study. The anticipated benefit of this study is to better understand how a Hispanic male student's perception about oneself, school environment, and their peers may influence their academic performance.

Costs/Financial Considerations

There will be no costs to you as a result of taking part in this study.

Payment/Reimbursement

Reimbursement for your participation in this study will not occur at any time.

Questions

I understand that I can email Mr. Jordan Lewis at Jordan.Lewis@students.dominican.edu to ask further questions about the study, I may call him at (530) 301-22171. If I have any questions or comments about participation in this study, I should first talk with Mr. Jordan Lewis. If for some reason I do not wish to do this, I may contact the Dominican University of California Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Participants (IRBPHP), which is concerned with the protection of volunteers in research projects. I may reach the IRBPHP Office by calling (415) 482-3547 and leaving a voicemail message, or FAX at (415) 257-0165, or by writing to IRBPHP, Office of the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dominican University of California, 50 Acacia Avenue, San Rafael, CA 94901.

Consent

I may request a copy of this consent form, signed and dated, to keep. Participation in the interview sessions are voluntary. I am free to decline to be involved in this study, or withdraw myself at any point. My signature below indicates that I agree to allow my child/agree to participate in this study.

Signature of Participant

Date

Appendix C: Group #1 Interview Questions

1. What beliefs do you have about Hispanic male students in regards to academic performance?

2. What four words would you use to describe an academically low performing Hispanic male student in your class? Why did you choose those words to describe them?

3. What is your idea of the Hispanic male perception of school and classroom environment and its possible influence on their academic performance? Is this different from other students? If so, why do you think that may be the case?

4. What is your idea of the Hispanic male perception of their peers and its possible influence on their academic performance? Is this different from other students? If so, why do you think that may be the case?

5. What is your idea of the Hispanic male perception of themselves and its influence on their academic performance? How would the Hispanic male students' perceived self-identity may influence their academic performance? Is this different from other students? If so, why do you think that may be the case?

6. What factors do you perceive influence the Hispanic male students' performance?

7. What do Hispanic Male students value? Is this different from other students? If so, why do you think that may be the case?

8. What socio-economic conditions may negatively influence Hispanic male students in your classes?

9. What programs available for Hispanic male students to improve their academic performance?

10. What have you done to encourage Hispanic male students to improve their academic performance?

Appendix D: Group #2 Interview Questions

1. What was your perception about yourself and how did it influence your experience in high school? Why do you think you perceive those things about yourself? How did it influence your academic performance?

2. What four words would you use to describe yourself while you were a high school student? Why did you choose those words to describe yourself?

3. How do you view yourself as a learner? If there was one thing you would like to believe about yourself as a learner what would that be?

4. How was your family while you were attending high school? How were your relationships with your parents? How do you think your family influenced your beliefs about yourself?

5. How do you think your family influenced your success in high school? What were some positive and or negative factors that influenced your academic performance?

6. Did you work while you were in high school? Why did you work?

7. What did you value while you were in school and how did it influence your academic performance? What do you value now?

8. What was your reaction to getting a bad grade? What did you generally tell yourself when you got a bad grade? What things did you do to help with the possible negative feelings for receiving a bad grade?

9. Were there any programs that you were enrolled in at your high school to improve your academic performance? If so, how did those programs impact your academic performance? How did those programs make you feel?

10. What were your beliefs about your high school? Do you think those beliefs influence your academic performance?

11. What would you tell a younger student to help them succeed in graduating high school?