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Latinx Student Development At An Emerging Hispanic Serving Institution In The Midwest

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LATINX STUDENT DEVELOPMENT AT AN EMERGING HISPANIC SERVING

INSTITUTION IN THE MIDWEST

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ABSTRACT

As Latinx students continue to enroll at emerging Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI) in the Midwest, it is imperative that college administrators understand the ways students develop while living in the residence halls. Although much research has been conducted about Latinx college students, little is known about their first-year experience in residential life settings and how that experience might contribute to their development. Seven second-year participants were identified and participated in this phenomenological study. Arthur Chickering's (1969) student development theory guided the study to better understand how the seven vectors of identity contributed to student development in the following areas: competence, managing emotions, developing identity, moving from autonomy toward interdependence, interpersonal relationships, developing purpose, and developing integrity. Understanding the development of Latinx students living in the residence halls can inform student life professionals on their development and ensure that residential programs they create allow students to persist longer at their college or university. Engaging in meaningful reflection on the development of Latinx students has the potential to impact the educational outcomes of these students.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Nationally, retention and graduation rates for Latinx students lag behind other racial/ethnic groups (Lopez & Fry, 2013). According to Reason (2009), the research on college student persistence abounds, but little research on Latinx college student development exists even though they are the largest racial/ethnic group in the U.S. (Reason, 2009 as cited in Gonzales and Morrison, 2015). This lack of research has implications for improving programming by colleges and universities striving to support Latinx students as they develop and mature at their higher education institutions.

In their study, Arbona and Nora (2007) researched the impact of academic and environmental factors on Latinx student persistence and found that students who went directly to a four-year college versus a community college were more likely to earn bachelor's degrees. In addition, Arbona and Nora (2007) incorporated demographic variables in their study, but Gonzalez and Morrison (2015) questioned whether the variables such as gender, a Latinx student's native language, and parents' educational background have a strong cultural influence on students. The cultural interpretation leads to questions about whether Latinx students have the same opportunities to enter college because of possible cultural expectations of getting married or whether being able to speak Spanish and English in college is a benefit. Lopez and Fry (2013) pointed to lower retention rates for Latinx college students, but Gonzales and Morrison (2015) questioned if lower retention rates are related to students spending time assisting parents with their home chores, taking care of siblings, or other pressures reflecting cultural values.

In another study, Kiyama, Museus, and Vega (2015) found that Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs) can also create environments where Latinx students thrive, but the campus climate must be one where cultural values and home values are taken into consideration when

developing student programs. Faculty and college administrators can engage in educational activities that increased cultural awareness and responsiveness, as retaining Latinx students has become a challenge. Understanding the social and cultural aspects of Latinx student retention would greatly benefit administrators at emerging HSIs.

Statement of the Problem

As the retention and graduation rates continue to lag behind for Latinx students, knowledge is needed about how Latinx students develop when living in a residence hall (Guadalupe, 2019). Because the demographics of the student body at colleges and universities across the U.S. have changed, understanding the experiences of second-year Latinx students that live in residence halls as they inform their student development is necessary. One particular social phenomenon related to attending college and living on campus has to do with adjusting to life in a residence hall.

According to Gloria, Castellanos, and Orozco (2005) and Lopez (2005) there are factors that contribute to or hinder Latinx students' development when they enroll in college. These factors can include:

> . . . their levels of academic preparation, challenges to fulfill family obligations, challenges navigating higher education as first-generation students, financial challenges, gender role stereotyping of Latinas, stress due to new and culturally exclusive curriculum and incongruence between their cultural heritages and the culture of their campuses. (as cited in Kiyama, Museus, & Vega, 2015 pp. 29-30)

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand the lived experiences of second-year Latinx students living in residence halls at Cosecha (Harvest) College (pseudonym)

and the impact on their student development (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). The researcher sought a better understanding of how residential life contributed to the participants' personal development as they interacted with other students at the college and residence halls during their first year of college. Research by Astin (1973, 1993) and Tinto (1993) showed the benefits of participating in activities and being engaged with different programs on campus, including contributing to higher retention and graduation rates. Tinto (2006) asserted that retention and persistence can impact student development through effective institutional policies, programs, and faculty development.

Furthermore, Magdola and Astin (1993) found that students that lived on campus had greater personal growth and cognitive development throughout the span of their college years. According to Rodgers (1990), student development is "the ways that a student grows, progresses, or increases his or her developmental capabilities as a result of enrollment in an institution of higher education" (p. 27). In addition, Chickering and Reisser (1993) asserted that "development for college students, which today includes persons of virtually all ages, is a process of infinite complexity" (p. 34). Chickering's student development theory contributes a useful framework to understanding the development of Latinx students and is used in this study.

Research Question

The study of the lived experiences of Latinx students at an emerging HSI was guided by the following research question:

What can be learned from the lived experiences of second-year Latinx students living in residence halls and the impact on their student development?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study is Chickering and Reisser's (1993) student development theory. The framework is used to assess how residential life contributes to the development of Latinx-student participants' experience (as identified by Chickering's seven vectors) at an emerging HSI in the Midwest. Many student development theories inform higher education professionals' understanding of how students develop in college. Theories and models describe how students develop and become active participants in college life. There is some confusion about whether student involvement and student development are the same thing or how researchers distinguish what it means to be involved and its impact on an individual's development. Chickering (1969) based his student development theory on studies conducted at 13 small colleges across the United States. Chickering modeled his work on Erikson's (1969) identity development work which he considered foundational to understanding student development. More importantly, Chickering and Reisser (1993) realized that "since the stabilization of identity was the primary task for adolescents and young adults, it was a logical anchor point for Chickering's attempt to synthesize data about college student development into a general framework that could be used to guide educational practice" (p. 22).

For the purpose of this study Chickering's student development theory and the seven vectors guided the researcher's understanding about how Latinx participants developed in a residential setting. Chickering and Reisser's (1993) seven vectors progress from simple to complex. The authors asserted that student development is not the same process for students because some students visit and revisit the seven vectors at different rates. Chickering referred to the vectors as, "major highways for journeying toward individuation . . . and also toward communion with other individuals and groups. . ." (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 35).

According to various researchers (Auerbach, 2006; Berrios, 2011; Case & Hernandez, 2013; Gonzalez 2015), factors such as ethnic identity, familial relationships, collectivism, and immigration status had an impact on Latinx student development and persistence. Case and Hernandez (2013) found that student development was prominent as students managed their emotions and built pride in being able to succeed their first year in college because of building interpersonal relationships with other Latinx students. The importance of having Latinx students manage their emotions, move through autonomy and interdependence, understand their identity, and manage personal relationships in a positive manner are characteristics Chickering's student development theory (Chickering & Reisser, 1993) indicated are at the root of student development.

Assumptions

One of the assumptions the researcher considered was that some Latinx students who lived in the residence halls have home responsibilities. Considering the study, it was assumed that students would want to participate in the study because they wanted to persist and continue at the college. It was also assumed study participants would want to talk openly about their experiences in the residence halls. Based in the belief that study participants provide a critical dimension of data about the residence hall experience, they served as a resource for the researcher. Finally, it was assumed students had a genuine interest in the sharing their residence hall experiences.

Limitations

This study had several limitations that impacted the method, findings and conclusions. While this researcher discussed the lived experiences of second-year residential Latinx students at an emerging HSI, this study excluded the experiences of other Latinx undergraduate students.

A second limitation of the study was geographic location. Only one emerging HSI was selected for the study, which did not allow the researcher to gain knowledge of lived experiences of second-year Latinx students at other HSIs. For example, a nearby HSI experienced increased enrollment of Latinx students, but the researcher did not have access to student development information on Latinx students at that university. Another limitation in this study was the use of one-on-one interviews. This intervention may have intimidated some study participants. And, Cosecha College's small size may have hindered students' full disclosure of their lived experiences for fear that others on campus might identify them. The researcher informed the students that their identity would not be disclosed in the study and their interviews were kept confidential.

Significance of the Study

As Latinx student retention and persistence continues to lag behind other racial and ethnic groups, it is imperative that college administrators, faculty, and staff understand the student development of second-year Latinx students. Understanding the student development of Latinx students, which research has shown has a direct impact on retention and persistence, can create opportunities for increased dialogue on developing personal competence, identity development, interpersonal and social relationships, managing emotions, developing purpose, and developing integrity. Research on student Latinx students living in residence halls has the potential to create educational programs and support systems that advance student development, thereby retaining Latinx students at a higher rate.

The study filled a gap in the current knowledge on the topic of Latinx student development at emerging HSIs in the Midwest. The study contributed to the literature by describing ways HSIs in the Midwest can support student life professionals in understanding

how student development theory can impact outcomes with Latinx students. This study also provided an opportunity to learn how emerging HSIs can be more culturally responsive to the changed demographics of the new student body that has arrived on its campus. Understanding how Latinx students developed in their interpersonal and social relationships, and personal integrity, and whether or not the Spanish language and cultural traditions played a role in their lived experience in the residence halls determined how best to support Latinx students as they developed and matured as young adults.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined for the purpose of this research study.

Campus climate. The current attitudes, behaviors, and standards of faculty, staff, administrators, and students concerning the level of respect for individual needs, abilities, and potential (University of California, n.d.).

Culture. Culture is an idea created to describe a reality that people experience, the behaviors and assumptions common to a group that distinguish one group from others. Culture is learned, dynamic, adaptive, communal, and pervasive (Howell & Paris, 2011).

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). It is a United States' immigration policy that allows some individuals with unlawful presence in the United States after being brought to the country as children to receive a renewable two-year period of deferred action from deportation and become eligible for a work permit in the U.S. (Wikipedia, n.d.).

Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI). Any two- or four-year institution with a fulltime Enrollment of undergraduate students that is at least 25% Latino; also, not less than 50% of all students at the institution can be eligible for need-based federal aid ("Hispanic-Serving Institution Definitions," n.d.).

Latinx. Relating to, or marked by Latin American heritage —used as a gender-neutral alternative to Latino or Latina (Merriam Webster Dictionary, n.d.)

Persistence: Persistence refers to the act of continuing towards an educational goal (e.g., earning a bachelor's degree) (Merriam Webster, n.d.).

Predominantly White Institution (PWI). A PWI refers to predominantly white institutions, basically any institution of higher learning that were not labeled an HBCU prior to 1964. These institutions usually have student bodies made up mostly of whites, with sprinkles of different races such as African American, Hispanic, Asian, and so on (Encyclopedia of African American Education, n.d).

Residence halls. A college or university building containing living quarters for students (Vocabulary.com, n.d.)

Retention. The act of retaining, the state of being retained in higher education (Merriam Webster, n.d).

Student development. "The ways that a student grows, progresses, or increases his or her developmental capacities as a result of enrollment in an institution of higher education" (Rodgers, 1990, p. 27).

Conclusion

Understanding the experiences of second-year Latinx students who live in residence halls as they relate to their student development is necessary. Understanding the impact of residential life programming on student development is also important to ensure student life professionals provide appropriate student activities. Chapter 2 consists of a review of relevant literature on factors influencing student identity development, institutional climate, institutional best practices, and student development theory frameworks that have shown ways in which Latinx

students develop. The conceptual framework of this study, the impact of institutional climate and institutional best practices on Latinx student development will be explored. Chapter 3 outlines the methodology utilized. Chapter 4 presents the findings of the study, and Chapter 5 offers a discussion of the findings as well as conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review begins with a brief introduction to retention and graduation rates for Latinx students in the United States. Student identity development factors that impact Latinx student persistence and retention are presented. Several student development theories are discussed to inform the researcher's understanding of the development of Latinx study participants. A short description of the institutional climate of an emerging HSI is provided, and a brief discussion of institutional best practices is presented.

Nationally, retention and graduation rates for Latinx lag behind other racial/ethnic groups (Lopez & Fry, 2013). As recently as 2012, only 14.5% of Hispanic/Latinos aged 25 years or older had earned a bachelor's degree (Pew Research Center, 2009, p. 1). The low attainment of college degrees by Latinx students is of great importance given that Latinx are now the largest minority group in the United States (Flores, 2017). According to Stepler (2016), the trend for Latinx student enrollment in higher education is on the rise. Stepler (2016) noted that 2.3 million Latinx students ages 18 to 24 were enrolled in either a two- or four-year college in 2014–up from 728,000 in 1993 (p. 1). Also, the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities reported larger numbers of Latinx students enrolled in college (72%), compared to 69.7% for white students (Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, n.d.). Excelencia in Education reported that 46% of Latinx earned an associates or bachelor's degree, 19% of students were still enrolled in an institution, and 35% of students were not enrolled and had not earned a degree (Excelencia in Education, 2018, p. 1).

Factors Influencing Student Identity Development

The literature review showed that there are several factors that support student development of the Latinx college student. Factors related to persistence found in the literature

review and explored below include ethnic identity, career support groups, parent support, the

impact of immigration status, and the importance of collectivism.

Ethnic Identity

According to Gallegos & Ferdman (2007), Latinx individuals "are often engaged in

conversations in which they feel misunderstood, stereotyped, or categorized in ways that do not

reflect the full richness or complexity of their identities" (p. 27). Gallegos and Ferdman (2007)

developed the Latino Identity Model that focused on race and racial constructs. The model

focused on understanding identity as process not staged. The six categories that emerged from

the Latino Identity Model are as follows:

Latino-Integrated – Individuals understands society in terms of race and identified with

the larger Latino community.

Latino-Identified – Individuals believe race is fluid, and society is a dualistic construction

of race.

Subgroup-Identified – Individuals have strong identification with specific subgroup

within the Latino culture, belief that all other subgroups are subordinate.

Latino as other – Individuals who hold no stake in a subgroup, often caused by the

uncertainty of his or her heritage.

Undifferentiated/denial – Individuals claim a color-blind mentality, and race is not

important.

White Identified – Individuals identify as white.

In another study, this time looking at the ethnic identity development of Latinx students

at both PWIs and HSIs, Torres (2004b) "found that family influence affected Latino ethnic

identity. For example, Latina/o students with parents who were more acculturated to White

society stated that they felt comfortable in both cultures" (p. 463). Furthermore, Torres (2004b) "found that Latina/o students who grew up in Latino enclaves experienced some conflict regarding the college awareness of their parents" (p. 464). Finally, Torres (2004b) found that, "students with less acculturated parents also had conflicts regarding college awareness, but gender conflicts were more pronounced in Latino students from mixed backgrounds or Latinas/os adopted by White parents identified in multiple ways" (p. 463-464).

In their study, Case and Hernandez (2013), studied the impact of a cohort model of leadership with Latinx students across the four years at a Christian college in the Midwest that addressed ethnic identity. The authors presented examples of activities that were conducted all four years that addressed the importance of ethnic identity, service, and leadership. The authors found that equipping students to have a stronger ethnic identity helped them navigate the cultural challenges students encountered while at an emerging HSI. Furthermore, having students work with a cohort of the same ethnic background promoted a stronger sense of belonging among the students and helped bridge the cultural distance between the Latinx students and their peers from other racial/ethnic groups on campus.

Similarly, Gonzalez (2015) found that male identity played a factor in Latinx males' persistence in college. Male identity, as defined by Gonzalez' (2015) male participants, meant providing financially for their family, being responsible, strong, lacking emotion, tough, and being independent. The participants in the Gonzalez (2015) study reflected on their ethnic identity and persistence through the lens of income, being first-generation college students, and being an immigrant generation. Findings from this study revealed that "successful Latino male students' validating, and invalidating experiences contributed to their success, self-efficacy beliefs, and academic optimism" (Gonzalez, 2015, p. iv).

Family Impact on Student Development

In a study on the impact of family on Latino student persistence, Auerbach (2006) found that parents that supported their student to enroll in college used the term "apoyo" which means support. Parents were engaged with their student with moral support that encouraged them to do well in school and work hard. In a different study on student persistence and family, Schwartz, Donovan, and Guido-DiBrito (2009) stated, "for many Latino males, the concept of college is not only a personal endeavor, but a goal they must reach for their family as well" (p. 32).

In a similar study, Fann, McClafferty, and McDonough (2009) noted that Latinx parents who participated in the planning process for college with their student were an important persistence factor. As Latinx parents obtained more familiarity with the education process, parents were more available to help their students prepare for enrollment in college. Parents who have not had experience in applying for college lacked the skills to assist their student. The authors' study evaluated a parent program with a particular emphasis on experiences of Latinx parents in college enrollment processes. Four educational workshops were given to participating parents on topics such as overview of college choices, knowing the system, financial aid, and reviewing strategies parents could use to support their children's college plans. Families were able to take home a family action plan to complete. All of the workshops were conducted in the Spanish language. The authors also reported effective ways to deliver workshop content to Latinx parents and to better understand the needs and concerns of Latino parents as they prepare for sending their students to college.

Immigration Status

According to Passel (2003) "approximately 65,000 unauthorized students graduate from high school each year, many having been in this country for more than five years; of these

students, only 13,000 enroll in U.S. colleges" (as cited in Contreras, 2009, p. 611). Being

undocumented or *sin papeles* (without papers) is a challenge for Latinx students who seek to

enroll in college. In her study, Contreras (2009) noted several emergent themes that revealed a

set of experiences for undocumented students who sought to enroll in college. The key emergent

themes found by Contreras were: living in fear of possible separation from their families; the

financial limitations of paying for college without in-state tuition; campus climate that was

discriminatory; not fully understanding how to access resources; the desire to persist in the midst

of struggles; and concern about the future. All of the aforementioned experiences can reduce the

likelihood of an individual enrolling in college.

In their study, Sahay, Thatcher, Nunez, and Lightfoot (2016) described an executive

order, known as DACA, that President Barack Obama issued in 2012 that allowed certain

undocumented students to receive deferral from deportation. Sahay et al. (2016) noted that, while

undocumented students now had documented status, this did not automatically mean higher

enrollment in higher education because "lawful presence prevents deportation, however, lack of

lawful status means no access to federal financial aid" (p. 47). The struggle for educational

equity for DACA students impacted their desire to enroll in college.

According to Rhodes (2015), "Undocumented immigrants in North Carolina fear

immigration enforcement policies, mistrust people in authority, and report facing discrimination

that limits their access to essential health and social services" (as cited in Sahay, et. al 2016,

p. 48). In addition, Filindra et al. (2011) stated "Literature suggests that youth living in states

with more restrictive policies have less educational attainment even after adjusting for academic

performance, parental education, and income" (as cited in Sahay, et al., 2016, p. 48). The legal

and political climate for Latinx students who are undocumented can be an overwhelming

experience that leads them to persist alone in their academic journey. In the section below, Collectivism designates when Latinx students rely on others to address their personal or their family's immigration status to persist in college.

Collectivism

In a study by Arevalo, So, and McNaughton-Cassill (2016), the impact of collectivism and individualism on socialization and cultural values in the United States was explored. The authors' research on collectivism showed that Latinx were an ethnic group that demonstrated a close-knit relationship with their nuclear and extended families whenever possible. Furthermore, because Latinx exhibited a close-knit relationship and obtained social support from their nuclear and extended families, there was more willingness to strengthen relationships on college campuses. Arevalo et al. (2016) found that a peer-to-peer model came more naturally for Latinx students than other ethnic groups. This contributed to stronger social relationships that served as a buffer for Latinx students.

Researchers such as Watson, Sherbak, and Morris (1998) provided standard elements of individualism and collectivism, noting:

Elements of individualism include autonomy, assertiveness, and freedom of choice, self-fulfillment, and a sense of personal uniqueness. In contrast, collectivism focuses on the interdependence of members within a collective group through the functioning of social roles, duties, and obligations rather than their personalities. (as cited in Arevalo, So, & McNaughton-Cassill, 2016, p. 4)

In contrast, Soto and Deemer (2018) conducted a research study with 231 undergraduate, graduate, and professional college students at a large Midwestern university that did not necessarily show that collectivism was such an important factor in retaining Latinx college

students. Soto and Deemer (2018) "examined the moderating effect that perceptions of racial climate may have on the relationship between communal goals and academic major satisfaction for Latino students in comparison with European-American students" (p. 35). The authors of this study noted that communal goals help to maintain the family unit.

In her research, Berrios (2011) noted that career groups helped students obtain valuable help-seeking behavior skills, develop new coping skills, address common developmental issues, and provided a space for peers to talk about their career concerns. Berrios (2011) noted that career counseling groups that brought students together promoted overall wellness within group participants and at the same time improved academic performance, retention, and graduation rates of Latinx students.

Furthermore, various authors cited in the Berrios (2011) study found peer support to be a culturally relevant practice with Latinx students. The natural support systems that developed with formal college systems created an environment for a positive college experience. In a study conducted by Gonzalez (2015), 20 participants agreed that "peer influence was a strong motivation for their success" (p. 74). The participants believed the newfound relationships helped them navigate their new environment because they felt like they were part of a shared network where they received support.

Institutional Best Practices

According to Garcia and Okhidoi (2015), developing culturally relevant practices in the interdisciplinary curricula that address the social integration of Latinx students allowed students to see themselves. Such inclusion was a positive indicator of increased retention among Latinx students. This approach led to developing Chicana/o Studies courses that encouraged students to do "critical thinking, increased their sense of belonging and academic self-confidence, and

transition to college" (Garcia & Okhidoi, 2015, p. 347). More importantly, a best practice that Garcia and Okhidoi (2015) recommended was that the Chicana/o courses become part of the general education requirements.

In her study, Abood (2012) found that institutions that created financial incentives, created multicultural affairs department, and increased cultural competency of faculty and staff resulted in higher retention of Latinx students. Abood (2012) found that having top-down commitment from administrators who offered support by inviting Latino students into decision-making processes also contributed to higher retention rates. The author also noted that developing community partnerships that created opportunities for students to network with community organizations contributed to the retention of Latinx students. Similarly, Lopez (2016) reported that the more engagement institutions had with Latinx parents and family members, the better recruitment and retention of Latinx college students.

Similarly, Oseguera et al. (2009) found that "standardized assessments that categorize Latinx students into high- or low-ability groups are detrimental to academic identity development and have been shown to influence the withdrawal decisions of students enrolled in college" (p. 33). This practice has had an adverse effect on Latinx enrollment. Another example that Oseguera et al. (2009) presented as an institutional barrier to successful retention of Latinos was not having a sufficiently diverse faculty. The authors stated, "Latina/o faculty members and administrators are key players in institutional retention efforts because their presence sends a message of inclusivity" (p. 37).

Underprepared students have gaps in skills. Entering college with limited math, reading, or writing skills can impact the student's overall experience in higher education. Ensuring that institutions address this gap in skills as a best practice is needed. An example of this best

practice, Gonzales, Brammer, and Sawilosky (2015) developed a *Casa away from Casa* (Home away from Home) to help increase retention of Latinx students. Establishing a culturally relevant Center with a peer support model, where students participated in a cohort model that paired them with other students, increased retention rates. Staff at the Center created a block schedule for students which meant they spent time in classes with the same faculty learning math, reading, and writing over a more consistent and prolonged period of time. The authors believed the block schedule created a sense of community.

Institutional Climate

In her book, Minikel-Lacocque (2015), *Getting College Ready; Latin@ Student Experiences of Race, Access, and Belonging at Predominantly White Universities*, described racism and the power of words as factors that make or break the college experience for Latinx college students. Minikel-Lacocque (2015) stated, "Today, racism is expressed in covert ways; indeed overt racism is 'usually not condoned', and instances of overt racist acts in a public discourse are 'rare'" (p. 101). While Minikel-Lacocque (2015) reported on aspects of racism impacting Latinx students' sense of belonging, Lopez (2016) found that not having a campus climate conducive to accessing needed academic resources to succeed in college led to poor retention of Latinx students.

In their research, Johnson, Wasserman, Yildirim, and Yonai (2014) pointed out that the effect of stress and campus climate can have a direct impact on the student's psychological processes and outcomes while enrolled at the college of their choice. In their study on stress, the authors stated that "perceptions of racial discrimination, stereotypes, and prejudice on campus, beliefs about institutional response to racial diversity issues, and interactions between and among racial/ethnic groups are dimensions of the campus environment that comprise the campus racial

climate" (Johnson et al., 2014, p. 77). The campus racial climate environment led to decades of research which has found that "students of color perceive the campus climate more negatively than White students, and do in fact experience more racial discrimination, prejudice, and stereotypes at predominantly White institutions" (Johnson et al., 2014, p. 77).

Moreover, Kiyama et al., (2015) wrote extensively about the institutional and racial climate of PWI's. Their study identified nine characteristics of culturally engaging campus environments which are "cultural familiarity, culturally relevant knowledge, cultural community service, meaningful cross-cultural engagement, culturally validating environments, collectivist orientation models, proactive philosophies, and holistic support" (Kiyama, Museus & Vega, 2015, p. 33- 34). These characteristics can also be understood through building a culturally responsive HSI.

The culturally responsive emerging HSI takes into consideration that student development is key to ensuring Latinx student develops throughout their time at their institution. The decentralization of decision-making power, fewer people establishing the rules and procedures, more college budget planning shared between administrators and faculty, administrators and faculty working together to build a diverse campus and faculty, and students working with administrators to design culturally relevant support can allow the Latinx student to develop their identity and purpose. Kiyama et al. (2015) found that "using these indicators can help educators facilitate dialogue and construct a common vision regarding the types of environments that diversity and equity initiatives should strive to achieve in order to maximize success among diverse populations" (p. 34).

The culturally responsive emerging HSI could benefit from adding all of the nine indicators. Figure 1 presents a diagram that begins to outline a culturally responsive emerging

HSI that builds on Kiyama's et al., (2015) campus racial climate and campus climate study.

Figure 1 describes the changing climate of higher education and shows a bureaucratic university

versus a culturally responsive university. As described visually, the center portion of the figure

lists manners in which a higher education institution goes about its daily work. In some

instances, power, whether it be centralized or decentralized, must respond to decisions that are

made daily.

Bureaucratic University		Changing Climate of Higher Education *The Culturally Responsive University*		Culturally Responsive University
President and President's Council Cabinet make majority l of the decisions	Centralized	Power	Decentralized	Admin and faculty are invited to contribute to decision-making process/ empowered
Board, admin, faculty, alumni work on rules and procedures	Many	Rules and procedures	Few	Admin team works on rules and procedures Student Senate contributes
President decides Board approval No input by faculty	Narrow	Spans of control	Wide	Board supports leadership Accommodate to challenges
Budget work only in admin side	Specialized	Responsibilities	Shared	Admin/Profs do budget planning together
Admin directs work Profs lead innovation	Few	Teams and Task Forces	Many	Academics partner with admin staff on diverse campus Digital innovation
No student input on student services planning	Formal and Impersonal	Coordination	Informal and personal	Admin and students work together Design culturally relevant support

Figure 1. Culturally Responsive University. The diagram shows how power, rules and procedures, spans of control, responsibilities, teams and task forces, and coordination can be done either through a bureaucratic way or through a culturally responsive way (Perez, 2018).

As student life professionals move toward either side, they must be conscious of the

impact of their decisions for students living in the residence halls. Decisions that are made

between students and student life staff can involve many or few individuals within the

institution. Shared decisions or collectivism play an important role in the lives of Latinx students given their use of collectivism (Arevalo et al., 2016).

Student Development Theories

There are several student development theories that informed the researcher's study. A study by Strange (1994) outlined nine ways in which students develop: 1) age related development tasks, 2) how they construct and interpret their experiences, 3) the ways in which they approach and resolve challenges, 4) the way in which they resolve issues related to identity, sexual orientation, gender, culture and ethnicity, 5) reach points of being ready to engage other students, 6) respond to challenging situations on campus, 7) recognize the challenge before them and seek support, 8) recognize the complexity of their situation, and 9) development occurs as a result of their interaction with other individuals and their environment. The author found that these differences are important to understanding student development. Rodgers (1984), focused on psychosocial theories to understand student development. More specifically, Rodgers (1990b), asserted that psychosocial theories subscribed to the idea that "human development continues throughout the life span and that a basic underlying psychosocial structure guides this development" (p. 122).

Cognitive-structural theories arise from earlier work done by Piaget (1952), which focused on the way children formulate their thoughts rather than what they think. Cognitive-structural theories have sought to explore the way people develop cognitively. Cognitive-structural theorists have tended to focus more on cognitive and moral development of individuals.

While the conceptual framework is focused on student development theory, Astin's (1984) work on student involvement has influenced how student development theorists organize

their knowledge related to influences on student development. Astin (1984) stated, "a highly involved student is one who, for example, devotes considerable energy to studying, spends much time on campus, participates actively in student organizations, and interacts frequently with faculty members and other students" (as cited in Strayhorn, 2015, p. 518). According to Astin (1984) there are five basic postulates that influence student's involvement on campus:

1. Involvement refers to the investment of physical and psychological energy in various objects.

2. Regardless of its object, involvement occurs along a continuum.

3. Involvement has both quantitative and qualitative features.

4. The amount of student learning and personal development associated with any educational program is directly proportional to the quality and quantity of student involvement in that program.

5. The effectiveness of any educational policy or practice is directly related to the capacity of that policy or practice to increase student involvement (p. 519).

Researchers such as Oseguera, Locks, and Vega (2009) conducted research that focused on how student development played out in Latinx student retention. The authors asserted that no two students develop the same and not one thing makes for a student to stay or leave a college. Furthermore, Oseguera, Locks, and Vega (2009) found that institutions have established retention strategies and student-life centered programs that challenge Latinx students to develop their purpose as passionate learners of their discipline and cultural citizens of the institution with the hope they develop into successful students (Oseguera, Locks, and Vega, 2009).

Braxton, Hirschy, and Mclendon (2004) developed a retention framework to looked at social integration and its relationship to persistence. The specific factors of the retention

framework are "the commitment of the institution to students' welfare; communal potential; institutional integrity; proactive social adjustment; psychosocial engagement; and ability" (as cited in Oseguera et al., 2009, p. 28). The authors of this retention framework found that more social interaction with fellow students led to better retention rates. Additionally, the authors argued that students that lived on campus had more opportunities to interact with faculty and peers leading to greater engagement and positive social behavior with other students (p. 28).

The retention framework by Nora, Barlow, and Crisp (2006)—Student/Institution Engagement Theoretical Model—presented a "comprehensive framework used to explain how students can successfully transition past the 1st year of college and toward degree completion" (as cited in Oseguera et al., 2009, p. 31). The authors of this retention framework found that precollege factors and academic and social experiences in college contributed to higher retention rates. The authors' main point with their retention framework was high level engagement with students.

Conceptual Framework

Student development researchers have provided different models for understanding student development. Perhaps the most prominent author on student development theory is Arthur Chickering. Chickering's student development theory, initially developed in 1969 and modified in 1993, focused on identity development (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). This research led Chickering to develop the seven vectors of identity. Chickering and Reisser (1993) described the use of psychosocial theories in education as "a series of developmental tasks or stages, including qualitative changes in thinking, feeling, behaving, valuing, and relating to others and oneself" (p. 2). Chickering later developed seven vectors that symbolized the student development in young adults in college. The seven vectors of identity are:

1. Developing Competence**:** An individual develops within intellectual, physical and manual skills, and interpersonal competencies. Intellectual Competence is characterized by ability to use reasoning and critical thinking skills. Physical and Manual Competence is characterized by involvement and attention to wellness, artistic, and athletic activities. Interpersonal Competence is characterized by the ability to communicate and work well with others.

2. Managing Emotions**:** An individual becomes competent in his or her ability to recognize and manage emotions. Incorporation of all emotions and an individual's ability to reasonably manage his or her reactions to events.

3. Moving through Autonomy toward Interdependence**:** An individual develops ability to have an independent outlook on life, but understands successful relationships are based upon interdependence.

4. Developing Mature Interpersonal Relationships: An individual develops intercultural relations, appreciation for others, and tolerance for those around them.

5. Establishing Identity: An individual processes through his or her identity to emerge with a healthy self-concept in all facets of identity.

6. Developing Purpose: An individual has a strong outlook on professional life, makes meaning within his or her own interests, and establishes positive relationships with others.

7. Developing Integrity: An individual is able to articulate and emulate his or her own values affirmed as an individual through three stages: humanizing values, personalizing values, and developing congruence.

Since the stabilization of identity was the primary task for adolescents and young adults, it was a logical anchor point for Chickering's attempt to synthesize data about college student development into a general framework that could be used to guide educational practice. (p. 22).

Moreover, Chickering's (1969) student development theory was not seen as linear, rather as a movement from one vector to another symbolizing further growth and development in the college student.

Gonzales and Morrison (2015) proposed the importance of how culture impacted student development. For example, students who used the Spanish language to communicate with their friends had a positive association with their ethnic identity and better overall student experience at the college. In addition, the connection to family all throughout the student's academic experience proved to be an important factor in Latinx student development. The authors also found that, the more students were connected to their personal identity, beliefs, religion, and community networks, the more successful they were in college.

In another study, LeSure-Lester (2003) studied 111 Latinx students at a 2-year community college in Southern California and found that several behaviors led to student development in areas of competence, developing purpose, and personal beliefs such as:

active coping, planning, suppression of competing, activities, restraint coping, seeking social support for instrumental reasons, seeking social support for emotional reasons, positive reinterpretation and acceptance, turning to religion, focus on venting of emotions, denial, behavioral disengagement, mental disengagement, and alcohol–drug disengagement. (pp. 13-14)

According to Torres (2006) "Latino culture had an impact on students' intent to persist. For Latinx students, cultural affinity had the largest direct and indirect effects on other variables that influenced students' intent to persist" (Torres, 2006, p. 316, as cited in Gonzales & Morrison, 2015). In Torres' (2006) study, cultural affinity was evident when faculty made Latinx students feel at home and other Latinx students made each other feel at home; participation in cultural events contributed to higher student persistence (Torres, 2006). In a similar study, Torres and Hernandez (2009) found that students that identified a faculty advisor or mentor had stronger institutional commitment. The authors added that using "specific cultural variables such as "Family Responsibility, Encouragement, and Cultural Affinity demonstrate the importance of incorporating known Latino cultural variables when it comes to persistence research" (p. 99).

There is considerable overlap with Astin (1984) and Chickering (1969), but what is noticeably missing from these researchers is the influence of culture on student development. Authors Gonzalez & Morrison (2015), LeSure-Lester (2003), Torres (2006), and Torres and Hernandez (2009), discuss the importance of ethnic identity, family influence, cultural affinity and personal relationships and a faculty member as key to student development.

Conclusion

The literature review discussed the importance of five main themes: factors influencing ethnic identity, family impact on student development, institutional best practices, institutional climate, and several student development theories and models. The literature review showed that students entered several stages and developed their sense of identity, purpose, and relationships through completing various developmental tasks. There are opportunities to advance research on how Chickering and Reisser's (1993) seven vectors of identity influence student development of Latinx students. Understanding how Latinx students develop competence, manage their

emotions, develop mature interpersonal relationships, move from autonomy toward interdependence, develop identity, develop purpose, and develop integrity contributed to the body of literature on student development with Latinx students.

Further research on the residential lived experiences of Latinx students can build upon existing literature. Through the voice and stories of Latinx students, college administrators can gain a deeper understanding Latinx student development at an emerging HSI. This in turn can translate into increased knowledge of Latinx student development that can lead to successful completion of college. Chapter 3 addresses the methodology, research design, the role of the researcher, setting, participants and sampling procedures used, data collection, and data analysis.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methodology utilized for this phenomenological study with second-year Latinx students that lived in the residence halls at an emerging HSI in the Midwest. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand the lived experiences of second-year Latinx students living in residence halls at Cosecha College (pseudonym) and the impact of their experience on student development (Chickering & Reiss, 1993). The chapter will provide details of the participants and a brief background of the institutional setting, a brief description of the study participants, data collection and analysis, participant rights, and potential limitations of the study.

The data for this study came from semi-structured, in-depth interviews with second-year Latinx students between October 2019 and December 2019. A depiction of the questions used to conduct a qualitative analysis of the data are also included (Appendix A).

Latinx student development in higher education is an important dimension of student life that college administrators should more fully understand to appropriately serve this population. Recognition of their lived experiences and informing higher education administrators about responsive programming was the basis for this study. The study of the experiences of Latinx students living in the residence halls at an emerging HSI investigated the following research question:

What can be learned from the lived experiences of second-year Latinx students living in residence halls at Cosecha College and the impact on their student development?

The researcher proposed a qualitative phenomenological research methodology to gain insight into the nature of the lived experiences of second-year Latinx students living in the residence halls. An important component of the interview process was grounded in

understanding and exploration to establish trust with the participants (Creswell, 2002). The qualitative research methodology was also grounded in Chickering's (1969) student development theory. The research question addressed how residential life contributed to the students' personal development as they interacted with other students in their residence hall and college. According to Strauss and Corbin (1998), "qualitative methods can be used to obtain the intricate details about phenomena such as feelings, thought processes, and emotions that are difficult to extract or learn about through more conventional methods" (p. 11). Finally, a phenomenological study approach provided the researcher with an opportunity to bring to the forefront Latinx students' perceptions of their development at an emerging HSI.

Setting

Cosecha College was founded in the late 1800s in the Midwest as an institution intended to serve students from the region and other parts of the United States. As a private institution, Cosecha College assumed the identity of a liberal arts college focused on teaching and supporting students to complete their degrees.

As student enrollment grew at Cosecha College over the course of the next 50 to 70 years few Latinx students enrolled. By the 1960s and 1970s, a small number of Latinx and African American students enrolled, but not in significant numbers. By the 1990s, the demographics in the region had shifted significantly with a large influx of Latinx population from Mexico. As the region changed, so did Cosecha College. In 2006 a large grant was awarded to Cosecha College from a national philanthropic foundation.

More specifically, the grant total awarded to Cosecha College was $12.5 million dollars. Cosecha College began addressing issues of educational access of Latinx students, for example, administrators and faculty at Cosecha College launched the Center for Intercultural Teaching and

Learning. The faculty revised the general education curriculum and implemented cultural competency training and classes to improve Spanish language proficiency to better welcome Latinx student and their parents. The admissions office hired a multicultural counselor that focused on the recruitment of Latinx students. In 2006, the Latinx student population was 4%.

In 2016 the emerging HSI status was now reaching HSI status as the Latinx student population at Cosecha College was well over 21%. This new status was possible due to the high numbers of Latinx enrolled students. For example, in 2014 the incoming first-year class had a Latinx student population of 18%. In 2015 the incoming first-year class had a Latinx student population of 28%. In 2019 the incoming first-year class had a Latinx student population of 32%. The presence of Latinx students at Cosecha College was now noticeable across campus due to their physical presence on campus.

Participants/Sample

The data for this study came from individual interviews the researcher conducted with seven second-year Latinx students enrolled at Cosecha College. The researcher recruited participants who classified themselves as Latinx, were second-year undergraduates living in residence halls, and 18 years and older. Willing participants were recruited and invited to participate in the study via email through the Office of Institutional Research.

Access to study participants was obtained by contacting Cosecha's Office of Institutional Research which gave permission to conduct the study. An application for exemption was submitted to the University of New England's (UNE) IRB before beginning the study. The researcher requested that the Office of Institutional Research at Cosecha College send out an invitation to Latinx students living in one of three residence life halls to start the process of

identifying the study participants. The researcher asked the Latino Student Advisor and Residence Life staff to share the invitation to participate with Latinx residential students.

Participant Rights

All study participants were asked to read and sign the informed consent form. Study participants were informed that participation in this research study was voluntary. Study participants were informed they were free to withdraw their consent at any time during the study, including before, during, or after the interview. If study participants presented any concerns regarding the study, they were instructed to contact the researcher of the study. All interviews were recorded with participants' consent. Also, participants were instructed they could stop the interview at any time if they felt insecure or fearful of expressing their experiences. To ensure privacy, all study participants were informed that their name would not be used to identify them. All study participants were given a pseudonym for all interview documentation, transcriptions, and findings. The interview notes and documents remained entirely private as they were be kept in a locked file and within the researcher's possession and were included in any publication.

Potential Limitations of the Study

This study had several limitations. This researcher interviewed a small percentage of Latinx students at Cosecha College. It was expected that only five to eight students would participate in the study, and seven were interviewed. Due to time limitations the researcher was not able to include more Latinx students that lived in the residence halls. A second limitation to the study was that some of the Latinx students had family members that were impacted by their immigration status and may have felt stressed due to immigration related situations they were experiencing with family members, which may have affected their decision to participate in the study. According to Hope, Keels, and Durkee (2016), undocumented Latinx have higher stress

levels and anxiety when enrolling in college due to emotionally charged situations related to their family's immigration status. These emotionally charged situations may interfere with individuals' decision to participate in the study (Padilla & Borrero, 2006).

Finally, the researcher is a staff member of student life. The researcher engaged in bracketing, which describes the effort to set aside dialogue with student life colleagues about personal biases or prior knowledge about student behavior. The researcher kept a research journal to write notes about biases that arose or were being noticed by the researcher.

Data

The qualitative study was aimed at gathering extensive data from second-year Latinx students about their first-year college residential life experiences to reach a meaningful conclusion about the impact of that experience on their development. The research employed a qualitative design through in-depth interviews. A homogenous sampling approach (Creswell, 2015) was taken to understand the development of Latinx students who resided in the residence halls. Face-to-face interviews that had a duration of 75-90 minutes were conducted in a closed conference room that was not available to others during the interviews. Students had access to comfortable seating. The researcher invited study participants to answer a set of open-ended questions (Appendix A). The researcher created the interview questions based on the Chickering and Reisser (1993) seven vectors of identity that focused on student development in the residence halls. The face-to-face interview allowed the study participants to express their experiences in their own words and allowed the researcher to prepare ahead of time and reassuring during the interview. Inviting students again to consider whether they wanted to participate allowed for personal choice and adequate engagement throughout the interview. Students were given the opportunity to decline participation in the study.

The researcher recorded the interviews and began the process of transcribing the recordings through a professional transcriber. The transcribed data was manually coded for themes. After identifying the themes, the researcher analyzed the data. The rationale for conducting the interviews was to collect all the necessary information in the attempt to answer the research question and thereby assuring reliability of the data. The study participants were asked for permission to record the interview and the researcher used an Olympus audio recorder. The recorded interviews were transcribed. After the transcribing was complete, the researcher met with the study participants for member checking. The member checking allowed the participants to comment on their interview and add any new information related to their experience in the residence halls. All interviews were scheduled during the afternoon or early evening to ensure that students' class schedules were not impacted.

Analysis

All data collected through the semi-structured interviews was analyzed and manually coded. After the qualitative data was gathered, the researcher organized the data and identified important themes that emerged from the in-depth analysis of the seven vectors. A deductive approach was taken to analyze the data. The researcher checked for consistency of the themes and items were regrouped to ensure subcategories and categories were relevant. By collecting qualitative data, the researcher hoped to understand the lived experiences of second-year Latinx students living in residence halls at Cosecha College.

Conclusion

Overall, student development patterns of Latinx college students at an emerging HSI is not fully known. To understand the complexity of student development for Latinx students a phenomenological approach was conducted. Semi-structured and interviews were conducted

with study participants and measures were taken to ensure privacy. Chapter Four will describe

and provide interpretation of the results of the study.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand the lived experiences of

second-year Latinx students living in residence halls at Cosecha College and the impact on their

student development (Chickering & Reiss, 1993). This chapter begins with key findings obtained

from conducting seven in-depth interviews with study participants. The first section describes the

analysis method utilized to understand the raw data collected from the interviews. The second

section presents results of the study. The third section offers a short summary of the results.

Analysis Methods

The research question for this study was:

What can be learned from the lived experiences of second-year Latinx students living in

residence halls at Cosecha College and the impact on their student development?

The first step in the analytic process conducted by the researcher was to give careful

thought to developing conceptual categories that were linked to the study's conceptual

framework, Chickering and Reisser (1993) student development theory which also guided the

development of the interview questions. The second step to conduct after reviewing the raw data

from the interviews was coding the content in relation to the seven vectors. The seven vectors of

Chickering and Reisser (1993) student development theory are: developing competence,

managing emotions, autonomy toward interdependence, interpersonal relationships, establishing

identity, developing purpose, and developing identity. The evidence of each vector through the

data analysis is described in the results section of this chapter.

The researcher conducted in-depth interviews that consisted of 25 open-ended questions

that afforded the participants an opportunity to describe various situations in their first year of

college and in the residence halls. All seven participants returned to Cosecha College for their

second year of college. The open-ended questions permitted the participants and researcher to enter into conversation regarding their first two semesters of college. The data, which consisted of 134 pages of transcribed interviews, was reduced to a manageable database by omitting the introductory paragraphs outlining the study and repeated statements from the researcher in each of the sets of questions. This allowed the researcher to do open coding. Next, the researcher filled out the data summary table to summarize what study participants said during their interviews. The study participants were listed in the vertical axis under pseudonyms and the vectors were listed along the horizontal axis. The summary table allowed the researcher to tally how many times a word, phrase, or response occurred. The summary table also allowed the researcher to identify patterns of behavior, similarities in thought, and differences in responding to situations in the residence hall. The researcher read through the data multiple times to understand fully what study participants said and revisited the literature review to find any connections to prior research findings on student development and student involvement theory. The review of the data and results allowed the researcher to draw conclusions and recommendations which are presented in Chapter 5.

Results

This study employed a deductive approach which led to identifying seven second-year Latinx students who lived in the residence hall their first year of college at the study site. All seven study participants graduated from high school in spring 2018 and were enrolled at the study site in the fall of 2018. All study participants resided in the residence hall their first year of college. Study participants were given the opportunity to identify their race and ethnicity, age, place of birth, and whether they were a first-generation college student.

The first part of each interview served the purpose of restating the goal of the study and confirming the participant's voluntary participation. The researcher explained there were minimal risks associated with the study. The study participants were informed they could withdraw from the study at any time without any consequence, and if the participant had any questions, he or she could contact the researcher, the lead advisor, or the representative of UNE's IRB. All seven study participants chose to continue with the interview and signed the consent form. A copy of the signed consent form was mailed to study participants. The second part of the interview asked study participants to provide demographic information. See Table 1 for demographics of study participants:

Table 1: *Demographic information*

Gender	Sample		Percentage
	Female	2	20%
	Male	5	80%
Age			
	18	1	10%
	19	6	90%
Year of study			
	2nd year	7	100%
Ethnicity			
	Hispanic	5	80%
	Latino	1	10%
	Latinx	1	10%

First-generation college student		
	3	42%
Language		
English dominant	4	70%
Spanish dominant	1	10%
Bilingual dominant	2	20%

The researcher informed the study participants that he would be in contact with them to review the transcribed interview. After the interview was transcribed, the researcher met individually with the study participants to review the transcript of the interview and ask for any additional comments from the participants. Participants and the researcher discussed the content of the interview. No major corrections were offered. The participants were surprised at what they had said during the interview; some thought their responses were lengthy, and they noticed that they repeated themselves throughout the interview.

Interview Participants

Participants are introduced here based on their individual demographics using their assigned pseudonyms. A brief comment regarding the participant's fluency in Spanish is presented.

Marcos

Marcos identified himself as a first-generation college student who was an 18-year-old Latinx male. He was born in Puerto Rico and is Spanish dominant. Marcos said he is a student-athlete. Marcos described his fluency in English during first year of college by saying, "In my first year, I didn't have much command of the English language, so it was very difficult for me to

express myself with others." Marcos further described how his fluency affected his experience on the athletic team:

> It was horrible. My teammates didn't understand what I was saying, even the coach. If I didn't understand the instructions, they were giving me I would go to the back to see what I had to do because I didn't want to look ridiculous. I had a teammate who spoke a little Spanish and because of him I was able to engage with team more.

Samuel

Samuel identified himself as a first-generation college student who was a 19-year-old. Samuel was born in a small town in Indiana and stated he did not learn much Spanish from his parents. Samuel was a Mexican male and was English dominant. Samuel added:

> I can somewhat speak Spanish, I'm not fluent, but I understand my constructions or what people tell me and I can reply in Spanish sometimes. I have spoken with some people who do speak Spanish.

Fabio

Fabio identified himself as a bi-racial college student who was 19 years old and was English dominant. Fabio stated he was born in California and did not learn much Spanish from his parents. Fabio said, "I took Spanish in high school, but I was also taking Chinese and I learned Chinese a lot easier than I did Spanish."

Domingo

Domingo identified himself as a Hispanic male college student who was 19 years old and was English-dominant. Domingo was born in South Texas and has lived in the Midwest since he was a freshman in high school. Domingo said both of his parents speak Spanish, but he did not learn much Spanish. Domingo added:

Honestly, I haven't spoken too much Spanish. I have a little bit with a couple of people

in my floor just to try and connect with them because I realize that that's their primary

language and they aren't necessarily as comfortable in English. It's never been for an

extended period of time, just brief interactions that I think to myself, well, why not, just

speak in Spanish because I know they are more comfortable.

Jonas

Jonas identified himself as a Hispanic male college student who was 19 years old and

bilingual. Jonas was born in Honduras but grew up his entire childhood and adolescence in South

Florida. Jonas had this to say about his being bilingual and going to school with other Latinx

students:

Here it's a lot less common to speak Spanish and hear the type of music that is in Miami.

Back home I didn't have to make that effort to go looking for someone who spoke

Spanish or find someone who has the same music taste.

Gabriela

Gabriela identified herself as a Hispanic female first-generation college student who was

19 years old and was English dominant. Gabriela was born in New Mexico to a birth mother who

is from Guatemala. Gabriela said she was adopted at a young age and was raised by her two

mothers who are in a same-sex marriage and are Non-Hispanic White. Gabriela said, "I don't

speak Spanish and that does separate me from other Hispanic students at my school." Even

though Gabriela identified herself as a Hispanic female she had this to say about how it was like

to be raised by White parents:

I am Hispanic, but I was raised a lot like a White girl or like a typical White girl, and it

was easy for me to acclimate to other White girls in my residence hall because I was a lot

like them. Even though I didn't look like them I was brought up similar in similar ways to them.

Samantha

Samantha identified herself as a Hispanic female first-generation college student who was 19 years old and is bilingual. Samantha was born in a small town in California. At home she learned to speak both English and Spanish. Samantha had this to say about speaking Spanish at home:

> I only really speak Spanish with my grandparents or my family but I'm kind of scared to say something wrong. My friends are kind of White out here and so when we go to restaurants they make me order for them and so I think that's pretty funny.

Interview Responses

The interview consisted of 25 open-ended questions. The researcher developed questions that addressed the seven vectors developed in Chickering's student development theory (Chickering & Reiss, 1993). The seven vectors are: developing competence, managing emotions, autonomy toward dependence, interpersonal relationships, establishing identity, developing purpose, and developing integrity. The data presented relate to study participants' experiences their first year of college at an emerging HSI. Each theme listed is followed by its description. Additionally, the voices of the study participants are presented as excerpts to better illustrate the theme.

Developing Competence

The first set of questions (Questions 1-3) focused on developing individual and interpersonal competence as it related to what participants learned about themselves after having lived in the residence hall for one year. Participants were also asked to describe what they

learned about themselves when meeting new people, building relationships with new people, what was easy about building relationships, and what was most challenging in building relationships with their respective roommates and others on their residence hall floor.

According to Chickering and Reiss (1993), developing competence focuses on how well an individual develops within intellectual, physical and manual skills, and interpersonal competencies. In this vector, individuals demonstrate the ability to communicate and work well with others and use reasoning and critical thinking skills. Developing competence is characterized by involvement and attention to wellness, artistic, and athletic activities. Participants indicated they were open to meeting new people in the residence hall and found comfort in spending time in their room with new friends. Samuel had this to say about what he learned most about himself after having lived in the residence hall:

> I was happy to be away; branch myself out more than I used to be able to do. I think I am a different person. I'm still a different person and changing, like as a person being able to open up to people and be open minded.

> Domingo mentioned something similar:

> I am glad that I am with the roommate I am with. I learned that I am able to interact with multiple different people. When I'm in the room, the dorm room becomes my personal space. I do spend a lot of time there with other people, I'm open to having people come in and that's one of my go to spaces to hang out.

> Conversely, some participants realized they were more dependent on their parents than what they had originally thought when they moved into the residence hall. Jonas said this about his adjustment to life in the residence hall:

I was not as independent as I thought I was at first. The first couple of months, it took me a while to accustom myself to my life, living by myself and not knowing anyone around me. I realized I depended more on my family than I thought I did before.

Samantha said the following about her relationship with her parents: "I learned that I don't like being alone at all, and I also learned that I was definitely dependent on my parents, for sure." Marcos shared that it was extremely difficult to be in the residence hall because his English was limited.

Participants indicated that living with other people in the residence hall was not the easiest thing to do even though they knew things would be fine once they started making new friends. Participants were similarly divided on the ease of building relationships with other students. For example, Gabriela said:

At first, I was shy just knowing that I know some of them were in classes I had. Just building that connection. Just being comfortable with who they are and what background they came from and just accepting what kind of person they are. Just keeping in contact. I think knowing I have a good friend group back home and then trying to make a new one, and balance, not responsibilities, just time with the friend groups you have.

Gabriela went on to say that it was not easy to build relationships with other students because she was impatient, but at the end of the year she spoke favorably of her experience in the residence hall:

I definitely learned that you absolutely cannot be liked by every single person you encounter. And that was something I've always struggled with. Patience is a big thing. One thing I struggled with is patience because I'm kind of like, 'Let's get it done'. I have that kind of mentality. I loved living in the dorms. I always describe it to people as living

in one big mansion with all of these people. You like some of them and you don't like some of them. You are best friends with some of them. You are living in a mansion with all of your friends and all of your peers which some people would say that sucks, but I like it, and I think it's great.

Samantha stated that being an extrovert helped her make friends easily. This allowed her to build stronger relationships with new friends. Samantha said:

I learned that I am very extroverted and that I like meeting new people. I learned that spending time with all my neighbors, or however you want to call it, definitely built my relationship a lot stronger with them. Even though we are from separate places of the U.S. we could still come together, and it was super fun.

Participants reported that, as their first semester progressed, they noticed they had fewer sets of friends. Most of their activities at the beginning of the semester were with different sets of friends, but by the middle of the semester participants noted they were spending more time with a smaller group of friends. Jonas expressed the following about his experience with making friends in the residence hall:

At first, it was really easy [to meet new friends] since mainly my floor was freshman, and no one knew each other either so it was pretty easy to get to know each other. But after a while, after school started, everyone started, I don't want to say change, but once school actually started and everyone was doing their sports, their clubs now, it felt a little different. It felt as if we weren't as connected as we were before, the first week, becoming friends. We all just kind of found our own clique.

In the vector of developing competence, three participants shared it felt different living with a roommate, but they managed to adjust after a few weeks of living together. Marcos

described living with his roommate in the following manner: "I felt weird. Sharing my space with another person is something that was very difficult for me." All the participants shared that living in the residence hall was a challenge and they hadn't realized how much their parents had a big influence in their first year of college. Key words identified in the participants were: challenged, patience, connected, personal space, comfortable, and difficult.

Managing Emotions

The second set of questions (Questions 4-6) focused on managing emotions as it related to how participants managed their emotions during their first few weeks of college. Participants were also asked to reflect on their emotions after having lived in the residence halls for one semester, and then after one full year of living in the residence hall.

According to Chickering and Reiss (1993), managing emotions is directed at how an individual becomes competent in his or her ability to recognize and manage emotions. Individuals learn how to appropriately act on feelings that they are experiencing. Participants were asked to describe how they managed their emotions while living in the residence halls. For Gabriela being far away from home was difficult. Gabriela said, "I was super depressed the first three weeks because I live 1400 miles away from home."

Samuel stressed he missed his sleeping area and not having his family encourage him to do his homework was difficult. Samuel stated:

I really missed my bed, my area of sleep, my own personal sleep area. It really did kick in after the first semester being away from home and knowing what I have to do on my own as a college student, not having my mom or dad like nag me to do homework and all that. I kind of started to feel homesick because I had car issues, so it was kind of difficult to go back home and see my family.

Jonas described managing his emotions in the following manner:

Scared, sometimes lonely, but towards the end I felt more connected to my group of

friends. I felt like I had a strong bond with them, and I came to like the college a lot more

towards the end of the year.

Fabio described living in the residence hall as being relaxed, joyful, and not worried.

Fabio said the following:

I felt excitement, joy, and relaxed. I didn't really feel worried as much and that's about it.

I guess having so many different people there to help and talk knew I would make

different friends. If I ever had trouble in class or personally, I think there were multiple

people I could go talk to just down the hall or over in the other dorm.

For Domingo living in the residence hall was exciting, and as the semester progressed

living on campus started to feel like home even though he was not with his family. Domingo had

this to say about managing his emotions in the residence hall:

I was excited to see how living in that new space would be and meeting new people, but

at the same time kind of trepidation, or a little like reserved because I wasn't quite sure

how it was all going to work. I think at that point I was very comfortable. I think I was

content with where I was. I missed home but it wasn't like the dorm was more associated

with home. That's where I go back to. That's where I live even though my family wasn't

there. I just felt really comfortable.

Samantha said it felt scary to be in the residence halls. Samantha shared the following

about her first few weeks in the residence hall:

It was definitely scary. I had my door closed all the time but now that I am friends with girls that were on the floor they always tease me about the first few weeks of school when I had my door shut and didn't want anyone to come in.

Gabriela expressed a similar experience but hers was about feeling depressed and lonely. Here is what Gabriela had to say about her emotions the first few weeks of living in the residence hall:

I was super depressed the first three weeks. The distance from friends and family was really hard. A lot of the events that they had early in the year I didn't go to because I was so depressed and I just cried in my bed. I never blamed Cosecha for that. I missed my friends. There are a lot of White people at Cosecha which is fine. I was raised by White people. I was adopted so I'm used to it, but I was like, there are no brown people. Everything felt different, just felt so different and it made me feel really lonely. I am 1400 miles away from home. The distance from friends and family was really hard. I was like, there are no brown people and then the food is different, the climate, I mean, it's so humid here. I would FaceTime all my friends for like two hours every day.

In the vector for managing emotions all seven participants shared several emotions they experienced in adjusting to life in the residence hall. For Marcos and Fabio their connection to family created a better experience in the residence hall. However, Marcos did not interact very much with his floor mates during floor activities. Marcos said, "I saw them in the lounge, but I preferred to stay in my room to study." Fabio said, "I had family up here and I was able to go see my family and see them as well when they visited me." Marcos added, "I had communication with my family all the time." For Gabriela, Samantha, Fabio, Jonas, Domingo, and Samuel, the first few weeks of the semester were the hardest part of their first year of college, but each of

them talked about becoming more independent from their family as well as relying on their friends in college to help with the transition to college. Key words identified in this section were: scary, lonely, depressed, trepidation, alone, joy, excited, and relaxed. The next set of questions describes how participants processed their autonomy and interdependence with their friends and family.

Autonomy toward Interdependence

The third set of questions (Questions 7-9) focused on autonomy toward interdependence as it related to what it was like for participants to make decisions without receiving help from their parents. Participants were asked to reflect on what is was like to make decisions on their own and tell about how they made decisions with their roommate.

According to Chickering and Reiss (1993), an individual moves from autonomy toward independence when they have an ability to have an independent outlook on life, but understand successful relationships are based upon interdependence. Individuals recognize they are a part of a whole versus doing problem solving on their own. Participants were asked to describe what it was like to make decisions on their own and what it was like to make decisions without help from their parents. Participants were also asked to describe what it was like to make decisions with their own roommates.

Parent involvement throughout the first year of college was high for Marcos, Gabriela, Samuel, and Samantha. The parent involvement ranged from daily phone calls to weekly phone calls to talk about how things were going in college and ask for assistance with cooking instructions and how to do laundry. Samantha said:

I was kind of always raised to be dependent on my parents, like basically for everything. I

was never really allowed to get a job and things like that or ever go to parties, but that's

because my parents are kind of strict so being thrown into here and having all these decisions to make it was very overwhelming, too. Yeah, even decisions for my food. My sister would order for me at restaurants and then now I'm like, 'I gotta order for myself' and that sounds a little crazy, but it was true.

In addition, Samantha noted that she had not learned how to cook or do laundry, so she called her mom to ask for help.

When Fabio shared about calling home to talk with his mother, he said, "My mother said, 'Suck it up buttercup', so I think we learned pretty quick that we had to make decisions by ourselves." For Fabio, parent involvement was directed at his low grades. Regular phone calls from his parents helped Fabio keep on track with his studies. Fabio discussed a conversation he had with his parents:

I think my first semester I did awful. I played too many video games and just hung out with friends more than doing homework. I think after that, hearing and getting phone calls from my parents about my grades and then going home and them nagging at me, it really pushed me to do better during the second semester so I could show [my parents] I improved as a student.

Finally, Marcos said he spoke to his parents every day to talk about his day and let them know he was okay. Marcos said, "I would take a break from my studies to make the phone call to breathe, relax, and be calm."

Living in the residence hall for study participants was also about making decisions. The participants had different ways of making decisions and confronting their roommate and other students in the residence hall. For example, as far as making decisions with his roommate, Fabio said decision making worked for him and his roommate and friends. Fabio said:

I think we did okay with decision-making. I think my roommate and I were able to be in

agreement about a lot of things, decisions, you know we aren't exactly the same person,

but I think we hold a lot of the similar ideas and views about just general living and so I

think for us it was pretty easy to come to decisions together.

Gabriela talked about confronting her roommate, which was different from when she was

in high school. Gabriela expressed the following:

When I was in high school if I had a conflict with someone I would never dream of

confronting them about it. I'd just be annoyed and be like, okay, whatever. We're in

college, and if you're living with a person you have to communicate something because

it's not going to change unless you say something.

In the vector autonomy toward interdependence, six of the seven participants said they

reached out to their parents for assistance in their first year of college. Samantha said, "I was

always raised to be dependent on my parents." Gabriela said, "My parents and I are really close,

and I tell them everything about me." For study participants developing interpersonal

relationships with friends in the residence halls also presented opportunities for understanding

other perspectives as well as an opportunity to build tolerance for different beliefs and

viewpoints. Key words and phrases that were identified in this section were: dependent on

family, help from parents, parents, advice, and cooperate. The next set of questions brought

descriptions of how participants matured throughout the course of their first year in their

interpersonal relationships with their friends in the residence hall.

Interpersonal Relationships

The fourth set of questions (Questions 10-13) focused on interpersonal relationships that

developed in the residence halls during the participants' first year of college. Participants were

asked to describe differences between them and their roommate, how well they thought they developed close relationships with their roommate, their strengths in developing relationships with other students on the residence hall, and any challenges they encountered in developing relationships with others in the residence hall.

According to Chickering and Reiss (1993), an individual that develops interpersonal relationships learns to appreciate and understand others, intercultural relationships are formed, and there is tolerance for others. Participants were asked to describe their interpersonal relationships with their roommate and friends.

All participants except Marcos shared relationships with their roommates were strong and helped them get through some rough times during the first semester. Marcos shared he did not talk to his roommate all semester and when they did talk it was to say hello and goodbye. When his roommate's family would visit, he would say hello and that was all. Marcos, who is Spanish-dominant, made few friends his first year of college; however, he expressed that he and his roommate from his first year decided to room together their second year of college. The researcher asked Marcos to explain why he and his roommate decided to room together their second year of college. Marcos said, "I found a connection with my roommate and over the course of the year I appreciated the effort my roommate made to introduce me to his family."

On the other hand, Domingo described his relationship with his roommate as being close and having deeper connection. Domingo said:

> I would consider us pretty close. He's almost like an older brother in some ways. He is
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> older than I am, so we have we a lot of those kind of arguments, like dumb arguments,
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> over things. We also just love hanging out and doing random things together. We can
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> easily talk about stuff if we need to. I really enjoy one-on-one conversation. It doesn't

have to be conversation even if it's just like hanging out doing something else that kind

of tells me a bit more about them and makes me feel like we have a deeper connection or

a deeper relationship.

For Fabio, Jonas, Domingo, Samantha, Gabriela, and Samuel, interpersonal relationships

were developed in their room as they spent time talking and spending time together with their

roommate and friends. They expressed their desire to want to talk with their roommate in one-

on-one conversations and were not afraid to talk about hard topics. Marcos had a lot of

interaction with a fellow student athlete because he too was Spanish dominant. Samantha

expressed the following regarding her relationship with her roommate:

I liked having a roommate because it reminded me of being dependent on my parents, but

not to that extent. I was like I have somebody that looks out for me, and I look out for

them. I liked it because I had a roommate. I had a buddy to go everywhere with and to

tell me if my decisions were bad.

Jonas commented that building relationships was hard because he was not used to being

around so many White people and so little diversity. Gabriela said the following about building

relationships with others on her floor: "My strengths were definitely not being afraid to talk to

people. I just wasn't afraid."

Samantha commented that she had two different roommates her first year because of a

conflict situation. Samantha stated:

With my first roommate, that didn't really work because she would go ahead and do what

I didn't want her to do. We had a lot of issues, but with my second roommate she was

really understanding. Really good. I think my second roommate is definitely going to be

like my life-long friend. But with my first roommate, oh my gosh, I hope I never see her

again.

In the developing interpersonal relationships vector, participants commented they

enjoyed making new friends and it was good to establish new relationships in the residence halls.

One participant observed that, as the semester progressed he noticed friend groups developed and

he also did not necessarily establish new friends. Key words that were shared by participants

were: challenge, reasonable, disagree, connected, and talked it out. Establishing a sense of

identity and how students viewed their Latinx culture on their adjustment to life in the residence

hall and college is explored in the following section.

Establishing Identity

The fifth set of questions (Questions 14-17) focused on what it was like for participants

to establish their identity in the residence hall. Participants were asked to describe the impact on

their identity after having lived in the residence hall for one year. Participants were also asked to

describe if there were specific aspects of the Latinx culture that helped them adapt to living in

the residence hall. Participants were asked to share if speaking Spanish impacted their

relationships with other Spanish speaking students and adaptation to life in the residence hall.

According to Chickering and Reiss (1993), individuals that develop identity can receive

criticism from others and have a high self-esteem. Individuals have a healthy self-concept and

they become comfortable with oneself which includes accepting their physical appearance,

gender, sexual identity, ethnicity, and social roles in society.

All participants mentioned their Latinx culture as an important part of adjusting well to

life in the residence hall. Participants shared that their family connectedness taught them how to

make friends. Jonas said that because there were more Latinx students at the college he started to

speak more Spanish and listen to Spanish music. Jonas reached out to Latinx students that did

not speak a lot of English because he knew they needed support. Jonas said:

> I have spoken Spanish with a couple of people in my floor. I try and connect with them
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> because I realize that's their primary language, and they aren't necessarily as comfortable
>
> in English.

In his hometown of Miami, Jonas did not have to think about being Hispanic because he

heard Spanish all the time. In the residence hall he did not hear as much Spanish, but when he

was around Latinx students that spoke Spanish he felt more Hispanic. Jonas said:

> I felt a little bit more Hispanic. Yeah, now that I'm here because I have to make that
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> effort to speak Spanish with someone or listen to Spanish music. Now that I'm thinking
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> of it, I don't remember any Hispanic students on my floor. I met my Hispanic friends
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> playing volleyball one night. They were sophomores. So… they introduced me to the
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> other Hispanics that they knew, and that's how I made my connection with all the
>
> Hispanics. I didn't know they were Hispanic at first until I heard one of them speak
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> Spanish, and so I spoke Spanish back to them.

For Marcos, who identified as Spanish-dominant, connecting with Latinx students who

spoke Spanish was easy and an important factor in making new friends. Marcos shared that being

in college was helping him to be free and to think about his life. Having said this, Marcos also

noted his strong relationships and constant communication with his parents helped him find his

way his first year of college.

Samuel said, "I have a loud family, loud siblings and knowing people do have their own

volumes and everything and just being able to live with that made transition to the residence hall

a lot better." Samuel expressed that his Hispanic culture helped him adapt to college life. Samuel

added that life in the residence hall can be loud and this reminded him of being at home. Fabio shared that his father is Puerto Rican, but he never learned about Puerto Rican culture in his home. He added that his father would make Puerto Rican rice, but that was the extent of what he learned about Puerto Rican culture. "I guess the culture was never brought into my home, so I really never learned it," he said, adding, "I actually think I kind of learned more about Puerto Rican culture coming here. I learned Chinese a lot easier than I did Spanish."

Domingo shared that speaking Spanish helped him connect with other Latinx students because he knew English was not their first language. Domingo had this to say about speaking Spanish with his Latinx friends:

> I think we have a pretty large number of those people here, so, yeah, it just makes me feel more comfortable interacting with different groups. Just having that familiarity and like, also part of my identity in that. I haven't spoken too much Spanish. I have a little bit with a couple of people in my floor just to try and connect with them because I realize that that's their primary language and they aren't necessarily as comfortable in English.

Gabriela responded by stating that having grown up in a city where Latinx are the majority meant that she was always around people who spoke Spanish and cultural traditions were celebrated regularly, but she did not learn Spanish because her parents did not speak Spanish. Gabriela was adopted by two White mothers who did not speak Spanish. Gabriela stated:

> I had a foot in this upper middle-class world where it was like I had all the opportunities I needed. I had everything. I had everything I needed. I don't speak Spanish and that does separate me from other Hispanic students at Cosecha, it does. Not in a bad way, but it's just like, I don't speak Spanish.

For Samantha establishing identity was about her connectedness to her family, folk healing, and her faith. Samantha said:

> My whole family is Catholic. I definitely prayed and stuff like that, and I like watching the services in Spanish online. That helped and got me through. Also, do you know the thing when you get hurt and then your mom's like 'Sana, sana, colita de rana'[1]? I definitely had my Jesus candle.

For Samantha, being at a college with Latinx students was not anything new because she grew up in a community where the Latinx population was the majority. Samantha was concerned about coming to Cosecha College because she did not think there would be many Latinx students. She was surprised to find out that Cosecha College had over 20 percent Latinx students. Samantha said this about Cosecha College having Latinx students:

> It helped a lot because I thought coming to Cosecha it was going be mostly White people, but when I came here there was a culture of Hispanic students. It really helped me because I could connect with them better than other students and it made me have more friends and stuff like that.

Six participants mentioned that a key part of their identity was speaking Spanish with other Latinx students. The participants' use of the Spanish language allowed them to reach out to other Latinx students that did not have a lot of friends. Furthermore, participants noted that having more Latinx students on campus resulted in a positive experience at Cosecha College. Gabriela, the only participant that talked about racial discrimination talked about her identity and stereotypes people have about Latinx individuals. Gabriela shared the following:

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[1] *Sana, sana, colita de rana* is a folk healing term used in the Mexican-American culture that is said to children when they experience some type of sickness or fall. It is meant to help the child feel better.

I know what it's like to be accused of something because my skin is not light. There have been numerous times where a woman snatches her bag up and if I am next to her I say 'I'm not going to steal anything from your bag I don't want anything from your bag.' Would she do that to a White girl? Probably not, but I do feel some of that sting that people of color have.

In the developing identity vector, all seven participants noted the importance of speaking Spanish in adjusting to life in the residence halls. The ability to speak Spanish provided opportunities to make new friends and reach out to a different friend group. Some of the key words that were similar in the replies of the students were: Spanish, connection, culture, challenge, and comfortable. Domingo said this regarding being on a campus that has Latinx students who speak Spanish, "I think we have a pretty large number of Hispanic students, so, yeah, it just makes me feel more comfortable interacting with different groups."

Developing Purpose

The sixth set of questions (Questions 18-21) focused on individuals identifying if they engaged in career planning during their first year of college. Participants were asked to describe what actions they engaged in during their first year of college to assist them in their career planning and who helped them in their first year of college.

According to Chickering and Reiss (1993), individuals that establish a purpose for their career planning engage in activities that provide them a strong outlook on the professional life, make meaning of their personal and professional interests, establish positive relationships with others that build their ability to sharpen their career path, and set a life vocation. Participants were asked to reflect on and share what specific things they did in their first year of college related to career planning.

Fabio shared that he changed his major twice and now he feels satisfied because he is with a group of students that consider themselves a team. Fabio added:

I like having people who are doing the same thing I am. I like hearing their suggestions and what they think I should do because they are doing the same thing. The reason I'm in organic chemistry this semester is because I talked to them and some people are going the same way.

Fabio relied on his friends to decide which classes to enroll in. Fabio said, "I like having people who are going, basically [toward] the same thing I am, and like hearing their suggestions and what they think I should do because they are doing the same thing." Gabriela shared that this year's role as a resident assistant has helped her think about being a social worker, but in her first year she did not have many opportunities to explore social work. Gabriela shared in more detail regarding her thought process for applying for the resident assistant position her first year of college:

You really have to be there for your residents. Your job description is to be there and build community with your residents, so it's like ah, yes this could definitely have something to do with my future job. Applying for the RA position was kind of like, huh that's a leadership role that I can be there for other people that I should definitely try it out for because I think that could help me for my future.

Marcos had weekly tutoring sessions that helped him with his coursework. Marcos also found support from two faculty members. Marcos had this to say about the tutoring he received:

Many people recommended tutors to me. And then last year I saw two or three tutors per week. Apart from that, I asked my classmates, and apart from that, the advice that two

people from the faculty gave me during my studies was motivation to move on and not to give up and not surrender.

Samuel stated that he received advice from his parents and faculty for choosing his major. Samuel said, "I didn't really do anything intentional just heart-passion that I had. My professors helped me a lot; I did talk to my parents a lot, too, in asking like, 'What do you think would be the best choice?'" Domingo engaged in various activities offered by the Career Services office. Domingo said:

I tried to connect more with a couple of the campus events or field trips associated with my major. I also went to a couple on campus events like resume workshop and hearing from alumni. My business department professors were very encouraging and open to explain you know what that what a career in that sphere looks.

Samantha expressed that living in the residence hall helped her understand her major better because she lived with students that had the same interest, and she could ask questions [about her major] and learn about what courses she should take. Samantha said:

I'm taking all the courses that I need and living in the residence halls was a help too because other people are in the same major. I can always just go over and we can help each other with homework and things like that…and we'd have study groups in each other's rooms.

Samantha expressed earlier that living in the residence hall was difficult, but after several weeks, she realized that visiting with others on the floor to do homework helped her adjust to life in the residence hall. For example, Samantha said the following:

Living in the residence halls helped because other people were in the same major as I was so I could always go over, and we helped each other with homework. We would have

study groups in each other's rooms. I also talked to my aunt. She's a second-grade

teacher, and I asked her a bunch of questions. After this I knew I wanted to be a teacher.

For Gabriela, making friends took priority but by the end of the semester she realized that

her grades were not as good as she had hoped. Gabriela shared this about putting her focus on

making friends:

I made a whole bunch of friends really quickly, and then suddenly I was up till 3 a.m.

doing homework and I was like, 'Oh, this sucks, but at least I had a good night with my

friends.' And it got to be really stressful where things or due dates would start coming up

and I would not have even started with something and I'd have to start really late, and to

be frank, it would be like crap work. I did not have a good sleep schedule. I did not take

care of my academics because I was so worried about making sure those friendships were

there.

In the developing purpose vector, all the participants were actively engaged in some type

of career planning whether it was a workshop through the career services office and receiving

counsel from a faculty or staff member. Gabriela was the only participant that tied her student

leadership role to her major. Gabriela said, "I think being an RA [residential assistant] definitely

can correlate with being a social worker." All seven participants identified key college staff for

help with their career plans. Participants identified the following individuals: family, tutors,

professors, advisors, and friends. Two participants offered specific names of individuals in the

student life office and admissions office.

Developing Integrity

The seventh set of questions (Questions 22-25) focused on the development of integrity

in their first year of college living in the residence hall. Participants were asked to describe how

well they did in balancing their personal beliefs and the beliefs of others. Participants were also asked to describe a time when they were challenged to think about the beliefs of another person and what they learned about their own beliefs. Participants were asked to share any additional information regarding the benefits or disadvantages of living in the residence hall.

According to Chickering and Reiss (1993), an individual that develops integrity is able to articulate and emulate his or her own values affirmed as an individual through three stages: humanizing values, personalizing values, and developing congruence. The process of humanizing values moves the individual from a rigid posture to one that is balanced and interested in another person's perspective. The individual's personal values are established and he or she values and respects the values of others. Individuals that develop congruence align with their actions with their beliefs.

Gabriela shared that she did not have many interactions with individuals who had a different political view from her. Gabriela said, "I'm not really friends or interact with a lot of people that voted for Trump." Gabriela added that that coming to college helped her strengthen her belief in God and her spirituality. Gabriela had this to say about her spirituality:

I've gotten more spiritual and religious. I definitely believe in God which is definitely something I couldn't have said my senior year in high school. I have this whole new relationship with God which is really profound for me.

Jonas shared that he had conversations with his friends in the residence halls about religion. Jonas said:

Most of the students in the residence hall are Catholic, so we have different beliefs. But I don't think we got into any arguments about our beliefs. It was just like you believe what you believe, I believe what I believe and then sometimes we'd just have conversations

about our religion, and we'd see both sides of the spectrum. I value communication, but

at the same time I do value my privacy.

The participants that did have discussions with other students about their beliefs focused

on retaining their beliefs and being careful not to change others' beliefs. Marcos said, "Honestly,

I only supported them. I didn't engage. I didn't express my opinion to them. I am reserved in that

area."

Domingo's responses in conversations focused on trying to understand the beliefs of

others before making any comments or contributions to the conversation. For example, Domingo

had this to say about engaging in conversation about his and others' beliefs:

> Sometimes it feels a little hard to talk about certain things because I know certain groups
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> will react very strongly against even just bringing up certain topics. I mean, I try to listen
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> for both sides before giving input. Like if I'm in a group of three and two people are very
>
> much strongly talking about something, I'm, like, where do I fit in this? I try to really
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> listen to what both of them are saying before I even say anything.

Participants noted that they were not that excited about having discussions on religion or

politics for fear of people getting heated or testy. Domingo shared in more detail a situation he

encountered in the residence hall when he discussed his beliefs:

> We got into an argument, and it just became really toxic. I was able to stay mostly firm in
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> my beliefs, but I also realized that there's just a lot of different things out there that I
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> haven't even considered or thought about or really encountered much before. I've learned
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> that it's just different for every person and the experiences that each person has plays a
>
> huge part in what they believe in what they think. It's kind of hard to sometimes connect
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> over certain things because you don't have that shared experience or you don't really

know what it's like to be in their shoes and to see where they're coming from. I think we kind of all need to do that, you know, try to understand where other people are coming from.

Fabio commented that the only place where they had discussion about what he believed in was in his Identity, Culture, and Community (ICC) first-year class. Fabio stated:

We didn't really talk much about personal beliefs in the residence hall. I guess in the ICC classes they talked about what did you believe in and why and how does that affect you as a person. That was pretty much the only place I was really forced to talk about it.

Finally, Fabio appreciated that at Cosecha College he could have conversations about his faith. Fabio said, "At my high school I could not talk openly about my faith." In the developing integrity vector, the desire to not change the beliefs of others came out strongly in the seven participants. Samantha said, "I had to realize and accept that people were raised differently than me." Gabriela added, "I felt like a lot of my friendships and a lot of people living in my hall had similar beliefs to my own, so I didn't really have to alter my own." Key words that were mentioned by all of the participants were difference, diversity, change, and beliefs.

Summary

This chapter presented the findings of how the first-year residential life experiences of the seven Latinx participants in this study contributed to their own development based on Chickering and Reiss' (1993) student development theory. The findings were organized according to the research question, which was to understand how residential life contributed to student development along Chickering and Reiss' (1993) seven vectors for Latinx students at an emerging HSI in the Midwest. The researcher reported the findings in seven categories matching the seven vectors of Chickering and Reiss' (1993) student development theory: developing

competence, managing emotions, autonomy toward interdependence, interpersonal relationships, establishing identity, developing purpose, and developing integrity.

The researcher found that developing competence both with individuals and groups came easy for participants. All seven of the participants managed their emotions in a positive manner. While the seven participants expressed feelings of trepidation, fear, nervousness, and loneliness with living in the residence hall, they were able to manage their emotions by reaching out to other students. Most of the participants were dependent on their parents for emotional support all throughout their first year of college. Most of the participants found that establishing interpersonal relationships with their roommate was not difficult. All participants cited that their Latinx culture and speaking Spanish was a key factor in reaching out to fellow Latinx peers. Most of the participants were involved in an activity that assisted with their career planning. And finally, most of the participants talked openly about their personal beliefs and values but did not engage in discussion on their beliefs with other students.

Chapter 5 presents an interpretation of the findings on student development in the areas based on the key factors of interpersonal relationships, managing emotions, the influence of parents on student development, ethnic identity, the use of the Spanish language, and developing personal beliefs that emerged from the interviews while discussing the seven vectors. Implications, recommendations for action and further research, and a conclusion that articulates the significance of the study is presented.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand the lived experiences of second-year Latinx students living in residence halls at Cosecha College and the impact on their student development (Chickering & Reiss, 1993). The researcher hoped to gain a better understanding of how residential life contributed to the participants' personal development as they interacted with other students at the college and in their residence halls.

This research used semi-structured interviews to collect qualitative data. Participants in the study included seven second-year Latinx students from an emerging HSI in the Midwest. The data collected were coded, analyzed, and organized by the seven vectors and guided by the conceptual framework which was Chickering's (1969) student development theory as described in Chapter 2. The research question addressed cultural and social relationships that involve students identifying feelings and experiences with other students. The study had one main research question:

What can be learned from the lived experiences of second-year Latinx students living in residence halls at Cosecha College and the impact on their student development?

Interpretation

The researcher expounded upon the seven vectors of identity identified through the analysis of the data. While interview questions were designed to elicit the students' experiences based on the seven vectors, five themes emerged during the analysis of the data as being influential in these students' first-year residential life experiences. The five major themes were: interpersonal relationships matter, managing emotions, influence of parents, ethnic identity and Spanish, and personal beliefs.

In particular, the themes that emerged resulted from the discussions between the researcher and participants during the discussion of the seven vectors of identity. For example, in the areas of developing competence, autonomy toward interdependence, interpersonal relationships, and establishing identity, the researcher found that interpersonal relationships mattered significantly to participants in the first few weeks of being in the residence hall. Responses on how participants developed competence, managed emotions, moved from autonomy toward interdependence, and established identity responses were positive. Participants' responses that expressed their emotions were most present when connecting with peers in the residence hall, volleyball court, and study group sessions in each other's rooms.

Throughout the discussion of the seven vectors of identity, the theme that emerged most often was the impact of parental influence on participant's development during their first year of college. Most of the participants noted considerable contact with their parents in the five following ways: when participants were deciding in which courses they should enroll; when participants processed when they felt scared or nervous about starting college on their own; when participants had conflicts with their roommate; when completing daily living activities such as cooking and doing laundry; and, when participants sought advice on their academic plan of study. For participants the use of the Spanish language was discussed in the vectors of developing competence, managing emotions, and establishing identity. Although some participants self-described as English dominant, all participants stated how the use of Spanish created opportunities to connect with other Latinx students.

Participants discussed personal beliefs when they spoke about developing competence, moving from autonomy toward interdependence, establishing personal relationships, and establishing identity. Personal beliefs were identified when participants talked about developing

beliefs different from their parents. At the same time, participants were not sure if they were ready to develop their own beliefs or challenge the beliefs of other students in the residence hall.

Theme #1: Interpersonal Relationships Matter

According to Chickering and Reiss (1993), students must go through several tasks while developing their identity. The first task in developing identity is developing competence. This involves using the mind to build skill using analytical and comprehensive thought and development of forming one's point of view in dealing with experiences in life (Chickering & Reiss, 1993). The first theme that emerged speaks directly to how well participants understood what they learned about themselves having lived in the residence halls for one year, what it meant to develop relationships with their roommate, and what they needed to be successful in establishing relationships with individuals in the residence halls. This was evident by the responses that participants offered.

Developing competence involves the skill of listening, understanding, communicating, and functioning in different relationships (Chickering and Reiss, 1993). Participants in the study appeared to feel confident regarding making new friends and establishing new relationships with their respective roommates and residence hall floor mates early on in their experiences at the college. One of the participants, reflected this view when he said, "At the beginning of the semester, we connected really well. We spent most of our time together." Secondly, participants seemed to enjoy developing relationships with their respective new roommates and others in the residence hall. Another participant said this about developing a relationship with his roommate, "We have a lot of those kind of arguments, like dumb arguments, over things. We also just love hanging out and doing random things together." Thirdly, one of the participants expressed confidence in knowing how to establish relationships with individuals in her residence hall. The

participant said, "My strength was definitely not being afraid to talk to people. I mean I wasn't as afraid."

As stated by Chickering and Reiss (1993), increased competence in intellectual areas and interpersonal relationships is a key indicator that individuals are developing higher-order cognitive skills. Furthermore, Chickering and Reiss (1993) add that developing new relationships can be complex, and often times students struggle to know how to act or relate to individuals they are meeting for the first time. Moving into the residence halls and adding the new experience of living in a setting where there are new expectations, rules, and boundaries that need to be established can lead individuals to retreat and not engage in developing new relationships. One participant reflected difficulty with developing relationships with others in the residence hall by saying, "The first half semester that I went into my room and shut the door because no one else was going to come in there unless I wanted them to." By the end of the academic year this same participant had a different perspective. The participant said, "I was happy to be away; branch myself out more than I used to be able to do; I think I am a different person."

The above participant's behavior appeared to be what Chickering and Reisser (1993) referred to as developing competence. The ability for an individual to increase their cognitive skills and intellectual areas is a sign of maturity. Again, this participant was able to move beyond the initial behavior of increased time in his room to, "I think I made quite a few friendships. I am an outgoing person." When thinking about student development, the participants in the study are what Rodgers (1990) discussed about student development being "the way a student grows, progresses, or increases his or her developmental capabilities as a result of enrollment in an institution of higher education" (p. 27). All participants demonstrated the ability to build

relationships rather quickly even though there were students such as Marcos who spoke very little to his roommate and Samantha who reported requesting another roommate in the middle of the academic year, but both were still were able to make friendships with others across campus.

Theme #2: Positive Emotions Make for a Better Transition to the Residence Halls

According to Chickering and Reiss (1993), knowing and becoming aware of one's emotions are key to developing identity. Awareness of emotions increases when students learn to identify and accept feelings as normal reactions to life experience and when they can understand and amend outdated assumptions that amplify negative feelings (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). It appeared that all participants presented a variety of emotions during their first few weeks of being at Cosecha College. For one of the participants being in a new environment was not difficult because he knew his roommate prior to arriving at Cosecha College. One of the participants did not have a lot of interaction with others because he stayed in his room most of the time, however, he did spend time with students that spoke Spanish which allowed him to make friends with other students. When the researcher asked the participant to identify his emotions regarding his experience in the residence halls, he remained silent for a couple of minutes. At the end of the two minutes the participant replied, "I don't have anything to say about this." The researcher asked the participant to discuss his reason or reasons for not expressing his thoughts regarding his emotions, but he did not respond.

A different participant expressed ambivalence for what he was feeling. The participant said, "I can't really describe the emotions I was in because I was ready to be away and be on my own. So I wasn't really happy or sad." It is likely that the participant was eager to be away from home while at the same time wanting to be at home with his family. One participant expressed he too had mixed emotions when he said he felt lonely and nervous, but at the same time excited,

joyful, and relaxed about being in college. This participant was able to move from the mixed emotions to eventually joining a club and reaching out to friends to talk and process life in the residence halls. Another participant expressed mixed emotions. He said:

> I was excited to see how living in that new space would be and what kinds of different kinds of people I was going to meet, but at the same time kind of trepidation, or a little like reserved because I wasn't quite sure how it was all going to work. I missed home, but I couldn't see myself at home.

The two females in the study expressed being depressed and scared about being in the residence halls the first few weeks of the semester. The first female participant expressed feeling depressed and the other preferred to stay in her room and not visit other students on the residence hall floor.

As stated by Chickering and Reiss (1993), anger, fear, anxiety, depression, guilt, and shame are common in individuals that are entering their educational process. While all the participants expressed emotions such as scared, loneliness, trepidation, and nervousness with living in the residence halls all seven participants were able to state that, by the end of the first semester, they were at a better place emotionally. Chickering and Reiss (1993) stated that individuals who can manage their negative emotions have entered into a growth development process, which is exhibited in being more assertive and participatory in activities. It is likely that frequent interactions with other students allowed for developing confidence in stepping out of their rooms and comfortable spaces. The fact that one of the participants could joke about being teased by her friends showed her ability to not be as hard on herself as well as somewhat laugh at herself for staying in her room.

Theme #3: Influence of Parents

The third theme that emerged was the influence of parents on the participant's first-year experience in the residence halls. All seven participants expressed that parents offered support in their adjustment process to college. According to Auerbach (2006), "Moral support for education is the foundation, perhaps the essence of how Latino immigrant parents participate in their children's schooling" (p. 276).

In reviewing the interview data from the participants, it was found that all seven participants referenced being in contact with their parents by stating they either had frequent phone calls or they received advice for their course selection, moral support, daily living activities, and overall well-being. It is probable that parental influence helped participants navigate certain situations in their first year of college. For example, the participant who was Spanish dominant expressed that he had constant communication with his parents. For this participant, his high frequency in speaking to his parents was attributed to not knowing a lot of English, and his phone conversations appeared to have helped him relax and be calm. The two female participants also spoke to their parents frequently to discuss relationship issues as well as receive cooking instructions.

According to Auerbach (2006) parental influence can impact educational outcomes of Latino students. The data appeared to show that parental influence impacted the participant's educational outcomes as well. For example, one participant said his mother used the following phrase to motivate him to confront the situation by saying, "My mother goes like 'suck it up buttercup.'" He responded to this phrase saying, "I think I learned pretty quick that I had to make decisions and do stuff for myself." It seems as though another student's mother offered a hard "consejo" (cultural narrative and teaching advice) but this advice is what Auerbach (2006) stated

is a cultural model that is rooted in a pre-disposition for a moral support role for children that enroll in college.

For another participant it is likely that phone calls with his parents helped him focus on his studies his second semester of college. He said:

Getting phone calls from my parents about my grades and going home and them nagging at me, it really pushed me the second semester to do better so I could show I improved as a student. I think it was hard knowing my own responsibilities instead of having my parents.

Another participant stated that living in the residence halls gave him a new appreciation for making decisions. He appreciated the freedom to make decisions, but appeared to be conflicted with not being at home to receive advice from his parents. It also appears that as the semester progressed the participant relied less on his parents for advice even though he stated he did not feel disconnected from them. He said this about his relationship with his parents:

I still ask my parents for advice, but not as often. I don't think about doing it as often as I used to. I don't have a disconnect. I could always talk to them at any time, but it's just different when I'm not at home. I miss having that advice.

Finally, it appeared that the participants' parents took their cues on involvement and communication from their student due to the frequent outreach by the student to the parent. It is also probable that parental contact with the participants provided the necessary moral support for participants to develop interpersonal relationships in the residence hall. Fann, McClafferty, and McDonough (2009) asserted that Latinx parents who participated in the planning process for college with their student were an important persistence factor. It is likely that frequent contact by parents demonstrated to participants that their parents wanted them to be well and succeed in

college. For the participants, leaving home and living in the residence hall was an opportunity to test their independence and decision-making skills, but in many ways participants remained in regular contact with their parents and relied on their parents for making decisions on course planning and relationships with their friends.

Moreover, parental involvement seemed to be high with all of the study participants all throughout the first year of college and their involvement was not experienced as undermining to the participants desire to succeed; rather, the researcher learned that parental involvement was sometimes experienced by participants as subtle support and other times direct support. The researcher did not hear students express that their parents wanted them to drop out or return home because college life was difficult. Parents were steady in their support and were confident that their student would succeed. Their support allowed for students to potentially address their sometime desire to step away from their studies.

Theme #4: Ethnic Identity and the Spanish Language

In college-student development models, identity formation is among the central tasks of traditional-aged college students to develop (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). What it means to be Latinx for most of the study participants appeared to be what Gallegos and Ferdman (2007) referred to as *Latino-integrated*. Latino-integrated refers to individuals that understand society in terms of race and identify with the larger Latinx community. All participants identified with other Latinx students and the Spanish language connected them to one another

The experience of living in a residence hall with other Latinx students proved to be a positive experience for all the participants. For some of the participants, their desire to learn more about their ethnic identity was evident as they attempted to connect with other Latinx students and speak Spanish. According to Case and Hernandez (2013) participants in their study

entered into ethnic identity exploration and learned that participants had an awakening

experience with their ethnic identity when they did learning exercises, and they felt more pride in

who they were after having explored their identity during their first year of college.

For the participant that grew up in a small town in Indiana, answering questions related to

ethnic identity led him to share he felt disappointed that his father did not teach him about the

Puerto Rican culture. The participant shared that growing up in a home where his mother is

White and his father is Puerto Rican did not present many opportunities to speak Spanish or learn

about the Puerto Rican culture. This participant viewed his relationship with Latinx students that

were not as fluent in English as an opportunity to speak in Spanish. It appears the participant

lived on a residence hall floor that did not have many Latinx students which meant he was not

speaking Spanish on a regular basis but did interact with Latinx students in other locations across

the campus.

Having grown up in southern Florida, another participant was accustomed to hearing

Spanish regularly, but at Cosecha College not as much. The participant said:

> I felt a little bit more Hispanic now that I'm here because I have to make that effort to
>
> speak Spanish with someone. I met my Hispanic friends by playing volleyball one night.
>
> They were sophomores, so they introduced me to the other Hispanics that they knew and
>
> so that's how I made my connection with all the Hispanics. I didn't know they were
>
> Hispanic at first until I heard one of them speak Spanish so I spoke Spanish back to them
>
> and that's how we became friends.

Again, for this participant the ability to speak Spanish created an opportunity to make

friends. In addition, his home environment included hearing Spanish regularly and is fluent in

Spanish and when the opportunity presented itself to speak Spanish for developing interpersonal relationships seemed natural.

For one participant, ethnic identity exploration appeared to have begun in her high school years as she referenced in her interview living in a community where there were many Latinx individuals. Her pride in being Latinx was evident as she stated in her interview she felt comfortable being in an environment where there were many Latinx individuals. Still another participant said she was raised by White parents instilled in her the importance of having pride in who she is even though she is not fluent in Spanish. Having said this, she did feel that not being fluent in Spanish made her feel separated from the Latinx students at Cosecha College. The participant said, "I don't speak Spanish and that does separate me from other Hispanic students." When asked to expound on what being separated from Latinx students the participant responded by saying this:

> Hispanics in my community did not have easy lives and I was very lucky to have a foot in both worlds. I had a foot in this upper-middle-class world where it was like I had all the opportunities I needed. I had everything I needed.

While the participant stated in her interview that she is not fluent in Spanish and is separated from Latinx students it appears that in her first year of college she wanted to be identified by her peers as Latinx because she took part in a co-curricular program where she was identified as Latinx and had to speak Spanish.

On the other hand, it is likely that the participant who was Spanish-dominant was able to relate more closely to Latinx students that spoke Spanish fluently because he too was fluent in the Spanish language. It appears that this participant relied heavily on his teammates who were fluent in Spanish to help him navigate life in the residence hall. However, it seems that he

limited his participation in various residence hall activities and campus-wide activities because he did not feel confident with his Spanish skills. The participant said:

> I do not master English and I consider that those were the only moments that I could communicate with them [teammates]. We had the connection to develop good friendships because of Spanish.

For yet another participant, using Spanish was not a big part of his daily experience, but when he did use the Spanish language it was to reach out to other residents on the floor that were not as fluent in the English language. That participant said:

> I haven't spoken too much Spanish. I have a little bit with a couple of people in my floor just to try and connect with them because I realize that that's their primary language and they aren't necessarily as comfortable in English.

Someone else said being at Cosecha College offered him the opportunity to speak more Spanish because of the larger number of Latinx students at the school and residence hall. The participant said this about speaking Spanish:

> I think I've gotten better at speaking Spanish. I could still grow within it. I can somewhat speak Spanish. I'm not fluent, but I understand my constructions or what people tell me I can reply in Spanish sometimes. I speak with people who do speak Spanish.

In their research, Gonzales and Morrison (2015) proposed the importance of how culture impacted student retention. For example, students' use of the Spanish language to communicate with their friends had a positive impact on student's overall experience. In her study, Maldonado Torres (2016), found that "possible relationships between students' learning styles and their language spoken at home were identified, approaches to increase Latino students' academic attainment could be developed" (p. 245). The Spanish language for all the participants appears to

be directly tied to establishing relationships with other Latinx students. Even though all the

participants were not fluent in Spanish, when opportunities to speak Spanish were made

available, participants entered these encounters with confidence and with a desire to establish

relationships with their fellow Latinx peers. Speaking Spanish with other Latinx student

happened during times when they were playing a sport, participating in a co-curricular project,

having conversation in the residence hall, or studying with another Latinx student in the

residence hall. Speaking Spanish was utilized to feel connected and bonded with another student

(Maldonado Torres, 2016). Speaking Spanish also opened the door to reach out to Latinx

students on the margins. Two of the participants reached out to Latinx students that were not as

fluent in English and established relationships with these individuals.

At the beginning of the study, the researcher had not thought extensively about the

impact of the Spanish language on study participants' college experience. The literature review

revealed that Gonzalez and Morrison (2015) noted the importance of culture in student

persistence. Also, Torres and Hernandez (2009) noted the importance of cultural variables and

cultural affinity in the development of ethnic identity. While six of the study participants

considered themselves English dominant, the Spanish language served a key role in how

participants related to their Latinx peers. While the participants were not particularly fluent in the

Spanish language, strong attempts were made to speak Spanish. Early in the interviews the

researcher focused on engagement through the lens of activities, but as the interviews progressed

the researcher began to observe that participants' engagement with other Latinx students

happened through the Spanish language. The Spanish language created a human connection that

opened up the opportunity for participants to demonstrate their ability to speak a second

language and show care and compassion to another student (Maldonado Torres, 2016). This

created a bond between two students that allowed for mutual support. The researcher learned that student development can also be experienced through a second language.

Theme #5: Personal Beliefs

According to Chickering and Reisser (1993), an individual who develops integrity can articulate and emulate his or her own values affirmed as an individual through three stages: humanizing values, personalizing values, and developing congruence. The process of humanizing values moves the individual from a rigid posture to one that is balanced and interested in another person's perspective. The individual's personal values are established and he or she values and respects the values of others. Individuals that develop congruence align with their actions with their beliefs. The participants' personal beliefs did not change over the course of their first year in college. Chickering and Reisser (1993) found that a rebalancing of personal values and beliefs happened when young adults begin to develop integrity. This entails reviewing previously held beliefs and possibly reconsidering said beliefs for other beliefs. As identity emerges there is a process of internalizing the previously held belief.

It seems that participants held to their personal beliefs and did not engage in many conversations that challenged them to think more broadly about topics of religion and politics. More specifically, one participant said, "it feels a little like, hard to talk about certain things because I know certain groups will react very strongly against even just bringing up certain topics." Two participants referenced talking about their beliefs with others but did not expound further when asked to discuss why they chose not to. Another participant said, "I value communication, but at the same time I do value my privacy." Still another participant shared that he did not engage in conversation on these topics because he was, "reserved in that area."

Another participant expressed not interacting with people that did not align with her political beliefs, but she did reach out to students that were of her church denomination.

It is unknown whether students chose not to engage in discourse regarding religion, politics, or their beliefs because they wanted to avoid conflict. And, it is probable that participants preferred to only engage in conversations or activities related to less sensitive topics such as courses or sports. One participant stated, "I kind of had to accept the fact that other people were raised differently than me." This statement seemed to mean that she was understanding of other people's perspectives but did not offer a response to whether she should make any attempt to engage individuals in conversation on more sensitive topics. Having said this, she did mention how her family had influenced her beliefs and how she missed having discussions with them.

Implications

In working to understand Chickering's (1969) student development theory it was the goal of this researcher to learn how residential life at an emerging HIS contributed to Latinx students' development along the seven vectors of identity at an emerging HSI. Further exploration of the seven vectors of identity is needed to understand the implications for residence-life and student-affairs professionals as they interact and support Latinx students who are in the residence halls at emerging HSIs. It appears that parental influence on participants' experience in the residence halls can be explored further to understand overall involvement in activities at the emerging HSI and parental influence on academic success, persistence, and retention.

Additionally, it appears the seven vectors of identity could prove valuable as a way to determine how successful Latinx students will be in their first year of college because of the way participants in this study established friendships, developed their identity on campus, found

opportunities to engage with others using a second language, managed their emotions in a positive manner, and did not change their beliefs or challenge other students' beliefs. Chickering's (1969) student development theory showed that movement across the seven vectors of identity is not linear which means students develop at different rates. This seemed to be case with the seven participants in this study because of their ability to manage emotions of being lonely and scared and at the same time engage in meaningful discussions on their identity through the Spanish language and build relationships with other students.

In this study interpersonal relationships, positive emotions, parental involvement, and the use of the Spanish language were shown to be significantly related to positive student development in Latinx students. Residence life programs and policies should pay particular attention to these Latinx student development outcomes. Programs and activities should be designed to take into consideration parents, cultural traditions, and spaces where Latinx students can build more interdependence with their parents and further develop their ethnic identity. Residence life staff should develop programs where students can strengthen their interpersonal relationships with other students either in their rooms or in common areas in the residence hall.

Programs and activities that are created to foster social connections among students should be seen as integral to the student's development. Chickering and Reisser (1993) and Tinto (1993) showed clearly that persistence and the seven vectors of identity are accurate evaluators of development in college. Chickering and Reisser (1993) student development theory can assist higher education staff in residence life a way to create healthier environments and promote student development among the Latinx student population at an emerging HSI.

Recommendations for Action

This study provided the researcher with an opportunity to learn more about how residential life contributed to the development of Latinx students at an emerging HSI in the Midwest. The following recommendations are presented as a guide for leaders at emerging HSIs and other colleges and universities that are experiencing an increased enrollment of Latinx students.

Develop Social Programs to Strengthen Interpersonal Relationships

According to Velasquez (1998), establishing social programs that foster interpersonal relationships between Latinx students and other students increases the amount of communication and interaction between students. The results of this study showed that Latinx students developed interpersonal relationships with other students in the residence hall through various forms of interactions with other students which included study time in their rooms and meetings in common areas. Developing social programs that strengthen interpersonal relationships with other students should be considered by residence life staff at emerging HSIs.

As stated by Arevalo et al. (2016) peer-to-peer models strengthened interpersonal relationships and came more naturally for Latinx students than other ethnic groups. The authors noted that stronger social relationships served as a buffer for Latinx students. According to Chickering and Reisser (1993), mature relationships are characterized by "tolerance and appreciation of differences and capacity for intimacy" (p. 48). Social programs will motivate students to develop interpersonal relationships with other students versus being socially isolated in their rooms. Strengthening interpersonal relationships with other students can help students who feel scared and nervous about making new friends.

Develop Pathways for Parental Involvement with Latinx Students

The majority of the study participants sought parental support throughout their first year of college. Emerging HSIs should consider developing pathways for Latinx parents to obtain education on effective ways to support their student's adjustment to college. Researchers such as Auerbach (2006), Fann, McClafferty, and McDonough (2009), and Schwartz, Donovan, and Guido-DiBrito (2009), suggested that parental involvement is paramount to ensuring Latinx students are successful in the adjustment process to college. The results of this study showed the importance of building and strengthening bridges between Latinx students and their parents to support the role of parents in student development.

Auerbach (2006) stated, "Give parents the opportunity to meet with school and college representatives, who can become additional sources of help" (p. 141). Developing a Latinx Parent Council that gives parents the opportunity to meet with college representatives for engagement with school officials is recommended. Creating quarterly parent seminars that offer parents the opportunity to hear from college representatives on adjustment to college life of their student can strengthen the parent's confidence in supporting their student. In addition, inviting parents of second- through fourth-year Latinx students to serve as mentors for first-year Latinx parents can allow parents to support one another in the adjustment to college process. According to Araque, Wietstock, Cova and Zepeda (2017), parents who develop social networks "were no longer as intimidated with the educational system and that they now have a better understanding about their own roles when helping their children" (p. 242). Student life staff need to develop spaces where parents can offer one another counsel on how to address their student's possible difficult transition to college and their own adjustment. They create opportunities for using best practices to support parents through the college-going process. Finding the appropriate amount

of interaction and contact between Latinx students their parents will ensure that students persist and stay longer at the emerging HSI.

Develop Ethnic Identity through Spanish Language Activities

Most of the study participants utilized the Spanish language to establish interpersonal relationships with other Latinx students. Emerging HSIs should consider developing Spanish language activities to develop ethnic identity, social networking, and school connectedness. In his article, Padilla (2007) reported, "that students with higher levels of cultural congruity perceive fewer educational barriers" (as cited in Oseguera, Locks & Vega, 2009, p. 35). In addition, Kiyama, Museus, and Vega (2015) found that

> There is some evidence that campus cultures characterized by strong networking values, a commitment to targeted support, a belief in humanizing the educational experience, and an ethos characterized by institutional responsibility for student success are more conducive to college success among undergraduates of color. (p. 31)

Creating cultural events where students practice the Spanish language can bring about cultural congruity for the Latinx student. According to Velazquez (1998), cultural activities such as festivals, musical performances, and discussions related to traditional culture events create a meaningful link to the students own authentic cultural experiences. By creating culturally relevant events such as Loteria Game Night (card game) and Teatro en Espanol (Spanish theater), creates an opportunity for students to make connections to their culture and build relationships with other students, practice the Spanish language, and strengthen relationships between faculty and administrators. More specifically, Teatro en Espanol can encourage Latinx students to read and speak the Spanish language with others in a relaxed and fun environment. In her study, Lopez (2016), found that acting out cultural traditions has the potential to enrich the

student experience, create a sense of belonging and connectedness to others, and develop pro-social relationships at the college.

Offer First-Year Seminars on Adjustment to College

First-year seminars that support first-year Latinx students that may experience negative feelings when adjusting to life in college should be implemented. In her study, Lopez (2016) found that students who established support networks and used academic resources maintained higher grades throughout their college years. According to Cerezo et al. (2015), recommendations for an improved student experience meant making sure Latinx students obtain information on support services during their orientation experience. Furthermore, counseling services were recommended by the authors for Latinx students that needed extra support as they adjusted to the campus environment. Implementing orientation programs that include mental health information can increase the student's well-being and confidence during their adjustment to college life.

Develop Programs that Promote Discourse on Personal Beliefs

The majority of the study participants did not engage in dialogue regarding their personal beliefs. Developing programs that promote discourse on personal beliefs could motivate students to engage in dialogue on issues related to their beliefs. Latinx students at emerging HSIs need programs that model topic discussion and understanding for development of personal beliefs and not only activities such as sports or clubs. Authors Gonzalez and Morrison (2015) challenged the premise that students should only engage in traditional extra-curricular activities. Chickering's (1969) student development theory describe how students experience a change in their values and move away from dogmatic values to humanizing values. According to Chickering and Reisser (1993), developing integrity means students can move beyond their personal beliefs and

are challenged to respect and accept other people's values. This development brings congruity with self, but according to Chickering (1993), it requires the student to practice putting their values into action. Programs that promote discourse on personal beliefs and values are not ordinary extra-curricular activities because they offer students and opportunity to self-reflect and consider changing their way of thinking. Emerging HSIs should find ways to stimulate the minds of first-year Latinx students in order to discuss their beliefs and put into practice the process of understanding their values and beliefs. Residence life staff can bring together students for organized discussion and debate on various cultural topics. Becoming familiar with how to present an argument and how to accept disagreement without becoming upset or frustrated can help Latinx students develop and strengthen their personal beliefs on various issues. Student leaders can also serve as role models for the discussions and debates.

Recommendations for Further Study

The findings of this study present an opportunity to do further research in the following areas:

1) Study participants held parental involvement in high regard when responding to interview questions. Additional research should be conducted to better understand the role Latinx parents continue to play in student identity and how institutions can further support that connection.

2) Study participants used the Spanish language to connect with other students. Additional research on Spanish language activities should be conducted to better understand the ways in which students use language to connect with others and further develop their identity.

3) Study participants participated in residential life programs and co-curricular activities. Additional research should be conducted on the impact of residential life programs on student development of first-year Latinx students.

4) Study participants expressed that interpersonal relationships during their first few weeks of being on campus were crucial to their overall well-being. Additional research on peer-to-peer models for student development should be conducted.

5) Study participants expressed having positive emotions in adjusting to college. Additional research on the influence of positive emotions on retention and persistence should be conducted.

6) The seven selected participants completed their first year at the college. Additional research, using former Latinx students who dropped out, might determine what developmental differences, if any, they had with the participating second-year students on Chickering's seven vectors.

7) The research study focused on the impact of residential life on Latinx students at a PWI. Additional research could study residential life impact on other minoritized populations, including on Latinx students at Historically Black Colleges and Universities and White students enrolled at institutions with majority Latinx students.

Conclusion

This study examined how residential life contributed to the development of second-year Latinx students who attended an emerging HSI in the Midwest. The study's findings yielded critical insights, emergent themes, and other findings that provided the researcher rich information aligned to Chickering's (1969) student development theory.

Implications for practice were presented and recommendations for action were noted. These insights demonstrated ways that second-year Latinx students effectively developed relationships with other students at their college, managed their emotions appropriately, moved from autonomy to interdependence even though parental influence was prominent, and reinforced their ethnic identity by using the Spanish language. This study has shed light on how the residential life experience of Latinx students at an emerging HSI in the Midwest contributed to Chickering's (1969) student development theory. The study's findings and recommendations can benefit emerging HSIs as they strive to better serve enrolled Latinx who live in their residence halls.

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Appendix A

Interview Questions:

1. Why did you or your parents choose for you to live in the residence halls?
2. As a Hispanic/Latino student living in the residence halls, what have you experienced?
3. What was it like when you first moved into the residence halls?
4. What kind of help did you receive when you first moved in to the residence halls?
5. In what ways does College invite you to participate in decision-making with residence life staff?
6. Do you think your culture helps you be successful in the residence halls? Why or why not.
7. What cultural differences have you encountered in the residence halls?
8. What social relationships are you building in the residence halls?
9. Do the residence hall activities that are planned by staff meet your needs? If so, why or why not.
10. In what ways do you take part in the residence halls activities?
11. What are your thoughts about participating in the residence halls activities?
12. How do you see your current interest in extra-curricular activities compared to your previous interest in it at high school?
13. What do you do in your free time at College?
14. What do you do in evenings or other times in the residence halls?
15. How is your relationship with your residence hall roommate?
16. What support system did you have in place to encounter success or failures in the residence hall?
17. What is your relationship like with other members in the residence halls?
18. Please describe any obstacles you have encountered in your experience in the residence halls or at the college.
19. Please describe any benefits you are gaining from living in the residence halls?