

The influence of immigrant parents on the college decisions of Latinx community college students

by

Monica Lopez

B.A., University of California, Riverside, 2007
M.S., National University, 2011

AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

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Abstract

Latinx students are pursuing college at historically high rates; however, completion rates for this population are not keeping pace. With these students disproportionately attending community colleges, 2-year college leaders are striving to break down barriers and identify support systems that increase Latinx student success. Two factors found to influence students' academic success are their generational status and participation of parents in their education. Involvement of parents has been linked to improved student academic achievement and motivation, but little research has focused on Latinx parent involvement with community college students. In addition, Latinx immigrants are less likely to have experience with U.S. higher education, but little is known about how this influences their children's college going decisions.

This qualitative phenomenological study aimed to provide an understanding of the collective influence of these factors by exploring the role immigrant parents play in the college decisions of Latinx first-generation community college students. This study used Yosso's (2005) theory of community cultural wealth, derived from critical race theory, as a framework to explore the extent to which immigrant parents contributed to students' acquisition of cultural capital. The study also focused on parental influence in three areas of decisions students make about college: (a) whether to go to college, (b) where to go to college, and (c) what to study in college.

The researcher used a storytelling approach to conduct culturally contextualized, semistructured interviews with 17 first-generation Latinx community college students whose parents were immigrants to the United States. Through their *testimonios* and narratives, these students revealed how they universally sought and valued their parents' input when making decisions about college, despite their parents' lack of higher educational attainment. These

students also demonstrated strong evidence that they had acquired a variety of forms of community cultural capital through their lived experiences and these made a difference in how they approach college. Findings from this study could point the way for community colleges to develop more inclusive pathways for Latinx immigrant parents to support their children in navigating the college experience, thereby supporting both in realizing their shared commitment to the “American dream.”

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to my parents. Your example of hard work, dedication, resilience, and sacrifice inspired the topic of my dissertation.

Gracias mamá y papá por su ejemplo, sacrificio, y apoyo. Ustedes han sido mi inspiración. Los quiero mucho.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Multiple studies have addressed how Latinx parents emphasize the importance of higher education to children. In a study of parents of Latinx middle school students, McCallister et al. (2010) found “97% of parents said that they wanted their children to attend college, and 94% reported that having a college degree was essential” (p. 789). Similarly, the Pew Hispanic Center’s 2009 National Survey of Latinx Youth found “77% of Latinx ages 16-25 say their parents think going to college is the most important thing to do after high school” (p. 3). Community colleges serve as the primary entry point for Latinx students pursuing higher education. Santiago et al. (2015) noted Latinx students disproportionately enroll in community colleges, with almost half of Latinx students enrolled in postsecondary education attending community colleges. Yet, few community college Latinx students are completing a certificate, degree, or transferring to a university (Campaign for College Opportunity, 2018; Cuyjet et al., 2016).

Studies of Latinx students have noted these students often approach education as a family affair. Ceja (2006) observed consulting with the family about decisions is common for Latinx children. Ortiz (2004) asserted Latino students refer to family “so frequently that valuing the family as a characteristic of Latino college students borders on a stereotype” (p. 94). Although research has shown immigrant parents value education and want to support their children, Hill and Torres (2010) noted immigrant parents often lack the knowledge of navigating the complex college process in the United States. To increase the success of first-generation Latinx students, community colleges could benefit from understanding more about the role and influence of parents on decisions children make about college.

Statement of the Problem

Although Latinx students are pursuing college at historically higher rates, completion rates remain stagnant. The 2018 report, *State of Higher Education for Latinx in California* (Campaign for College Opportunity) indicated 40% of California's residents were Latinx, yet only 18% of California's Latinx adults have a college degree and many Latinx students fail to meet their college dreams. With the majority of Latinx college students attending community college, college leaders are striving to break down barriers and identify support systems to increase Latinx student success.

Research has shown parent involvement is one factor that has been linked to improved academic achievement and motivation (Goldsmith et al., 2018), yet most of the research on parent involvement has focused on White, middle-class families and has not addressed the family centered practices of diverse populations (Auerbach, 2007). Research has also shown Latinx families support college aspirations of their children, but few studies have addressed the impact of parental influence on the college decisions of Latinx students, particularly those attending community college. Ortiz (2004) underscored the need to consider differences in the generational status of Latinx living in the United States since these translate into significant within-group differences that need to be considered when working with Latinx students (Ortiz, 2004). Ortiz further noted, compared with families who have been in the United States for longer, the more traditional first-generation immigrant families are found to have fewer experiences with higher education. Latinx children of parents born outside the United States may reveal unique student experiences, contributions, and challenges in community colleges. A more accurate representation of how immigrant parents influence Latinx students' decisions about college

could help community college leaders understand the role parents may play in increasing the success of Latinx students.

Background of the Problem

Context and Background

Immigrant Latinx parents are misrepresented and misunderstood by institutions of higher education when it comes to the influence parents have on children's decisions about college (Ceja, 2006). Baum and Flores (2011) contended the misrepresentation of parents is in part because the system of higher education in the United States is foreign to immigrants. As a result of cultural differences, citizenship issues, language barriers, and discrimination, immigrant parents frequently have inadequate information about college opportunities, including how to access them (Baum & Flores, 2011; Ceja, 2006).

Durand and Perez (2013) found educators may assume Latinx parents are uninvolved and uninterested in their children's education because the involvement of Latinx parents is often less visible, which leads educators to characterize parent involvement from a deficit perspective. Nonetheless, research has shown Latinx students seek and follow parental advice from their parents when it comes to making educational decisions (Aragon, 2018; Ceballo et al., 2014; Cuyjet et al., 2016).

Studies have shown that despite low levels of education or income, Latinx parents find alternative ways to convey the importance of a college education to their children (Ceja, 2004). Espino (2016) found the contribution of immigrant parents to children's education takes place outside of a college campus. They further noted schools' lack of recognition of the moral development and family values that parents instill at home, which later complement the education and knowledge Latinx students receive at school. Goldsmith's (2018) study of Latinx

parental involvement in high school students found the most dominant themes that influenced parents' values, beliefs, and actions about their children's education were *familia* (family) and caring about the family's welfare.

Researchers have noted strong family ties cause Latinx children to stay close to home for college and to prioritize family responsibilities over school (Nuñez & Crisp, 2012). These factors may contribute to the decision of Latinx students to attend community colleges at higher numbers than other racial/ethnic groups. Ceja (2004) substantiated Latinx students were less likely to enroll in a 4-year college or university immediately following high school and were more likely to concentrate in the community college.

Generational Status

Researchers defined the complexity of generational status through a widely used definition indicating:

First-generation immigrants are foreign-born; second-generation immigrants were born in the United States and have at least one foreign-born parent; natives—third generation or higher—include individuals who were born in the United States and both of whose parents were born in the United States. (Baum & Flores, 2011, para. 12)

Baum and Flores (2011) found immigrants' prior education when they enter the United States contributes to the educational attainment of their children. The authors noted characteristics of immigrants when they arrive in the United States, the subcultures in which they engage, and how parents decide to raise the second generation, explain the variations in overall postsecondary outcome of their children. Baum and Flores also explained Latinx student experiences vary significantly depending on common characteristics that correspond to their family's generation in the United States.

For many Latinx families, poverty is related to the immigrant experience, with successive generations achieving higher socioeconomic levels (Cuyjet et al., 2016). Generational status impacts factors such as “educational attainment, familial influence, bilingual skills, and Spanish language use” (Cuyjet et al., 2016, p. 86) of Latinx students. Because of these factors, the authors underscored that first-generation Latinx community college students are more likely “to be at risk of socioeconomic conditions that impede occupational, financial, and educational attainment” (p. 86). The combined research on Latinx students and generational influences on Latinx families suggested the college experience of Latinx students with immigrant parents was a distinct phenomenon worthy of investigation.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to understand the role immigrant parents played in decisions of Latinx first-generation community college students related to their college education. This study focused on parental influence from the perception of students. Furthermore, the researcher who conducted this study explored parental influence in three areas of decisions students made about college: (a) whether to go to college, (b) where to go to college, and (c) what to study in college.

The researcher sought to recognize and validate the less visible, cultural narratives, advice, and teachings Latinx parents used to support their children’s education (Ceballo et al., 2014). Overall, the goal of this study was to understand the influence immigrant parents had on Latinx students by highlighting the direct and indirect college perceptions participants acquired from their parents and how these perceptions influenced college decisions.

Research Questions

This study was designed to answer the following research questions:

Research Question 1: In what ways do Latinx students perceive having immigrant parents contributed to their acquisition of community cultural capital and influenced their decisions about college?

Research Question 2: How do immigrant parents influence Latinx community college students' decisions in three areas: (a) whether to go to college, (b) where to go to college, and (c) what to study in college?

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Researchers have used critical race theory (CRT) as a theoretical framework to discuss the importance of how historical racial exclusion of minorities has played a role in discrimination against students of color (Fernandez, 2016). Latinx critical race (LatCrit) theorists added important dimensions to critical race theory and is an important framework in the development and research specific to Latinx students (Fernandez, 2016). LatCrit has provided an appropriate lens for qualitative research in the field of education. LatCrit broadens the perspective for researching:

the intersection of such forces as ethnicity, race, immigration, class, sexual orientation, language, and gender allows for critical analysis of the oppressive nature of societal institutions and the opportunity to view cultural resources, experiential knowledge, and resistance as important tools for social justice and equity. (Cuyjet et al., 2016, p. 93)

Researchers have used LatCrit to compare and contrast Latinx student perspectives and views of what counts as knowledge, specifically language, culture, and commitment to communities (Bernal, 2016). LatCrit offered an important lens for this study and the multidimensional identities and lived experiences of first-generation Latinx community college students and immigrant parents.

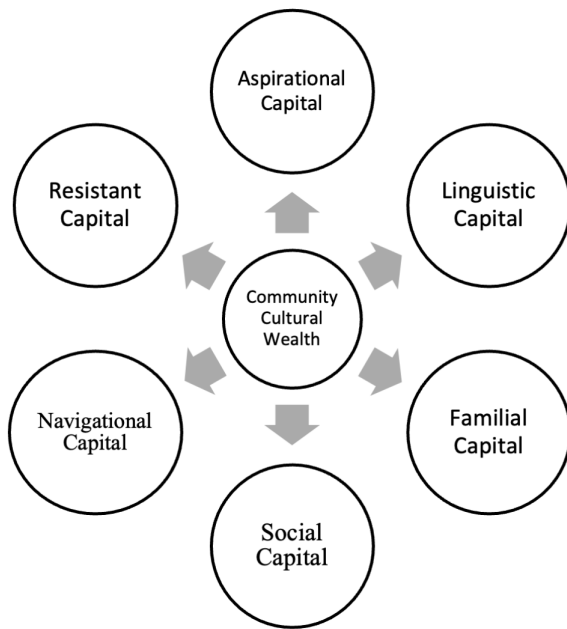
Yosso's (2005) concept of community cultural wealth (CCW) addresses multiple ways in which Latinx youth are supported by their families and home communities when they plan for and attend college. Yosso identified the following six types of cultural capital that influence students:

- Aspirational capital: the ability to dream beyond current circumstances despite real and perceived barriers
- Linguistic capital: the benefits of bilingualism and other forms of communication
- Familial capital: those cultural knowledges nurtured among family (kin) that carry a sense of community history, memory, and cultural intuition
- Social capital: networks of people and community resources
- Navigational capital: the ability to maneuver through social institutions
- Resistant capital: challenging inequities

Figure 1 displays Yosso's CCW model and the six types of cultural capital.

Figure 1

A Model of Community Cultural Wealth



Note. Yosso (2005) found “these six forms of capital are not mutually exclusive or static but rather are dynamic “processes that build on one another as part of community cultural wealth” (p. 77). Adapted from “Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth,” by T. J. Yosso, 2005, *Race, Ethnicity and Education*, 8(1), p. 78 (<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/1361332052000341006>). Copyright 2005 by Carfax Publishing Company.

Yosso’s (2005) CCW model best encapsulates the diverse ways in which Latinx immigrant families gain knowledge and information that may influence their children. The model shows CCW is portrayed through knowledge, skills, abilities and ways communities of color have used to survive and resist oppression. Through the lens of LatCrit, the researcher used the concept of CCW as a conceptual framework for this study with a focus on familial influence.

Table 1 illustrates how the theoretical and conceptual frameworks related to the research questions, data collected, and data sources in this study.

Table 1

Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks

Research questions	Frameworks	Data collected	Source
In what ways do Latinx students perceive having immigrant parents contributed to their acquisition of community cultural capital and influenced their decisions about college?	Latinx critical race theory (LatCrit) Community cultural wealth model (CCW)	Whether parents influenced Latinx students through the six types of capital in the CCW model	Interviews
How do immigrant parents influence Latinx decisions in three areas: (a) decision to go to college, (b) where to go to college, and (c) what to study?	Latinx critical race theory (LatCrit) Community cultural wealth model (CCW)	Do parents influence these three areas? If so, how?	Questionnaire Interviews

Note. This conceptual framework was used to obtain qualitative data (i.e., interviews with Latinx participants).

Methodology

This study was a phenomenological, qualitative study. In a phenomenological study, the researcher begins with determining whether the research problem is best understood through the study of individuals' shared experiences (Lochmiller & Lester, 2017). In this study, the researcher's goal was to capture individual experiences of first-generation Latinx community college student participants who were children of immigrant parents.

The practitioner-scholar solicited study participants by sending an email to students in the database of a selected community college in southern California who self-identified as first-generation and Latinx. The email explained the significance of the study and invited them to

participate. Criteria to participate in the study indicated participants had to self-identify as: (a) Latinx, (b) a first-generation community college student, and (c) a child of immigrants living in the United States. The email included a short questionnaire with four questions as a precursor to the topic, to determine eligibility, and to ask if the student was willing to participate in an interview. The questionnaire served as a way of establishing trustworthiness, as the researcher acknowledged immigration may be a sensitive topic for students to discuss, especially given the prevalence of anti-immigrant political discourse in the recent years prior to this study (Finley & Esposito, 2020). The primary source of data collection was one-on-one, semistructured interviews. According to Bogdan and Biklen (1998), this data collection method allows the researcher to obtain data in participants' own words from which the researcher can then develop insight on how participants interpret a particular phenomenon.

Storytelling

The researcher chose to conduct interviews for data collection as a cultural approach to obtaining data; interviews allowed participants to tell their story. Osorio (2015) described interviews as a form of *counter-storying*, a technique of “telling the story of those experiences that are not often told” (p. 95). Furthermore, Lopez (2007) described storytelling as an essential component of CRT “since the experiential knowledge of people of color is related through privileging forms of storytelling, family histories, oral histories, *testimonios* and narratives” (p. 54). Fernandez (2002) asserted [CRT and LatCrit] “suggest that we must recognize and address the lives of students of color who are often the objects of our educational research and yet are often absent from or silenced within this discourse” (p. 46).

Data Analysis

Themes from Yosso's (2005) six forms of capital in the CCW model were used to organize and analyze data. More themes emerged when analyzing responses to Research Question 2, which addressed parental influence regarding: (a) whether to go to college, (b) where to go to college, and (c) what to study in college. The researcher used thematic analysis as a guide to analyze the data. The thematic analysis process is described in detail in Chapter 3.

Assumptions and Delimitations

This study revealed values, beliefs, and voices of Latinx participants at a community college in southern California, who self-identified as first-generation, children of immigrant parents; however, perceptions of participants were subjective and did not represent perceptions of all Latinx students in community colleges. The researcher refrained from assuming Latinx community college students were a monolithic group. The researcher used the interview questions on family dynamics and parental influence to avoid assumptions and generalizations about Latinx parents. An assumption was participants would answer interview questions truthfully; however, the researcher acknowledged participants may not have wished to answer some questions about their parents, especially about their countries of origin or immigration statuses.

There is extensive literature on Latinx community college students and immigrant parents. These studies have broadened the conversation about how Latinx families make decisions surrounding college, but they have not addressed the conceptual elements of Yosso's (2005) CCW model. The researcher's focus was to explore the narratives of participants through the six forms of capital in Yosso's CCW model and how these forms of capital played a role in participants' college decisions.

Significance of the Study

Studying children of immigrants in the community college may be particularly important to the field of practice and to the body of knowledge about community colleges because these institutions are the gateway to higher education for Latinx—especially first-generation—college students (Conway, 2009). Community colleges play a vital role in college access for Latinx students; however, experts in the field anticipate the community college's role to expand for several reasons including population growth, cost effective education, and college access through legislation (Campaign for College Opportunity, 2018; Conway, 2009). Therefore, the more community college leaders know about how Latinx students are influenced on their college journeys, the more they can do to help them succeed.

In particular, information regarding the influence of immigrant parents on Latinx students' decisions about college could expand the understanding of the low retention and graduation rates of this population of students. College administrators are focusing beyond access to find ways to increase Latinx success and completion (Campaign for College Opportunity, 2018). Furthermore, researchers have suggested Latinx students may not seek support when faced with academic, personal, social, and financial stressors first-generations students experience (Cerezo & McWhirter, 2012). Findings from this study may lead community college constituents to find alternative ways to address needs of Latinx children of immigrant parents by contributing to better understanding how their familial systems support or inhibit their academic success. Finally, children of immigrants' narratives on their parents' influence on college decisions may bring an opportunity for college constituents to communicate and connect with a marginalized immigrant population in a way that could directly impact the success of Latinx students.

Chapter Summary

Given one of the most reliable predictors of first-generation students' success in college is parental educational background and support (Campaign for College Opportunity, 2018), the influence of immigrant parents on the college decisions of Latinx community college students was an area worthy of further study. This chapter provided an overview of the study, including the problem addressed by the researcher, the purpose of the study, and the significance of the study. The researcher introduced LatCrit and Yosso's (2005) CCW model as the theoretical and conceptual frameworks for this study. The research design, key terms, assumptions, and delimitations were also presented. Finally, this chapter provided operational definitions for key terminology presented throughout this study.

Definitions of Key Terms

The researcher used the following definition of terms found in this study:

- **first-generation students:** In this study, this term refers to students whose parents' highest level of education is less than a college degree.
- **generational status:** Here, generational status refers to the number of generations a family has lived in the United States.
- **immigrant:** An immigrant is person who decides to live in another country other than their country of birth. The term does not imply citizenship status in the United States.
- **Latinx:** A gender-neutral term, Latinx refers to people of Latin American descent or ethnic identity living in the United States. Other terms found in the literature to refer to the Latinx community include but are not limited to Hispanic, Latino, Latina, Mexican, Mexican American, Chicano, and Chicana.

- **student perception:** Student perception is a student's point of view about their parents' attitudes or influences.

Organization of the Study

Chapter 1 of the dissertation presented an overview and organization of the study. Chapter 2 provides a detailed literature review of the practice of workforce development at community colleges, including a foundational theoretical framework, mission of practice, expectations of practice, gaps in practice, and promising practices. Chapter 3 features the research methodology used for the study. Chapter 4 details the research findings. Finally, Chapter 5 provides a conclusion to the study with a discussion of findings, implications of the study, and researcher recommendations.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

This chapter contains a review of the literature and is organized in themes as follows: (a) critical race theory (CRT) and Latinx critical race theory (LatCrit), (b) Yosso's (2005) community cultural wealth (CCW) model (c) first-generation college students, (d) decisions about college, and (e) Latinx immigrant parents. These themes helped organize the exploration of the literature regarding factors related to the purpose of this study, which was to understand the role of immigrant parents on the college decisions of Latinx community college students. The chapter focuses on theoretical and conceptual frameworks, as well as literature relevant to the study population and college-decision-making process.

Critical Race Theory and Latino Critical Race Theory

CRT and LatCrit aid in the examination of structural systems of racism and inequality experienced by people of color in the United States. CRT defines race as “a human invention constructed by groups to differentiate themselves from other groups, to create ideas about the ‘other,’ to formulate identities, and to defend the disproportionate distribution for rewards and opportunities within a society” (Banks, 1995, p. 22). As a result of systematic exclusionary processes based on race, CRT theorists have argued people of color have certain life experiences that differ from White people. For that reason, CRT theorists have maintained people of color should narrate their life experiences because they are best suited to communicate their reality and understanding of the world (Bernal, 2016).

A CRT and LatCrit lens focuses on moving away from a deficit view of communities of color as places full of cultural poverty and disadvantages toward the perspective that researchers can learn from communities of color and the cultural wealth they possess (Yosso, 2005). Furthermore, Villalpando (2004) argued CRT and LatCrit focus on social justice and social

justice practice, as both frameworks “strive to eliminate all forms of subordination on the basis of race, gender, language, generation status sexual preference and class” (p. 45).

CRT in Education

CRT was initially applied in legal studies but has since been extended to education (Solórzano & Yosso, 2001). Both CRT and LatCrit have the potential to contribute significantly to research focused on students of color, in particularly regarding the personal experiences and challenges faced by students of color (Fernandez, 2002). In education, CRT theorists’ analysis about race has revealed that students of color are systematically excluded from educational opportunities. There are five tenets of CRT in education that serve to guide educational research, (a) the centrality and intersectionality of race and racism, (b) the challenge to dominant ideology, (c) the commitment to social justice, (d) the centrality of experiential knowledge, and (e) the interdisciplinary perspective (Fernandez, 2002, Solórzano & Yosso, 2001; Yosso, 2005).

Fernandez (2002), Solórzano and Yosso (2001), and Yosso (2005) have explained the five tenets of CRT through their work with and research on people of color. First, the centrality and intersectionality of race and racism focuses on a discussion of these topics that includes multiple faces, voices, and experiences of people of color. Second, CRT in education challenges the educational system and its institutions to move equal opportunity for students of color. Third, a commitment to social justice argues for liberty and transformation in response to racial, gender, and class oppression. Fourth, the centrality of experiential knowledge in education recognizes students of color experiential knowledge as legitimate, critical, and essential for teaching in the field of education. This means studies about people of color that include methods such as storytelling, family histories, biographies, and narratives should be valued as critical for understanding and analyzing in any educational setting. Finally, the transdisciplinary perspective

in CRT in education insists on analyzing race and racism in education by using an approach that brings disciplines such as ethnic studies, women studies, sociology, history, and law together to better understand racism and classism in education.

LatCrit

Valdes (1996), the leading founder of LatCrit, noted CRT has been “insensitive to the limitations in scope and depth of the ‘black/white paradigm’ as an exclusive lens for the deconstruction of race and race-based subordination in a multi-cultural society” (p. 4). Valdes, Aoki and Johnson (2008), Villalpando (2004), and other researchers have argued other ethnic groups have also struggled against racial subordination and oppression. LatCrit focuses on studying the civil rights of the Latinx population and how they intersect and differentiate from the experience of other subordinated groups (Aoki & Johnson, 2008).

LatCrit is defined as “the emerging field of legal scholarship that examines critically the social and legal positioning of Latinas/os, especially Latinas/os in the United States, to help rectify the shortcomings of existing social and legal conditions” (Valdez, 1998, p. 3). LatCrit expands its analysis to address issues such as language, accent, immigration, ethnicity, culture, socioeconomic status, and to highlight how these factors intersect with race among Latinx communities (Villalpando, 2004). Therefore, though CRT and LatCrit emphasize the importance of how race and racism affect the experiences of college students of color, “LatCrit is especially conscious of accounting for how additional dimensions of identity might also be subjected to additional or different forms of discrimination or marginalization in the case of Latinos” (Villalpando, 2004, p. 43).

CRT/LatCrit in Community College Studies

Several studies have applied CRT or LatCrit to analyze the experience of community college students. Cahill (2019) studied challenges of Latinx community college students whose goal is to transfer to a 4-year university. The author relied on CRT and LatCrit and Yosso's (2005) CCW model to explore the experiences of students in the transfer process. Cahill found, by looking through the lens of LatCrit, the findings "exposed the subtle forms of discrimination that these students experience from classmates, instructors, and administrative staff" (p. 123). The author also found the intersection of the forms of oppression in their study were based on ethnicity and gender, and students resisted oppression in various ways.

Chavez (2019) investigated the impact of a transformative peer mentor model on Latinx community college students. Chavez (2019) used CRT to "examine how community college peer mentors and mentees make sense of the role of race and racism in their lived experiences" (p. 36). Because immigration status impacts student success, Chavez deemed LatCrit to be appropriate when studying Latinx because LatCrit uncovers additional forms of discrimination related to immigration. The findings of this study led Chavez to offer solutions on effective ways to promote retention, persistence, completion, and transfer by using elements from a transformative peer mentor model.

Gonzalez (2016) conducted a mixed-methods case study to examine the barriers prehealth community college students in the Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS) face. The researcher noted Latinx students in prehealth majors experienced additional challenges. In many cases, Latinx students felt alienated in science courses and not understood in the classroom. Gonzalez (2016) argued Latinx students' experiences align with CRT because "students are well aware of their ethnicity and identify and how it affects them in classroom

interactions and engagement with instructors” (p. 76). Gonzalez’s findings suggested five themes to help community colleges assist Latinx students, especially those in prehealth majors, succeed.

Yosso’s Community Cultural Wealth Model

Yosso (2005, 2006) began to introduce a new conceptual framework while investigating the context of social inequality to explain the experiences of those outside the dominant class. Yosso noted this work was built on that of Bourdieu and Passeron’s (1977) argument that “the knowledges of the upper and middle classes are considered capital valuable to hierarchical society” (Yosso, 2005, p. 70). Yosso explained the idea was if someone is not born into a family whose knowledge is perceived as valuable, then one could access the knowledge of a middle- or upper-class family, and therefore the potential for social mobility through formal schooling (Yosso, 2005). Yosso further noted previous notions that assumed people of color lack the social and cultural capital for social mobility led to an educational structure in which schools often try to find ways to help “disadvantaged students whose race and class background has left them lacking necessary knowledge, social skills, abilities, and cultural capital” (Yosso, 2005, p.70).

Yosso (2005) criticized the assumption students of color have cultural deficiencies. By using CRT, Yosso (2005) challenged traditional interpretations of cultural capital theory by arguing “cultural capital is not just inherited or possessed by the middle class, but rather it refers to an accumulation of specific forms of knowledge, skills and abilities that are valued by privilege groups in society (p. 79). Through a CRT lens, Yosso and Solórzano (2005) argued researchers can counter the deficit perspectives of people of color by recognizing cultural wealth is already present in these communities of color.

Yosso (2005, 2006) introduced an alternative concept of CCW, which included six forms of capital: (a) aspirational, (b) navigational, (c) social, (d) linguistic, (e) familial, and (f)

resistant—all of which encompass CCW and are often unacknowledged or underrecognized. CCW calls for examining “some of the under-utilized assets students of color bring with them from their homes and communities into the classroom” (Yosso, 2005, p. 70). The six forms of cultural community capital are defined as follows:

Aspirational capital refers to the ability to have high hopes for the future despite social, economic, and institutional barriers. It is the idea of nurturing the goals and aspirations for the future, regardless of low educational attainment or academic abilities in the family history. Several studies have shown, despite not having a college degree, Latinx parents foster aspirational capital in their children (Acevedo-Gil, 2017; Yosso, 2005).

Linguistic capital describes the ways in which people communicate in more than one language or form of expression such as art, poetry, or music. It also refers to the idea of storytelling as a tradition and communication skill. Yosso (2005) provided the example of bilingual children who are often called upon to translate for their parents as showing skills of increased vocabulary, cross-cultural awareness, familial responsibility, and social maturity.

Familial capital consists of the cultural knowledges nurtured among *familia* (kin) that carry a sense of community, history, memory, and cultural intuition (Yosso, 2005). These relationships allow for a collective understanding around emotional, educational, and occupational awareness. These relationships can be within families or extended families that value similar beliefs and norms.

Social capital encompasses networks of people and community resources. Peer or other social contacts that can provide instrumental and emotional support to navigate through social institutions. Yosso (2005) stated scholars have historically documented how people of color have

used their social capital to gain upward mobility. This type of capital has allowed immigrants to overcome adversity in their daily lives by uniting with supportive social networks.

Navigational capital refers to the ability to navigate institutions in which people of color are underrepresented. Scholars have examined individual, family, and community factors that support students' academic ability to successfully make their way through the educational system. It also connects to social networks that facilitate community navigation through places including the job market, health care, and judicial systems (Yosso, 2005).

Resistant capital refers to the skills created through oppositional behavior that challenge inequality. This type of cultural wealth is rooted in the idea of resistance to subordination. Yosso (2005) gave examples of parents exercising this form of cultural wealth by “consciously instructing their children to engage in behaviors and maintain attitudes that challenge the status quo” (p. 81). Furthermore, resistant capital includes cultural knowledge of the structures of racism and motivation to transform such oppressive structures.

Studies Applying Yosso's CCW Model

Yosso's CCW model can be applied to help understand how first-generation Latinx students find alternative social networks that enable their academic success despite inequitably structured educational opportunities (Yosso, 2005, 2006). Several studies have used Yosso's CCW model as a theoretical framework to study Latinx students in education. Butler et al. (2020) examined various studies on Yosso's CCW model and how it has been used in studying Latinx student engagement, specifically at community colleges. The authors focused on studies published between January 2014 and December 2019. The 21 studies they found used Yosso's CCW framework as a theoretical model to make sense of students' experiences; some studies used all six forms of cultural capital, whereas others focused on a specific capital. For example,

Briceño-Moreno (2017, as cited in Butler et al., 2020) focused on the experiences and stories of Latinx first generation studies as they navigate community colleges that are considered Hispanic-serving institutions. The researcher found students used aspirational capital as an asset to overcome any barriers that enabled their engagement while in college.

In addition, Cortes (2017, as cited in Butler et al., 2020) explored how Latinx STEM students persevered in a calculus course despite institutional challenges. The author used Yosso's CCW model to explore the forms of capital students brought to the classroom. In this study, familial, social, and resistant capital were recurrent in the findings showing students relied on support from family and peers to pass the courses. Students also showed resistant capital by attempting the course multiple times to succeed.

Saenz et al. (2018, as cited in Butler et al., 2020) studied how Latino male students balance family obligations, work, and academics while in college. The sample included 130 participants from seven distinct community colleges in Texas. Findings revealed participants' familial capital also influenced their social and aspirational capital, which all contributed to students' college success. An important finding showed Latino males found it difficult to seek help in college because they found the college environment to be unwelcoming.

First-Generation College Students

Research has shown first-generation college students are demographically different from the subsequent generation of college students. Although researchers have defined this differently, for the purposes of this literature review, first-generation college students are defined as those whose parents have less than a high school diploma or those for whom neither parent holds a college degree (Choy, 2001). According to Nichols and Islas (2016):

being a first-generation college student is highly correlated with an increased likelihood of being from a family with limited economic resources, being born outside the United States, and belonging to an ethnic minority group that is underrepresented in higher education. (p. 62)

Researchers have indicated first-generation students tend to be enrolled part time and are more likely than students whose parents went to college to work while attending college (Choy, 2001). Other researchers have found first-generation students receive less support in the college process from family members than students with parents who attended college (Auerbach, 2006; Cahill, 2019; Goldsmith, 2018). This finding supports other research stating first-generation college students face challenges in the transition from high school to college (Choy, 2001; Conway, 2009). Other studies have addressed how first-generation students find it difficult to seek help (Gonzales, 2016; Nichols & Islas, 2016). Taken together, these findings indicate being a first-generation student is tied to significant challenges that may hinder students' graduation and transfer goals.

Parental Influence on First-Generation College Students

In their study about parental influence in students' 1st year in college, Nichols and Islas (2016) found the ways in which parents helped their children differed by the educational background of their parents. Although all students spoke frequently about parental support, first-generation college students said, "the biggest thing that their parents provided was support, while continuing generation college students cited multiple instances of receiving specific help from their parents" (Nichols & Islas, 2016, p. 78). Similarly, Ceja's (2004, 2006) studies highlighted direct and indirect forms of influence Latinx parents provide to their children, particularly through emotional support, encouragement, and stressing the importance of having an education.

First-generation college students also felt pressured to fulfill their parents' expectations to well in school. Kim and Gasman (2011) found first-generation, Asian-American students "were determined to succeed academically because they understood the hardships their immigrant parents endured" (p. 717). Several researchers have found parental encouragement and support are important motivators for first-generation Latinx students pursuing a college education (Auerbach, 2006; Ceja, 2004 2006; Goldsmith, 2018; Nichols & Islas, 2016; Ortiz, 2004). Although parents of first-generation college students are limited in their knowledge about college due to their minimal exposure and understanding of the educational system in the United States, they still find ways to relay the value of education (Ceja, 2006; Goldsmith, 2018; Nichols & Islas, 2016).

Decisions About College

The type of institution an individual chooses for college may affect several life-changing outcomes such as persistence, degree attainment, continuing to graduate school, and overall satisfaction with the college experience (Perez & McDonough, 2008). The college decisions students make have a direct impact on their future benefits and opportunities. A widely used college choice model developed by Hossler and Gallagher (1987) describes three sequential stages students experience when making the transition from high school to college. The three stages are described as follows:

The first stage—predisposition—occurs between 6th and 10th grade and entails a student developing an interest in pursuing college. The student then enters the second stage—search—in which she considers the colleges to apply to during 11th and 12th grades. Then in the choice stage, the student applies to, receives admission offers, and selects an institution to attend. (Acevedo-Gil, 2017, p. 830)

It is in the predisposition state where Hossler and Gallagher indicated the influence of parents, peers, and high school characteristics can shape the extent to which students will choose whether to pursue postsecondary education. In the search phase, students begin to create a choice based on information-seeking behaviors. This model showed parental encouragement and academic preparation were more important in the predisposition stage than family income (Acevedo-Gil, 2017; Ceja, 2006).

College Choice and Students of Color

Although Hossler and Gallagher's (1987) college choice model has been used extensively for studies on the transition from high school to college, other researchers have argued the model is inadequate for students of color (Acevedo-Gil, 2017). A key limitation of this model is it was based on data regarding middle-income students with initial college enrollment at 4-year institutions without consideration of community colleges as a pathway for students. Research about college enrollment has predicted diversity among students will continue to increase (Campaign for College Opportunity, 2018; Conway, 2009). Therefore, the lack of a more diverse perspective in this well-recognized model leaves unanswered questions for students of color and their parents. Despite its limitations, Hossler and Gallagher's work has provided a practical model on which other researchers have built.

Acevedo-Gil (2017) noted critics of Hossler and Gallagher's (1987) college choice model have argued the traditional college choice model fails to address nontraditional students and social contexts that surround low-income, first-generation Latinx students. Acevedo-Gil introduced other college choice models, such as the college-*conocimiento* framework, which is being introduced by Latinx researchers to address the complex and intersectional experiences of

Latinxs and the complex experiences of Latinx students when choosing a college and self-advocating.

Garcia et al. (2019) studied first-generation Puerto Rican students living off the island (DiaspoRican) and their journey in making decisions about college choice. The study showed DiaspoRican students created a network of support with parents and community members to assist with the college choice process that was unlikely acknowledged or recognized by school officials. DiaspoRican students spoke about having a sense of fulfilling aspirations of parents and other family members when deciding to go to college. For DiaspoRican families in this study, college choice was a collective, not an individual, journey. The study also highlighted the importance of documenting the distinct ethnic experiences of Latinx students in the United States.

Kim and Gasman's (2011) findings on Asian American college students and college choice suggested students considered family and peers to be the most important influence on their decisions about where to apply and attend college. The authors noted Asian American parents held higher educational expectations for their children compared to parents of other ethnic groups. The study showed Asian American students and their families thought an education was worth the investment in a first-choice college, even if it meant getting loans. Kim and Gasman (2011) concluded, "students described their parents as caring deeply about their education and the type of institutions they would attend and careers they would later pursue" (p. 716). Similar to Garcia et al.'s (2019) emphasis on diversity in the Latinx student experience, Kim and Gasman challenged the notion Asian American students are a monolithic group. They argued Asian student populations vary in family backgrounds, generational status, and

immigration history, and the communities in which they are raised shape their college choice processes.

Kim (2004) analyzed the impact financial aid plays on students' first-choice college across racial groups. The author noted about 80% of student consider financial aid as an important factor when making decisions on which college or university to attend. When looking at racial groups, the data revealed, compared to Latino and African American students, whose college choices were influenced by financial aid, Asian American students were strongly influenced by having loans or a combination of grants and loans when choosing to attend their first-choice colleges. However, Kim found, for Latinos and African Americans, the decision about their first-choice college may change depending on the financial aid they are offered.

Perez and McDonough (2008, as cited in Garcia et al., 2019) documented interviews with 106 Latinx students in the Los Angeles area and factors that contributed to these first-generation college students' college choices. The study revealed, although the students said they talked to their parents about college and said their family played a critical role in their college choice process, the students relied on information from their siblings, peers, relatives, and high school contacts to determine college choice (Garcia et al., 2019).

College Choice and First-Generation Students

Acevedo-Gil (2017) suggested first-generation students may receive less familial support and can be less likely to be prepared for college, especially in the search stage of Hossler and Gallagher's (1987) college choice model. Acevedo-Gil noted low-income students tend to rely on peers and school counselors for information about college, in comparison to high-income students, who rely heavily on parents and private college counselors. This finding corroborates parental education and family income have an effect during the choice stage and supports the

argument that low-income, first-generation students are more likely to choose a 2-year college (Acevedo-Gil, 2017; Choy, 2001; Kurklaender, 2006).

Choy's (2001) study on students whose parents did not go to college found parents' education mattered to high school students as they thought about college enrollment after graduation. The author noted high school students whose parents did not attend college were twice as likely as their peers to attend a 2-year institution instead of a 4-year institution. Choy concluded parents' educational attainment, or lack thereof, influenced the decision on whether to go to college and what type of college they decided to attend. Similarly, Kim's (2004) data from 1st-year undergraduate students attending 4-year institutions in 1994 showed fathers' education and financial aid as being influential in students' first-choice college. When looking at Latinx students, findings revealed students whose fathers had only completed some college or a college degree and who were offered grants and loans as financial aid were less likely to attend their first-choice institution. In contrast, Latinx students whose fathers had at least some graduate education were more likely to attend their first-choice college if they received grants and loans as financial aid. Both studies indicated parents' educational level impacts students' college decisions in some way (Choy, 2001; Kim, 2004).

Owen et al. (2020) presented another study that examined preferences of high school seniors for receiving college and career information. The authors found first-generation students relied heavily on school staff to make sense of college options and entrance requirements. Although students reported visiting a school counselor was beneficial in helping them make college decisions, the researchers noted students "seek college information from parents, friends, and college brochures more often than consulting with a school counselor" (p. 71). Interestingly,

Kim's (2004) study on 1st-year university students revealed, among Latinx students, friends' suggestions had more impact on college choice than teacher or academic counselor advice.

College Costs

Hoxby and Avery (2013) contended many eligible high-achieving, low-income students often lack information about college opportunities and have familial, cultural, and social issues that prevent them from applying to more selective colleges. The researchers noted when low-income students enroll in college, it is likely to be at less selective 4-year universities or community colleges. The authors concluded many low-income students do not apply to any college at all and thus remain unlikely to continue their education beyond high school. The researcher's argument supports many studies that have shown college cost and financial aid are important criteria in the college choice process (Choy, 2001; Hoxby & Avery, 2013; Kim 2004; Kim & Gasman, 2011; Kurklaender, 2006).

For low-income students, college cost remains a barrier to access and college choice. In most cases, however, low-income students are limited in their access to information about college applications, cost, and access. Kim and Nuñez (2013) found Latinx students were more likely to be part of families with lower income levels. Furthermore, Latinx students with limited information are unlikely to apply to 4-year universities due to misconceptions of college costs, even if they qualified to attend, thus, affecting their college choice (Kim & Nuñez 2013, Kurklaender, 2006). Studies about choice decisions, especially for low-income students, have repeatedly demonstrated college costs affect college choice. Community college is often the only choice for low-income students who lack information on financial aid programs and scholarships that would help fulfill college or university costs (Cahill, 2019; Hoxby & Avery, 2013; Kim 2004; Kim & Gasman, 2011).

What to Study in College

Gallup and the Strada Education Network (2017) conducted one of the largest studies to date on preferences for college and career information and advice (as cited in Gallup, 2017). Gallup and Strada's study surveyed more than 22,000 18- to 65-year-old adults to identify where they received advice about choosing a college major and the perceived helpfulness of the advice given. The findings in the Gallup and Strada study revealed 55% of respondents identified friends and family members as their main source for advice when choosing a major. The findings also showed students in 4-year programs were more likely to seek advice from their informal social networks (family, friends, or community leaders), whereas first-generation college students and students attending 2-year programs were less likely to seek advice from their informal social networks.

When examining student ethnicity and choice of majors, the study showed Hispanics were less likely to get information from their family and friends for college major advice (Gallup, 2017). However, Hispanics pursued advice from formal sources such as high school and college counselors, media, or the internet, especially first-generation students whose parents did not have the knowledge about college majors (Gallup, 2017). On factors that influence students' decisions about college, research has repeatedly shown how factors like income, generation, and race and ethnicity intersect to influence students' decisions on where to go to college and what to study (Cahill, 2019; Choy, 2001; Gonzalez, 2016; Kurklaender, 2006).

Latinx Immigrant Parents and the Education of Their Children

The National Education Longitudinal Study, which used data from 1988 to 1994, revealed the overwhelming majority of immigrant parents expect their children to go to college, graduate, and have a successful career (Kim & Gasman, 2011). The study showed more than half

of Asian immigrant youth in the study had parents who expected them to go beyond college, while less than one fifth of Mexican immigrant youth had parents with expectations that high. Kim and Gasman (2011) noted, “immigrant and second-generation Asian youth had higher educational expectations than did immigrants and second-generation youth from other racial and ethnic groups (p. 722). They attributed this finding to second-generation youth being raised by their parents with the same expectation to attend college and, therefore, holding that expectation for their children.

Significant research has well documented the Latino population is heterogenous, and Latino students come from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds that impact their experience in the United States (Villalpando, 2004). For example, students from farmworking families are likely to have a very different economic experience from middle-class Latinos, as well as a different experience living in the United States. Villalpando suggested college experiences and the decision-making processes of children of immigrants will differ depending on the experiences of their parents.

Moral Support

Acevedo-Gil (2017) suggested Latinx immigrant parents may have limited formal education and college knowledge, yet they display the importance of college to their children. The author noted Latinx college students often attribute their pursuit of higher education to parental support. Auerbach (2006) argued moral support is the essence of how Latinx immigrant parents participate in their children’s schooling: “Moral support encompasses practices such as stressing the value of education and hard work; encouraging students to study, do well, and go to college; and sharing *consejos* (narrative advice) and other stories to reinforce the message” (p.

276). The author noted a common practice for parents was translating their experiences of hard work into lessons for working hard in school.

According to a study by Auerbach (2007) on parent roles among families of color, Latino immigrant parents often attribute the contributions in their child's education as moral support.

The Latino immigrant parents in the study:

had the lowest educational attainment, least English fluency, and least knowledge in K-16 knowledge in the sample. [Parents] offered moral and emotional support for college largely in the form of talking with their children, as in stressing the value of education, study, and hard work. (p. 261)

The author found parents in this study also expressed trust in their children to do well academically and take the steps needed to get to university on their own. Auerbach concluded parents used moral and emotional support as strategies to promote college to their children, as well as stressing the importance of having a career.

Influence on Attending College

Ceja (2004) investigated the topic of how first-generation college Latina students perceived and understood how their parents influenced their educational goals and aspirations. Ceja (2004) focused on the attention "given to what parents say and do that enables these parents to instill the importance of attaining a college education among their daughters" (p. 339). For Latina students, the encouragement they received from parents comprised advice regarding education, high motivation, and positive encouragement as well as high expectations, despite parents' low levels of education and income. Parents in this study had no formal experience with the U.S. educational system, and many did not speak English fluently. Interestingly, Ceja (2006) found siblings also influence students' decisions about college. Regarding the role of parents and

siblings as sources in the college choice process of Latinx students, although Mexican American parents placed high value on college, their children also relied heavily on their siblings for information about the college process, especially when a sibling had attended college.

Park and Holloway's (2012) study on parental involvement in adolescents revealed, as children got older, parent involvement in schools decreased, but expectations of their children increased as they entered high school. When noting differences among ethnic groups, Park and Holloway found "Latino parents consistently endorse the importance of education but may express lower expectations concerning their future achievement than do parents in other groups" (p. 107). The study showed language was also a factor in Latino parent involvement. Parents who do not speak English and are not familiar with the education system in the United States may find it difficult to participate in the school site. Results of the study also indicated "Latino parents become involved in their children's schooling but may do so in ways that are not detected or appreciated by school administrators and teachers" (Park & Holloway, 2012, p. 116).

Where Latinx Students Go to College

There is a need to understand the decision-making process of Latinx when choosing a postsecondary pathway (Cox 2016; Perez & Ceja 2015). In a study on the college choice of Latinx, Kurlaender (2006) found, even when controlling for differences in academic achievement, gender, and financial resources, Latinx students were more likely to attend a community college, when compared to all other students.

In addition, Kurlaender (2006) argued Latinx students are more likely than their White peers to be financially disadvantaged and, therefore, more likely to choose institutions with low tuition and a class schedule that will allow for work and family commitments. The researcher noticed when choosing socioeconomic status or academic achievement as variables to skew

results on college choice, the results did not change, suggesting regardless of income or achievement, Latinx students disproportionately choose community colleges over 4-year institutions. Kurlaender concluded, due to high Latinx population in states with accessible community college access, students selected these institutions because of convenience and lack of access to nearby universities. However, results of the study indicated, even when examining data for different states, Latinx were still more likely than White and African American students to choose a community college over a university.

Although the study did not include distance as a factor, research has shown program flexibility such as offering evening courses or part-time enrollment and proximity to home might be important factors in Latinx college choice decisions (Kurlaender, 2006). Other studies also showed first-generation Latinx students who attended community colleges typically attend part time due to work schedules and family responsibilities (Campaign for College Opportunity, 2018; Cuyjet et al., 2016). These findings suggest fully understanding factors that lead Latinx students to disproportionally enroll in community colleges requires further study.

There is evidence geographic location of colleges has a significant role in Latinx and college choice. The Cooperative Institutional Research Program, which examined Latinx degree attainment documented, “Latinx were the most likely to cite wanting to live near home as a ‘very important’ reason for choosing their college” (Perez & McDonough, 2008, p. 259). According to students, Latino parents voiced strong preferences regarding college choice, especially with regard to location.

Summary

The literature on the topic of parental influence has primarily documented the broad roles of parents regarding college decisions of their high school children. There was a consistent

disregard in these studies for the experience of immigrant Latinx parents and their children. Few studies have examined the effects of generational status of Latinx students and college decisions. However, no studies were found that examined the experience of children of immigrants. For this study, the researcher investigated the college decision process of Latinx children of immigrant parents. Moreover, most studies on parental influence on college decisions of students, regardless of the ethnic group, have focused on high school students making college choice decisions about attending 4-year colleges and universities. This trend further points to the need for more research on the experience of community college students and how their parents may have influenced their college decisions.

Furthermore, studies on college choice models have underscored the necessity for additional studies of Latinx students and college choice (Garcia, et al., 2019). Although previous studies on the college choice experiences of Latinx groups progressed knowledge in the area, there is a need to develop college choice models that challenge the notion the Latino community is a monolithic group. This literature review revealed important aspects of parental influence on some Latinx college decisions, while showing a need for studies specific to the Latinx community college population.

This chapter provided a review of the literature addressing the key themes informing the research questions guiding this study. The researcher reported on historical and recent literature about Latinx community college students. Immigrant Latinx parents' involvement and influence in their children's education was also discussed. An analysis of CRT, LatCrit, and Yosso's CCW model were discussed as the theoretical and conceptual frameworks used as a lens for this study. The next chapter highlights this study's methodology.

Chapter 3 - Methodology

This chapter describes the methodological framework used to explore Latinx community college students' perceptions about how their immigrant parents affected their college decisions. First, this chapter focuses on the researcher's reflexivity to provide positioning with the phenomenon of this study. Second, the chapter includes an overview of the methodological framework and approach to the study. Third, the researcher presents the research questions, research design, site selection, and sampling methods. Fourth, the researcher discusses data collection, analysis, and validity. Finally, the researcher addresses ethical considerations for this study.

Reflexivity

Lochmiller and Lester (2017) defined *reflexivity* as the process of intentionally accounting for researcher assumptions, biases, experiences, and identities that may impact any aspect of a research study. As a first-generation, Latinx student and a child of immigrant parents, the researcher's experiences, knowledge, and insights may have affected the data collection and analysis processes. Berger (2015) suggested a positive effect of having a shared experience position is participants may feel receptive and cooperative to share their experience with someone who has a similar experience (i.e., participants may feel a sense of comfort and trust). Berger also noted one of the dangers of a shared experience is participants may withhold information they assume to be obvious to the researcher.

From the data analysis perspective, the researcher may have been better equipped with personal insight and the ability to understand sensitive cultural content, such as terminology in a native language (Berger, 2015). Before the interviews began, the researcher stressed to

participants, although they may share the experience of this study, their stories were unique, and the researcher hoped to learn theirs.

Pillow (2003) suggested researchers must navigate how to use their own experiences, which offer intimate familiarity and thus potentially deeper understanding of the phenomenon being studied, while not imposing their experience on participants. As a college counselor, the researcher had experience with listening attentively to students' needs and challenges while keeping the focus on them; this approach was useful during interviews. The researcher found a balance between restraining personal experiences to avoid imposing or deviating from participants' interview responses, while expressing an understanding of their experience by sharing relatable examples. When appropriate, the researcher validated participants' emotions as they talked about family memories. Researcher empathy led to participants sharing and trusting the researcher with sensitive and personal family stories.

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to understand immigrant parents' influence on the college decisions of Latinx community college student participants. The study focused on two aspects of influence. First, the focus was on how participants felt the experiences of their immigrant parents living in the United States had influenced their community cultural capital and their college decisions. Second, the study focused on three specific areas of parental influence on participants' decisions about college. The practitioner conducted the study from the perspective of the student by using qualitative research methods, addressing the following research questions:

Research Question 1: In what ways do Latinx students perceive having immigrant parents contributed to their acquisition of community cultural capital and influenced their decisions about college?

Research Question 2: How do immigrant parents influence Latinx community college students' decisions in three areas: (a) whether to go to college, (b) where to go to college, and (c) what to study in college?

Theoretical and Conceptual Lenses

The researcher used critical race theory (CRT) and Latinx critical race theory (LatCrit) as the theoretical lenses through which to examine participants' perspectives. An integral aspect of CRT is the use of counter-stories to “challenge, displace, or mock pernicious narratives and beliefs of communities of color” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012, p. 49). Delgado and Stefancic (2012) argued, when stories of people of color are written well, stories have the ability to emphasize evidence that has been neglected and to remind others of humanity. Yosso and Solórzano (2005) noted using CRT allows the researcher to ask, “Whose stories are privileged in academic discourse, mass media, and social policy contexts and whose stories are silenced?” (p. 124). It is through these counter-stories that the storytelling tradition continues among people of color; these stories can be used to address racism in higher education by using patterns and themes as evidence in data. LatCrit in education was essential for the researcher to relate the educational experience of Latinx students in college (Bernal, 2016).

Because this study was an investigation of participants' perceptions grounded in their cultural and familial experiences, Yosso's (2005) community cultural wealth (CCW) model was used by the researcher as the conceptual lens to document cultural capital. Through interviews, the researcher identified whether participants possessed the six forms of capital Yosso (2005, 2006) described in the CCW model: aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational, and resistant. Yosso (2005, 2006) argued students of color possess these six forms of capital from

communal funds of knowledge (i.e., the personal experiences they encounter in their families and communities). Yosso and Solórzano (2005) concluded:

Cultural knowledge is very valuable to the student and his/her family, not necessarily considered to carry any capital in the school context. This leads researchers to ask if there are forms of cultural capital that marginalized groups bring to the table that traditional cultural capital theory does not recognize or value? (p. 129)

The researcher explored and answered that question in this study by using the narratives of Latinx community college students to see what forms of cultural capital participants possessed or lacked. This theoretical lens used by the researcher captured how different forms of capital emerged in participants' experiences and stories.

Research Design

According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), a qualitative study is best suited when researchers aim to understand "how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences" (p. 6). Lochmiller and Lester (2017) defined *phenomenology* as a qualitative methodology that applies a philosophical perspective to the study of human experience and explained, rather than an individual experience, a phenomenological researcher seeks to understand shared participant experiences.

A phenomenological, qualitative research methodology was used in this study to best understand the lived experiences of Latinx community college student participants and their perceptions about the influence their immigrant parents had in their education. The researcher's goal was to capture the perspective of participants by giving them the opportunity to tell their stories. This study's goal was to document participants' voices, perspectives, thoughts, beliefs, and opinions that led them to make decisions about college. Lochmiller and Lester (2017) noted

another characteristic of a phenomenological approach in data analysis occurs when the researcher focuses on common themes across data. In this study, the common themes were the six forms of cultural wealth described in detail in the literature review.

Study Setting

The site for this study was a midsized community college located in southern California. The college has a main campus along with multiple off-campus locations and a distance education option, a platform that offers courses over the internet. The college service area has many tourist attractions and rich agricultural farmlands. The area is also distinctive for significant disparities in income, education, and housing.

The institution's 2017–2022 educational master plan (EMP) included U.S. Census Bureau (n.d.) data that indicated the surrounding cities the college serves have a racial/ethnic community of 53% Latinx, 39% White, 3% Asian, and 2% other. The overall population of the college's service area was slightly over 409,000 in 2015, a growth of 1.6% per year since 2011. The state of California grew by only 1% per year. The college's EMP revealed labor market data from Economic Modeling Specialists International, which identified major industries in the area as arts, hospitality, healthcare, business and entrepreneurship, construction/manufacturing, agriculture, transportation, information technology, service occupations, and education/teaching.

The college's EMP indicated enrollment of over 15,000 students (U.S. Census Bureau, n.d.). The students attending this college come from diverse backgrounds in ethnicity, age, and income. In terms of socioeconomic status, the college's EMP revealed nearly half (48%) of students are from low socioeconomic status as determined by financial aid criteria. The institution's demographic data indicated the majority of students (56%) are female, and most (61%) are younger than 25 years old. Furthermore, the percentage of Latinx students grew from

63% in 2011 to 71% in 2015. The college's research office concluded approximately 84% of students are first in their family to attend college.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2019, Table 312.40), the college is a federally designated Hispanic-serving institution. Although there are no college data to indicate the percentage of students who are children of immigrants, the high proportion of students who are Latinx (71%) and first generation (84%) in the overall college population led the researcher to believe the study sample would be large enough to support a meaningful study.

Study Participants

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) noted a characteristic of a qualitative study is the researcher becomes the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. To begin the participant selection process, the researcher obtained permission from the appropriate administrator of the college to obtain a data sample of students from the college's institutional research office. Once approved, the researcher received a random sample of students enrolled in the Spring 2021 semester. The password-protected dataset provided student information, including basic demographics such as students' age, gender, ethnicity, email address, program of study (i.e., major), and credits earned. Once familiarized with the dataset, the researcher began narrowing down the sample to students who identified with a Hispanic ethnic code as their primary ethnicity (see Table 2). After excluding other ethnic groups from the dataset, the researcher sent email invitations with a link to complete the online questionnaire. The eligibility questionnaire can be found in Appendix A.

Table 2*Ethnic Codes in Dataset the College's Institutional Research Office Provided*

Primary races	Description
AC	Asian, Chinese
AF	Asian, Filipino
AI	Asian, Indian
AJ	Asian, Japanese
AK	Asian, Korean
AM	Asian, Cambodian
AO	Asian, Other
AP	Asian, Pacific Islander
AV	Asian, Vietnamese
BL	Asian, African-American/Non-Hispanic
HC	Hispanic, Central American
HL	Hispanic, Latino
HM	Hispanic, Mexican/Chicano/Mexican American
HO	Hispanic, Other
HS	Hispanic, South American
NA	Native American, American Indian, Alaskan Native
PG	Pacific Islander, Guamanian
PO	Pacific Islander, Other
WH	White
WX	White, Other

Note. To be selected for this study, participants had to select HC, HL, HM, HO, or HS as their primary ethnicity, which the dataset presented as “primary race.”

Lochmiller and Lester (2017) defined *purposeful sampling* as selecting participants on the basis of specific criteria. To participate in this study, participants needed to be (a) Latinx, (b) children of immigrant parents, and (c) first-generation college students. Once the researcher received responses to the online questionnaire, the researcher used purposeful sampling to create a subsample of students who met the criteria for this study. Then, the researcher emailed eligible participants requesting an interview.

Phenomenology studies vary in sample size (Creswell, 2013; Dukes, 1984). Creswell (2013) suggested a sample size of three to 15 participants. Other phenomenology researchers

have advised interviewing from five to 25 individuals who have experienced the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013; Lochmiller & Lester, 2017). Phenomenological studies require researchers to focus on describing what all participants have in common and interpret the meaning of participants' lived experiences (Creswell, 2013). It was important to the researcher to have diversity in age, gender, major of study, and parents' country of origin to reveal commonalities and different points of view based on these various factors. During participant selection, the researcher noted a low response from men and sent two follow-up emails, specifically targeting men. The researcher was able to get one additional male participant. In total, the researcher interviewed 17 participants (see Table 3).

Table 3

Participant Demographics

Name	Gender	Age	Parents' country of origin	Academic program of study (major)
Alicia	Transgender female	18	Mexico	Psychology
Alondra	Female	22	Mexico	Health science
Ana	Female	22	Mexico	Elementary teacher education
Andres	Male	29	Guatemala	Criminal justice
Carmela	Female	19	Mexico	Economics
Dalia	Female	18	Mexico	Biology
Denise	Female	39	Mexico	Health science
Elizabeth	Female	62	Peru	Alcohol and drug studies
Estella	Female	24	Mexico	Psychology
Isabel	Female	20	Mexico	Criminal justice
Javier	Male	30	Mexico	Math and engineering
Jennica	Female	18	Mexico	Public health
Manuel	Male	26	Mexico	Engineering
Melina	Female	30	Mexico	Accounting
Ramon	Transgender male	18	Mexico	Sociology
Sabrina	Female	19	Mexico	Sociology
Sonia	Female	38	Mexico	Business administration

Note. All participants chose their own pseudonyms.

Instrumentation

The researcher served as the instrument for data collection. The researcher used open-ended and follow-up questions, which is the common approach in phenomenological study interviews (Creswell, 2013). A semistructured interview approach was used because it is the most useful for interviews centered on experience; it also allows the flexibility of a less rigid interview process (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The researcher used follow-up questions to capture the in-depth experiences of participants and clarify meaning. A journal was used for notetaking and to document observations during the interview (Creswell, 2013; Lochmiller & Lester, 2017).

Interview Protocol

Creswell (2013) argued phenomenologists are required to ask appropriate questions during interviews and rely on participants to discuss the meaning of their experiences, which involves patience and skill from the researcher. The researcher looked in depth at (a) the lived experiences of Latinx community college student participants as children of immigrants, (b) their experiences when making college decisions, and (c) how these experiences shaped participants' education and acquisition (or lack thereof) of CCW.

The first interview question focused on family history related to the immigrant experience of participants' parents. The researcher used follow-up questions about participants' experiences as children of immigrant parents and their experiences making college decisions. The researcher intertwined Yosso's (2005) six forms of cultural capital into interview questions to address this study's research questions. In keeping with the second research question, the researcher asked interview questions related to (a) whether to go to college, (b) where to go to college, (c) what to study in college, and (d) who (if anyone) influenced participants in making those decisions.

The researcher tested the study's validity through a professional peer review of the interview protocol. According to Creswell (2013), peer review provides an external check of the research process. The researcher collaborated with two peers who self-identified with the characteristics of participants: (a) Latinx, (b) first generation, (c) child of immigrants (both parents or single parent), and (d) attended a community college. The researcher conducted sample interviews with two peers to pilot test interview questions and analyze feedback from a participant perspective.

Storytelling

The researcher used the technique of storytelling for qualitative research. A storytelling approach was incorporated as part of the interviews, including interview prompts that engaged participants in storytelling. Some scholars use the terms “narrative” and “story” interchangeably because they have many of the same characteristics, such as the telling of events in chronological order; others argue these are distinct (Creswell, 2013). McAleese and Kilty (2019) maintained “stories are used to reveal a particular experience (or combination thereof) that when taken together constitute an overarching narrative message” (p. 823). Moreover, McAleese and Kilty (2019) noted stories help the researcher get answers to questions such as “and then what happened?” or “What do you mean?” (p. 823). The authors suggested humans are natural storytellers, which makes stories very common in qualitative research. The researcher also deemed storytelling approach appropriate because it aligned with this study's theoretical and conceptual framework's view of counter-storying, which features the need for people of color to tell their own stories (Fernandez, 2002; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001; Yosso, 2005).

Data Collection

Creswell (2013) noted the data collection procedure of phenomenological studies “involves typically interviewing individuals who have experienced the phenomenon” (p. 79). With permission from the appropriate administrator at the community college and the approval of the Institutional Review Board (IRB), the researcher sent the initial invitation to all potential participants included in the dataset provided by the college’s institutional research office. Only students who identified with a Hispanic ethnic code (see Table 2), received an invitation with the link to complete the eligibility questionnaire. In total, 1,844 students of the 2,605 in the dataset identified with a Hispanic ethnic code. The 1,844 potential participants were given 4 weeks to complete the questionnaire, with weekly reminders sent to their email. Those who completed the questionnaire were entered into a drawing to win one of two \$25 Amazon gift cards.

The researcher received 103 responses to the eligibility questionnaire. After reviewing each questionnaire, the researcher found 52 students met all criteria for this study: (a) Latinx, (b) first-generation college student, and (c) child of immigrant parents. The researcher then sent a second email to the 52 prospective participants with the interview invitation protocol (see Appendix B). Students were asked to respond with three possible options for an interview, and a follow-up email was sent 2 weeks after the initial email. Once an interview day and time was confirmed, the researcher sent the pre-interview consent form (see Appendix C) and included the Zoom link for their interview. Key points in the interview consent form were verbally stated before the interview started.

The researcher’s primary data collection method was semistructured interviews. The researcher conducted 17 interviews using Zoom video software as an alternative to face-to-face interviews during the COVID-19 global pandemic. The researcher did not encounter any

problems using Zoom as the interview setting since participants used Zoom in lieu of face-to-face classes and were familiar with the software. All participants received the interview protocol via email stating interviews would be conducted and recorded through Zoom and transcribed for accuracy. Although 1-hour interviews were scheduled with participants, interviews typically lasted 30–45 minutes. Participants were aware the researcher was taking notes during interviews.

The researcher used a semistructured interview protocol with open-ended questions, which prompted storytelling and asked participants to describe experiences that lead to Yosso's (2005) CCW model. Ten open-ended questions addressed both research questions and Yosso's six forms of cultural capital. The 10 questions included one to three follow-up questions for additional insight and clarification. When needing clarification during the interview, the researcher did not interrupt, but instead wrote down the question and asked a follow-up question to clarify meaning. The interview questions are provided in Appendix D.

In this study, the first open-ended question used to solicit storytelling was, "Tell me, what has been your experience as a child of immigrant parents living in the United States?" Several open-ended questions with one or two follow-up questions addressed whether participants possessed community cultural capital as defined by Yosso's (2005) CCW model. These questions included:

- What are your parents' dreams for your future? How have they shared these dreams with you over the years? (aspirational capital)
- What language do you speak with your parents? Are you bilingual? (linguistic capital)

- Did your parents speak to you about applying to college? Did you receive any input from your parents during the college process? In what ways do you feel parents support you now that you are in college? (familial capital)
- Have other people influenced you? If yes, describe the person, relationship, and support given. (social capital)
- What type of difficulties (if any) did you face in the college process? How did you work through those challenges? Did your parents support you during this time? (navigational capital)
- How do you describe your college experience as a Latinx student? Do you think being Latinx has an impact on your college experience? (resistant capital)

The researcher asked the following questions to address the three types of parental influence on (a) whether to go to college, (b) where to go to college, and (c) what to study in college.

- Tell me about how you decided to go to college. Who did you talk to about whether to go or not (if anyone)?
- How did you decide what college or university to go to? Did you apply to universities? Did anyone help you or suggest which college to go to?
- What is your major? Tell me how you decided on this major.

As Creswell (2013) noted, it is imperative for qualitative researchers to pay close attention to securing data. The researcher followed Creswell's suggestion to protect the anonymity of participants by using pseudonyms to protect their names in the data, making sure files and recordings were password protected. The researcher also stored the journal with

interview observations and notes in a password-protected safe. All 17 participants received a \$20 Amazon gift card for their participation in their interview.

Data Analysis

The researcher analyzed the data based on themes from Yosso's (2005) CCW model, describing six forms of capital, and addressed additional themes about parental influence on the three factors in Research Question 2—whether to go to college, where to go to college, and what to study in college. Interview transcription is another form of data analysis (Creswell, 2013). After interviews were conducted, the researcher transcribed them using the closed captioning script recorded via Zoom and using the video recording when reviewing the transcripts for accuracy in the transcription. By recording the interviews and transcribing them, the researcher gathered verbal and nonverbal data about participants' stories and experiences. The researcher used NVivo coding software for thematic analysis. First, the researcher transcribed all interviews verbatim into Microsoft Word documents. The transcripts were saved with participants' pseudonyms and uploaded to NVivo.

The researcher used thematic analysis to break down the data. Thematic analysis involves “identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79) that relate back to the study's research questions. The researcher looked for themes in participants' answers about parental influence on (a) whether to go to college, (b) where to go to college, and (c) what to study. Furthermore, the researcher looked for patterns to exemplify the six types of CCW (aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational, and resistant capital) to develop themes. Themes and subthemes of CCW are presented in detail in Chapter 4.

Nowell et al. (2017) noted data collection and data analysis may happen concurrently. After the researcher transcribed the interviews, the researcher used Braun and Clarke's (2006)

six-step thematic analysis—(a) familiarizing yourself with your data, (b) generating initial codes, (c) searching for themes, (d) reviewing themes, (e) defining and naming themes, and (f) producing a report—as a guide for data analysis. The thematic analysis involved a constant recursive process in these steps. After establishing themes and subthemes, the researcher analyzed them using the theoretical and conceptual frameworks. This study’s themes, subthemes, and direct quotes from participants are presented in detail in Chapter 4.

Credibility and Trustworthiness

Nowel et al. (2017) noted the credibility of a study is determined when coresearchers or readers are confronted with the experience, and they can recognize it. The authors also defined credibility as how well the researcher can represent the views of the respondents. The researcher used techniques such as persistent observation, prolonged engagement, and data collection triangulation to establish credibility (Lochmiller & Lester, 2017; Nowel et al., 2017). The researcher clarified the meaning of data with follow-up questions and kept notes in a journal to document reflections and observations during and after the interview. As noted in the reflexivity statement, the researcher shared similar life experiences with some of the participants in this study. This was an asset when interpreting the data, and as such, enhances the credibility and trustworthiness of the conclusions drawn by the researcher.

Nowel et al. (2017) also noted the six-phase thematic analysis approach aims to achieve trustworthiness in qualitative research. The researcher followed the six phases of thematic analysis described in detail in the data analysis section, which was important in the process of understanding the data. An important part of trustworthiness in a study is humanizing the research (Lochmiller & Lester, 2017), which entails giving participants the sense the study is being conducted with care, dignity, and respect. Reassuring participants of confidentiality was

critical because family history of immigration was a delicate issue for some participants to discuss.

Ethical Considerations

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) stated a researcher's identity (e.g., class, gender, ethnicity) may play a role in shaping the research process. A similarity in identity and experiences of a researcher with participants may create a more natural progression in gaining access and establishing trust with participants. As the Latinx daughter of immigrant parents, personal biases from the researcher's experience could have affected data analysis. The researcher made every attempt to minimize bias through maintaining and analyzing data only as scripted in the interviews and the literature. The researcher also sought ongoing professional feedback from a professional editor on the data's interpretation. It was imperative for the researcher that the stories of Latinx children of immigrants were told in their own voices and with their own insight to truly capture the narrative of their experience.

The researcher also followed all guidelines mandated by the IRB (e.g., informed consent of participants, participants' ability to withdraw from the study, determination and elimination of unnecessary risks, making sure the benefits of the research outweigh the potential risks of participants; Roberts & Hyatt, 2019). The researcher made sure to protect participants' rights by making sure they understood the study's procedure before they agreed to participate.

Limitations

The closure of college campuses in California due to the COVID-19 global pandemic may have affected the sample size of this study. All college courses were transitioned to online instruction when this study took place and students were not allowed on campus. It was more difficult to recruit participants from home rather than in daily on-campus interactions or events.

The researcher relied heavily on potential participants to check their email to become aware of this study. Another limitation was participants' willingness to participate in an interview via Zoom instead of in person. Participants may have preferred an in-person interview, especially if they did not have the adequate setting for a successful interview (e.g., reliable internet, privacy, a quiet space at home) during the COVID-19 global pandemic.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided an overview of the phenomenological study design and methods the researcher used to collect data for the study. The chapter addressed reflexivity and effects of having a shared experience with participants. The chapter indicated the purpose and research questions. The researcher presented and discussed the study's theoretical and conceptual frameworks in terms of the research design. Participants' criteria for eligibility and the study setting were discussed. One-on-one interviews with participants and storytelling as a technique for qualitative research was presented. The interview protocol was presented as instrumentation for the study. The chapter also included an explanation of how the researcher used thematic analysis to analyze data and ensure credibility. Finally, ethical considerations (e.g., biases of the researcher) and possible limitations for this study were presented. Chapter 4 presents findings of this research.

Chapter 4 - Findings and Analysis

The purpose of this study was to understand the influence of immigrant parents on the college decisions of community college student participants. This phenomenological study focused on how participants' experiences as children of immigrants played a role in their college journey and how Yosso's (2005) concept of community cultural wealth (CCW) was present in participants' college experience. Through qualitative interviews, the researcher used a storytelling approach to obtain personal stories from participants on their decision-making process regarding (a) whether to go to college, (b) where to go to college, and (c) what major to study. The lived experiences of participants and their parents provided additional context on the perspective of immigrant families on attending college in the United States. The research questions guiding this study were:

Research Question 1: In what ways do Latinx students perceive having immigrant parents contributed to their acquisition of community cultural capital and influenced their decisions about college?

Research Question 2: How do immigrant parents influence Latinx community college students' decisions in three areas: (a) whether to go to college, (b) where to go to college, and (c) what to study in college?

Data Collection

Data for this study were collected from an eligibility questionnaire and one-on-one, semistructured interviews with 17 participants. The eligibility questionnaire (see Appendix A) was administered online through Google Forms. The 17 one-on-one interviews were conducted online via Zoom software. The only method of interviewing participants was online due to college campus closure and COVID-19 global pandemic guidelines. Interviews were audio and

video recorded and saved in Zoom. All interviews were transcribed verbatim into Microsoft Word documents and saved in a password-protected drive. Once interviews were transcribed, the audio and video recordings were deleted.

Study Sample

The data analysis process began with the researcher working with the dataset provided by the college's institutional research office. The password-protected dataset included each student's college identification number, first and last name, college email address, personal email address, mailing address, age, gender, academic program of study (i.e., major), units completed, and primary ethnic group, which the dataset presented as "primary race." All 2,605 students in the dataset were registered in classes for the Spring 2021 semester. The researcher started the participant selection process by narrowing down the dataset to students who had self-selected one of the Hispanic options as their primary ethnicity when applying to the college. The researcher excluded all other ethnic groups from the dataset, after which 1,844 students remained. Table 2 shows the options of ethnic codes students could select when self-reporting their ethnicity to the college.

The next step was to send the eligibility questionnaire to the 1,844 students who selected Hispanic as their primary race. The researcher received 103 responses. Demographics from questionnaire responses were as follows: 89.3% female, 92.2% Latinx, and 89.3% first-generation college student. Additionally, 87.4% of respondents identified as a child of immigrant parents or as a child of a single immigrant parent. As noted in Garcia et al. (2019), Latinxs are not a monolithic group; therefore, it was important to document the experience of Latinx participants from different countries. Of the respondents, 15 indicated their parents were from Mexico, one student's parents were from Guatemala, and another student's parents were from

Peru. The researcher also wanted participants with different majors of study to address the second research question, which asked whether parents had an influence on major selection; the researcher identified 14 distinct majors of study among respondents. The eligibility questionnaire can be found in Appendix A.

Participants

After reviewing each questionnaire individually, 52 students met all criteria to participate in this study: (a) Latinx, (b) first-generation college student, and (c) child of immigrant parents. The researcher proceeded with sending an invitation to all 52 students to participate in a one-on-one, semistructured interview. A follow-up email invitation was sent 2 weeks after the initial invitation. A total of 17 participants responded and completed an interview. The interview invitation can be found in Appendix B, and Table 3 shows participant demographics.

Data Analysis

The researcher analyzed the qualitative data gathered during one-on-one interviews with 17 participants. Once all interviews were transcribed and verified with their corresponding Zoom audio and video recordings, they were imported into NVivo, a qualitative data analysis software. The researcher saved all files in NVivo using pseudonyms. Each participant was given the choice to select a pseudonym at the end of the interview, and all 17 provided one. The researcher used an inductive analysis process to begin analyzing each interview and interpreting meaning (Lochmiller & Lester, 2017). The researcher began interpreting data by classifying initial codes in NVivo. Coding transcripts involved thoroughly reading each transcript line by line, classifying thoughts with ideas, and giving them descriptive titles (i.e., codes).

The researcher read each participant's transcript several times to understand the story of each participant. In this study, it was important to grasp the experience of children of

immigrants, which also involved paying close attention to participants' mentions of their parents. The researcher precoded the data by going through each transcript in NVivo and highlighting significant statements, such as phrases, words, and sentences, that directly addressed the research questions (Creswell, 2013).

After all interview transcripts were coded with initial codes, the next step of data analysis was grouping initial codes related to a major idea, which eventually became major themes. For example, all phrases about speaking Spanish were given an initial code titled "Spanish," but other codes such as "Spanglish," "Mixing Two Languages," and "Learning English" emerged. These initial codes were collapsed into a subtheme titled "Bilingualism." Bilingualism became a subtheme of the overarching theme titled "Linguistic Capital," which is one of Yosso's (2005) six forms of cultural capital discussed in Chapter 2. Using that method, the researcher then connected codes associated with Yosso's six forms of cultural capital, which are the overarching themes for the first research question (RQ1) of this study. Repeated themes found across the responses from all 17 participants revealed data collection had reached saturation. The researcher found participants' responses were clearly linked to Yosso's six forms of cultural capital. The researcher also identified codes and themes that surfaced relating to the second research question (RQ2) of this study. The researcher discovered new emergent themes during coding and data analysis. The next section of this chapter addresses each research question separately.

Research Question 1: Yosso's CCW

The first phase of thematic analysis focused on the first research question (RQ1): In what ways do Latinx students perceive having immigrant parents contributed to their acquisition of community cultural capital and influenced their decisions about college?

Table 4 displays the six forms of Yosso’s (2005) CCW model as the overarching themes to RQ1. Subthemes represent clusters of phrases each form of cultural capital contained. The coded phrases that were redundant among participants ultimately provided a subtheme, as they directly addressed characteristics of forms of cultural capital Yosso described in the CCW model. The “*n*” column indicates the number of unduplicated participants who referenced the corresponding form of cultural capital. The “Transcript excerpts” column shows the number of quotes gathered from participants when mentioning each theme. Transcript excerpts represent a collection of participants’ experiences in different contexts that answered RQ1—whether participants possessed each form of capital based on their experiences as children of immigrants.

Table 4

Data Analysis Subtheme Alignment to Yosso’s (2005) CCW Model

Yosso’s six forms of cultural capital and subthemes	<i>n</i>	Transcript excerpts
1. Aspirational capital	17	29
Parents’ Dreams for Future	13	23
Finding Purpose	5	6
2. Linguistic capital	17	56
Translating	10	12
Bilingualism	17	44
3. Familial capital	17	177
Parents’ Emotional Support	17	86
Parents’ Financial Support	14	45
Support From Relatives	15	71
4. Social capital	17	73
Peer Network	11	34
Faculty Support	6	8
Counselor Support	12	31
5. Navigational capital	17	138
Looking for Resources	17	91
Educating Parents	15	47
6. Resistant capital	17	83
Latinx Experience in the United States	17	74
Cultural Differences	3	9

Note. This table shows the six forms of cultural capital addressed in RQ1.

Aspirational Capital

Yosso (2005) described aspirational capital as having hopes and dreams for the future, despite challenges and barriers in everyday life. The following themes and interview responses show how participants had the capacity to remain hopeful regardless of difficult situations they encountered.

Parents' Dreams for Future

The data analysis process revealed 13 participants described aspirational capital when speaking about dreams for the future. Despite these participants' personal, academic, or financial challenges, it was clear immigrant parents highly encouraged a college education. When sharing stories about their parents' journeys migrating to the United States, they mentioned constant parental reminders of working hard for a better future. These participants viewed obtaining an education as a way to repay the sacrifice of parents coming to the United States. Examples of aspirational capital participants stated included:

- “My parents’ dreams for us are to have a better future, to see us, you know, in a better job with good benefits” (Alondra).
- “I want to make their sacrifice worth it. I keep that in mind to this day. Their intention when immigrating here was for me to take advantage of the opportunities they didn’t have” (Carmela).
- “My mom definitely wants me to keep going with my studies, which is my goal to keep this going and be successful in my future” (Sabrina).

Finding Purpose

Five participants described their aspirational capital by acknowledging college meant finding their purpose. Establishing their future in the United States, setting personal goals, and

being successful were common ways in which participants described their aspirational capital. At times, the researcher found a sense of uncertainty and doubts in these responses. Participants often questioned if their goals would be attainable because being children of immigrant parents involved facing challenges alone. Examples of this subtheme included:

- “It’s hard sometimes, um, mainly because, you know, they’re [parents] scared of a lot of things. Like, for example, they don’t know the process on a lot of things, so I need to figure it out” (Ana).
- “I feel like first-generation American children, we have to pretty much grow up faster than anyone else, you have to mature faster, you miss out on certain things because you’re like a third parent to your siblings, you go through adversity and you do this alone because you don’t want to worry your parents” (Estella).
- “Here [in the United States], everything is about laws, you have to do your research to be capable of doing stuff, like finding jobs. I feel like I have to be in charge for my family, take care of them you know” (Sabrina).

Linguistic Capital

Yosso (2005) referred to linguistic capital as the ways people express themselves through language. Being bilingual or having parents who were bilingual offered the following themes and examples of the significance language had for participants.

Translating

Ten participants showcased their linguistic capital by giving examples of various ways they translated for parents. Whether translation meant reading English documents, filling out applications, writing checks to pay bills, or translating conversations, participants viewed translating as a valued contribution to parents. Ten participants provided 12 translating examples.

The following interview excerpts highlighted the subtheme of translating related to linguistic capital:

- “I was always the translator. Being the oldest in the family, I always had to help translate the forms or at the stores, doctor appointments, so I just feel like I grew up super quick to understand what was going on around the world so I could explain it to them” (Alondra).
- “When your parents are immigrants, you’re learning with them, learning the language. I’m the only one bilingual so I’m able to help them translate” (Dalia).
- “At first, I was struggling with English myself but once I learned how to communicate, I translated for them because they did not understand any English” (Isabel).

Bilingualism

All 17 participants conveyed their linguistic capital when referring to language as a form of identity. These participants expressed being bilingual as mixing and embracing both English and Spanish. They expressed linguistic capital in terms of being proud to know English, Spanish, and “Spanglish,” a term participants used to describe speaking English and Spanish interchangeably. Examples of this subtheme included:

- “I say we’re pretty bilingual at this point. They first taught me Spanish and that was my first language, and then I taught them some English so I speak both to them, but if my English is too fast, my mom will be like, ‘Okay, Español’” (Alicia).
- “I consider myself bilingual but very rough; my Spanish is not pretty. I’ve been told I speak like an American, you know, and my process of changing my thoughts from

English to Spanish, um, it's difficult because I get stuck in the middle, my Spanish is more like Spanglish" (Elizabeth).

- "We speak both because my dad understands broken English, so it's more Spanglish" (Roman).

Familial Capital

Family history, memories, and cultural traditions in the home play a role in familial capital (Yosso, 2005). The following themes emerged when participants described how their college motivation was centered around family experiences.

Familial Emotional Support

The data demonstrated all 17 participants referred to parents as giving them emotional support and encouragement with college. The researcher found 86 passages demonstrating types of emotional support from parents. Participants expressed familial capital as having a supportive family member who helped relieve stressors that college brought. A common form of familial capital among participants with children was parents helping them with childcare so they could go to college. Participants demonstrated having familial capital when referring to parents' words of encouragement, moral support, or behaviors they perceived as support. The following were examples of familial emotional support:

- "My parents, they're like, 'mija, ponte las pilas.' You know, get out there and make something of yourself" (Alicia).
- "I feel like, I don't know, they support me a lot. I don't know what I'd do without them. They support me in taking care of my kids while I do homework, when I go to class, or when I have an exam" (Ana).

- “They encourage me when things get hard, like, you know, make sure I remember why I’m doing this for, and how at the end of the day it’s for myself and for a better life” (Carmela).
- “They [parents] help me the best they can, they cook for me, help me clean to stay organized. To me, that’s a lot of help” (Denise).
- “They [parents] always tell me, ‘Make sure you finish, don’t drop out. Whatever it takes, make sure you finish’” (Estella).
- “They [parents] have always told me they want me to graduate. They don’t know what’s a bachelor’s or doctorate, but they just tell me, ‘Graduate from college’” (Jennica).
- “My mom tells me a lot, ‘Hechale ganas en la escuela,’ like, um, focus in school” (Manuel).
- “They [parents] tell me school is my priority. They make sure I’m okay, that I’m eating well, sleeping well, make sure my health is good to study” (Sabrina).

Parents’ Financial Support

Another major finding all but three participants expressed when describing familial capital was support with money or support by saving money. Living with parents or with a spouse and not having to work was seen as financial support. Participants were thankful to family, as they did not have to worry about paying rent or utilities like some of their peers. Examples of this subtheme included:

- “They support me. Like, if I need to take a day off work, I know that they have my back if I need anything paid for. They just push me to do good in my classes” (Alondra).

- “I am working a little bit, but they [parents] tell me to save my money for when I transfer. They said they will cover everything right now while I live here” (Carmela).
- “Financially, I don’t have to worry about my living expenses, or my transportation, or food, because I’m in school” (Isabel).

Support From Relatives

Most participants described familial capital when receiving support from other family members, such as grandparents, siblings, cousins, aunts, uncles, spouse or partner, and children. Fifteen subjects gave 71 examples of extended-family support, and 13 subjects described siblings as most supportive after their parents. Examples of this type of support included:

- “I see, like, my tias [aunts] and grandparents, like, excited. Like, ‘you’re doing this, you’re doing something,’ because it’s only me and my 24-year-old cousin who are in college, out of, like, 40 cousins” (Alicia).
- “My son and my brother got a degree before me, so that was a really good incentive” (Elizabeth).
- “My big sister really influenced a lot in me because she’s the oldest. She was just, like, ‘Okay, you need to make a list of what colleges and universities you want to go to. Let’s prepare’” (Ramon).

Social Capital

Social capital includes networks of people and community resources (Yosso, 2005). Participants’ responses to support from people, besides their family, led to developing three themes, (a) Peer Network, (b) Faculty Support, and (c) Counselor Support.

Peer Network

Eleven participants described their social capital when mentioning how valuable it was to have support and encouragement from peers, especially when struggling in college-related situations. Five of the 11 participants described social capital in terms of being a part of a student club or study group because being involved gave them a sense of belonging in college. Examples of peer-network social capital included the following:

- “My friends are my support system, especially one of my best friends because she’s Latina, so in a lot of ways she gets me more and has encouraged me. She tells me, like, ‘Let’s get through this class’” (Carmela).
- “I work at a hospital, and I see a lot of my coworkers, especially moms like me, juggling multiple plates, going to college, getting their education. That inspires me” (Denise).

Faculty Support

Six participants mentioned faculty support eight times. These participants referred to faculty encouragement as an important part of their social capital in college. They reported faculty had an influence in their approach toward college in general, but more importantly in courses participants found challenging. Participants indicated:

- “I would stay after class and ask professors for help. My parents pushed me to get help because, well, I would tell them how hard a class was and that I was struggling, and they would tell me, ‘Ask your teachers’” (Alondra).
- “I have an English teacher that has always supported me. She’s always been there for me, she cared” (Andres).
- “My precalculus professor, he always pushed me to apply for things, like this NASA program. He was cool, he encouraged me” (Carmela).

- “My English as second language professor, I knew her for a long time, and she always told me, ‘Fear cannot stop you’” (Melina).

Counselor Support

Twelve participants shared examples of social capital in 31 mentions of interactions with counselors. It was clear participants relied on counselors for personal, academic, and social advice while in college. Having access to a counselor was a way of finding out about additional resources entering college, staying in college, graduating, and transferring successfully, if that was their goal. Participants spoke about their interactions with counselors in various ways, including:

- “I got a lot of help from counselors. I always made appointments or just walk in and basically ask all my questions. There’s always new things I need to know, so it’s good to ask” (Ana).
- “I had no idea about community college until counselors came to my high school and did a presentation. That’s how I applied” (Dalia).
- “I was in the EOPS [Extended Opportunity Programs and Services] program and, like, the counselors, they definitely pushed me to keep going with my studies and have good grades” (Sabrina).

Navigational Capital

Navigational capital refers to having the skills to maneuver through institutions foreign to students of color (Yosso, 2005). Themes that arose in navigational capital were representations of actions participants took to cope with the unknown.

Looking for Resources

All participants showed evidence of having navigational capital when sharing tools they used to navigate a system unfamiliar to them. Participants gave examples of applying to college on their own and seeking out resources they needed. Examples of participants' navigational capital included seeking help in several college offices (e.g., financial aid, admissions and records, tutoring center, library, bookstore, business office). In 91 interview examples, all 17 participants described seeking resources. Comments included:

- “I went back to the college the next day if I had questions. I had to look for answers on my own. It was one of those things that I couldn't rely on them [parents]” (Sonia).
- “My parents were great, they just didn't have the tools to guide me when I was younger. Now that I'm older, I decided I'm not going to be shy anymore; I'm going to ask for help if I need it” (Elizabeth).
- “My biggest resource was the Dreamer resource center, they did an event called “Welcoming Dreamers,” and that's where I got the information I needed” (Isabel).

Educating Parents

Not having parents to guide them in the college process required most participants not only to learn the processes, but also to educate parents. In 47 interview responses, 15 participants described how they educated their parents regarding their college experience. For example, Carmela, indicated:

My parents didn't know about, like, the different systems in education, but they just knew it was a step in the right direction, so they supported me. It's a learning experience for me and my parents. When I applied to the different universities, I updated them on everything, the whole application process, like, why I'm doing things.

Resistant Capital

Resistant capital shows itself through the knowledge and skills fostered through oppositional behavior and inequality (Yosso, 2005). Participants spoke about dealing with stereotypes and negative connotations of their ethnic identity. Themes created to present this form of capital were: (a) Latinx Experience in the United States and (b) Cultural Differences.

Latinx Experience in the United States

All participants explained their resistant capital when sharing examples of facing discrimination, stereotypes, injustice, and bullying due to their ethnicity. As participants described the importance of knowing their rights and asking the right questions, they expressed examples of resistant capital in their Latinx experience:

- “It’s the reality; you face blatant racism in so many ways because of who you are or what you look like” (Alicia).
- “I just think that as a Latina, it’s important to get an education, take care of your household, especially as a woman, break the cycle of being dependent to be independent” (Jennica).
- “I have mixed emotions when I talk about being an immigrant Mexican woman in the United States because there’s still a lot of people, unfortunately, that have a closed mind, and I won’t forget one time in class someone made fun of my accent. It was hurtful, but it motivated me even more” (Melina).
- “I got interested in sociology because I identified with the topic, like the way people in society think around the world, and it’s true, depending on your race, people see you differently, and you see things differently, too” (Sabrina).

Cultural Differences

Three participants referred to significant cultural differences they experienced as children in elementary school. Resistant capital refers to resisting cultural oppression (Yosso, 2005). Even as children, Isabel and Elizabeth identified what was happening to them as strictly linked to cultural differences. Elizabeth said:

I remember my food was very different than what the students had in lunch, so here I am 8 years old, with a lunch that my mother made that's completely opposite to what the other children are eating, and they're going "Ugh! What is that?" Believe it or not, that kind of traumatized me, because, you know kids, can be mean without knowing they're being mean.

Isabel indicated:

When I started school in the U.S., it was a culture shock, like, I don't know if you know, but a lot of kids in Mexico have a scar from their vaccines and many times students would make fun of me and ask me why I had a hole in my arm. Those moments really made me feel like an outsider.

CCW in Participants

Yosso's (2005) CCW model indicates, despite students of color being at a disadvantage, Latinx students possess the cultural capital to succeed in college. Participants did not see themselves at a disadvantage entering college but rather used the cultural wealth they had acquired from their parents and community to push through barriers that arose as they took charge of their education. It was evident participants knew college would be difficult because it was something foreign, not only to participants, but also to participants' parents. Despite the

challenges that arose, participants revealed the outcome of having a college education was a great motivator to pursue college.

Findings: Research Question 2

The aim of the second part of the study was to identify themes that aligned with participants' decisions about college. The second research question contained three parts: How do immigrant parents influence Latinx community college students' decisions in (a) whether to go to college, (b) where to go to college, and (c) what to study in college? Table 5 displays themes that emerged from participants for each part of the question. The researcher developed initial codes that developed into overarching themes for all three parts of RQ2.

Table 5

RQ2 Themes Regarding Parental Influence on Three College Decisions

RQ2: How do immigrant parents influence Latinx community college students' decisions in three areas?	Themes used to address question
(a) Whether to go to college	Family Pressure and Expectations Making Parents Proud
(b) Where to go to college	Closer to Home Financial Concerns Alone in the Process
(c) What to study in college	Happiness Admiration to Profession Financial Security

Note. RQ2 was a three-part question; each part led to distinct themes.

Whether to Go to College

When narrating how they made the decision about whether to go to college, participants spoke about childhood memories and touched on high school experiences. Participants shared

discussions about college over the years. These conversations led to two predominant themes: (a) Family Pressure and Expectations and (b) Making Parents Proud.

Theme 1: Family Pressure and Expectations

When asking participants with whom they had initial conversations about whether to go to college, 15 participants mentioned having a college conversation with at least one parent. Four participants mentioned going to college as a way to honor parents' sacrifice of immigrating to the United States. Some thought parents' sacrifice of leaving everything behind for better opportunities would be in vain if they did not go to college. Alicia spoke about her parents coming to the United States, saying:

When they came over here, they did it for us [their children]. That's what you're told your whole life, and so you carry these expectations because they couldn't reach the level of success that they wish they could have, so it is on us now.

Participants expressed ways they knew parents expected them to go to college—meaning it was not a question of whether they would go to college, but rather a natural progression after high school. Alondra made reference to this expectation, saying:

Ever since I was younger, my parents really just pushed the idea of going to college, and I don't think I really spoke to anyone about going or not going because it was always in my plans because education was always stressed in my family.

Carmela spoke about her parents reminding her of the opportunities she had in the United States as her parents' way of expressing expectations, stating, "They [parents] want me to go to college because their intention when immigrating here was for me to take advantage of the opportunities they didn't have."

Theme 2: Making Family Proud

Twelve participants indicated making their family proud was the motivator when deciding whether to go to college. Moreover, nine participants expressed setting an example to siblings or family members influenced whether they went to college. Sabrina stated, “Being the oldest, I feel like you have to be a role model to your younger siblings. You need to be successful because they look up to you.” Carmela commented, “As an older sibling, I have this duty of having to, like, set an example for my younger sister.”

Where to Go to College

Three themes were identified as factors that led participants to choose where to go to college. These themes are (a) Closer to Home, (b) Financial Concerns, and (c) Alone in the College Process.

Theme 3: Closer to Home

Findings regarding location revealed a variety of factors leading to participants deciding to study close to home. Nine participants did not apply to 4-year universities; they had decided staying local was the best option for them. The other eight applied to universities but ultimately attended community college. When asked about her decision about where to attend college, Melina answered, “I decided on the local college because of my mom; she didn’t want me to leave.” Estella mentioned making the decision based on parents’ current situation. Estella commented, “[My] parents weren’t doing well financially, so part of it was, like, they can’t help me financially, so staying local was the best way I could make college work.”

All participants said parents did not mention a specific college or university of preference. However, 14 participants made reference to “hints” from their parents about staying local. Women in particular expressed parents had a sense of relief when participants informed

them they were attending a local community college. Alicia commented, “I think in a paternal way they still want me here for another 2 years.”

Theme 4: Financial Concerns

When discussing college decisions, a major topic was having concerns about finances. All 17 participants referenced financial concerns at least once in their interview. Participants mentioned during college conversations with parents, the main concern was how they were going to pay for college. Twelve participants mentioned they did not know about the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) until they applied for college. These 12 participants described the FAFSA as “difficult,” “complicated,” “confusing,” and a new concept for their parents. Isabel specifically mentioned her parents did not trust providing tax information for the application, stating, “When I mention to them [parents] that there was a chance I could attend college they were like ‘Can you really?’ At first, they didn’t believe it, they thought it was loans because they didn’t understand the laws.”

It was evident U.S.-immigrant parents were unaware of the existence of federal and state financial aid. Participants mentioned the FAFSA was something that did not exist in their parents’ home countries. Melina mentioned her parents’ reaction to finding out about the existence of financial aid:

When I graduated from high school, and they told me that I had 2 years of college to study whatever I wanted, and for free, my mom was, like, crying and she was, like, “I told you the opportunities were going to come.”

According to most participants answers, financial aid was one of the most evident themes unknown to immigrant parents. When conversations about federal and state grants took place, most participants said parents described these as opportunities they never had. Four participants

were more specific in their explanation, saying when parents talked about financial help for college in their home country, they referred to scholarships or private bank loans as the way people paid for a university.

Theme 5: Alone in the College Process

Thirteen participants mentioned applying to college alone and justified being alone in the college process as being a normal occurrence for first-generation college students, as their parents did not have the first-hand experience of applying to college, especially in the United States. For this study's participants, not only did parents not have a college education, but the idea of community college was also new to them. In addition, seven participants said both of their parents did not speak English. This theme demonstrated when it came to choosing a college or university, the choice was not necessarily due to participants not meeting the qualifications for acceptance to a 4-year university. In fact, eight participants stated they met the requirements to apply to a university and considered attending one right after high school. When participants were asked about college choice, participants who did not consider applying to a university mentioned they did not know how or where to apply. For example, Denise stated, "The only option we have out here is this college, so that's where I decided to start off at."

Other participants referred to community college as their default choice because they did not get accepted to the university of their choice or waited too long to apply. When asked about college choice, Andres mentioned, "I started at this college because that was the only college I knew. I didn't apply to a university, but I plan to transfer to one." Javier mentioned attending community college after he missed the deadlines to the 4-year university he was planning to attend. Javier commented:

I actually got accepted to Cal Poly, Pomona, and I didn't know that I got accepted because I didn't pay attention to all of my emails. I don't know why, maybe because I was younger and I didn't really know much or needed more help and I didn't have anyone in my house to be like "Check your email, make sure do this," you know. My parents didn't have that extra layer of knowledge to help me in that process, so I ended up going here.

Ana referred to choosing to attend a community college as "starting out small." To Ana, a community college was less intimidating than a university. On the other hand, Alicia remembered the college application process as being complicated. Alicia shared, "I didn't have college figured out in high school. I didn't know what I was going to do, so I said, 'I'll go to community college and figure it out there,' so that's what I did." In this instance, Alicia perceived community college as a natural transition after high school.

What to Study

When participants discussed their decision-making process on what to study in college, three themes emerged: (a) Happiness, (b) Admiration of Profession, and (c) Financial Security.

Theme 6: Happiness

When asked to speak about how they decided on their major, all participants referenced being happy. All 17 participants spoke about having conversations with parents about their major and parents emphasizing the importance of doing what made them happy. Sabrina mentioned having conversations with her mother about her studies. She stated, "I know my mom just wants me to be happy in my future. She just wants me to be fine, be at peace." Jennica spoke about her father's reaction to her major, saying "My dad just always told me to do whatever career I want that makes me happy." Ramon mentioned, though his parents did not really understand his

major, they seemed happy it was something better than jobs they had. Ramon commented, “I’m a sociology major, and they don’t quite understand what it is, but they’re just, like, ‘As long as you get a good career and stay away from hard labor,’ then you’ll be good.” Ramon’s parents associated having a job that did not require physical labor or working outside in the heat as a higher standard and, therefore, with bringing happiness to their son’s life.

Theme 7: Admiration of Profession

When discussing the thought process of selecting a major, nine participants spoke about admiring the profession or someone in the profession corresponding to the major. These nine participants mentioned a sibling, relative, friend, or someone they admired sparked an interest for that major of study in college. Andres expressed an appreciation for his stepfather’s profession. When asked about his major—criminal justice and law—Andres said his goal was to become an immigration lawyer. He commented, “I want to be a professional, he’s [my mother’s husband] a lawyer, someone successful, he’s someone respectful, he’s like a rich person that is respected by a bunch of people and so I want to be that person, too.” It was evident Andres’s admiration and respect for his mother’s husband had transferred to his view of what a successful and respected person was, which clearly influenced Andres. The financial success and the image of respect and admiration Andres had seen toward lawyers influenced his decision to pursue law.

When speaking about her major, Carmela mentioned her uncle’s career as a university professor in Mexico. Carmela referred to her relative by saying, “He’s just very educated and the way he carries himself, I think it’s really cool how so many people respect him.” Carmela continued, “I want to be a professor with my economics major, I also want my own business someday.”

Jennica also spoke about family members she admired in the health field. When asked about her parents' reaction to her decision to pursue becoming a physician assistant, she commented:

[My] mom comes from a family of eight sisters and one brother, and I would say the majority of them are healthcare professionals, and my mom always talked about how important it was to have someone in the family with medical knowledge to help if someone gets sick. I do see how that may have geared me to healthcare . . . they are all in Mexico, but I always knew about them.

Ultimately, what was apparent during discussions about selecting a major was how those around the participants and the careers of people they respected and admired influenced them. All 17 participants discussed their major with their parents once they had an idea of what it would be. However, when describing their thought process for selecting the major, most participants looked for examples of careers in their family and social circle.

Theme 8: Financial Security

When speaking about parents' reactions to their major, financial security was a consistent theme among participants. Some participants reported parents suggested careers that offered higher salaries as a way to suggest financial security. Alondra spoke about a conversation with her father when she declared nursing as her major. She said:

My dad wanted me to go into business or law. He wanted me to be an attorney. When I told him I wanted to be a nurse, he kind of asked me, "A doctor gets paid more. Why not a doctor?" But, I don't want to be a doctor; I want to be a nurse, and he respected that.

Participants referred to financial security in different ways, such as having a house, being able to not worry about money, and helping their families financially when they got older. Participants

hoped to provide financial assistance to their parents after college as a way to repay them for supporting them financially during college.

Findings Related to Demographic Differences

When participants shared experiences, the researcher found differences by demographics. In themes such as (a) Gender and (b) Parents' Country of Origin, participants highlighted findings unique to their demographic characteristics or background.

Gender

Although the proportion of men in this study was less than half, there were unique themes that surfaced when interviewing the four men in this study. When speaking about the importance of a college education, men were primarily financially driven. Male participants associated finances with being successful and fulfilling their role as the provider in the family. All four male participants made reference to their fathers, or in the case of Andres, "father figure," on what it meant to be the breadwinner, which was an admirable characteristic that influenced their decision to pursue college. Manuel stated, "My dad is very smart, and he only went to first grade, but it's amazing what he does. He can build anything. He can't read or write, but he's like an engineer, he just builds things." Manuel referenced his father not having the opportunity to become an engineer but how he saw that opportunity for himself. He noted becoming an engineer would not only grant him a well-paying job, but it would also honor his father.

Descriptions of two transgender participants, Alicia and Ramon, showed other gender-related findings. An overlapping theme for both participants was family acceptance, especially from parents. Being their "true self" and "being out" was especially important to both. Alicia shared:

I am a trans woman, so my life was kind of written since I was born. I was supposed to be male, be the man of the household, but, you know, I realize I am lucky to have parents that accept me for me, and just want me to be happy.

Parents' Country of Origin

When looking at differences in countries of origin, the 15 participants whose parents were from Mexico had similar answers when speaking about their parents' reasons for migrating to the United States. Andres from Guatemala had similar answers to the participants from Mexico. Elizabeth's story about her parents' journey from Peru was unique and different. Unlike the other 16 participants, Elizabeth's father migrated because of his athletic ability. Elizabeth shared, "We came to the United States because my father was a great tennis player in South America, and they sponsored him to come to the United States." Elizabeth recognized her experience was different, saying:

I'm a little older, so the way my parents viewed things is different from Latinos now because I had to assimilate really quick. That was kind of their way of thinking, you know, my dad and mom's way of thinking, like, "You're an American now."

Elizabeth's experience is unique because sports was the reason for immigration. The other 16 families in this study did not have sponsorship to come to the United States.

Other Themes That Arose

Three other themes that surfaced in this study were (a) American Dream, (b) Children of Farmworkers, and (c) Participants as Parents, Influence on the New Generation. In all interviews, a prevalent theme for children of immigrants was pursuing the "American dream." Children of farmworkers had unique experiences. Participants who were parents had unique experiences in addition to their experiences as college students and children of immigrant parents.

American Dream

During the initial part of the interviews, the researcher focused on the experiences of participants as children of immigrant parents. When focusing on their parents as immigrants, a predominant theme identified was pursuing the American dream. There were 46 mentions of the American dream among the 17 participants while they told their stories. Participants described the American dream in different ways. Achieving the American dream was described as being successful, earning an education, having a good-paying job, buying a house, and not having to worry about money. Participants noted it was clear parents had migrated to the United States to pursue the American dream. Most participants expressed it was their responsibility to accomplish the American dream, not only for themselves, but for parents. Angel referred to the American dream as, “being a professional, having [your] house, having a business, and prove to [yourself] that [you] don’t need anyone’s financial help. That would mean that [you] made it.”

Children of Farmworkers

Six of the 17 participants were children of farmworkers. As stated in Chapter 2, one of the main sources of employment in the area is agriculture. Participants described parents working in fields as an example of hard work. Working in fields was viewed as an honorable job but one that did not pay much. Four of the participants described hearing constant reminders from parents about finding a job that did not require working in the heat in an area where temperatures rising above 100° Fahrenheit is the norm. Alondra spoke about her parents’ experience, saying:

I feel like they [parents] hope to see us have, you know, with a better job with good benefits, that we don’t have to, like, deal with, you know, working out in the fields in the hot summer or having to not get paid what you deserve to be paid.

Ana, Javier, and Manuel shared experiences working in fields themselves. At times, they worked alongside their parents. However, participants described working in fields as a temporary job and as a good lesson on hard work. Javier referred to his experience as a clear indication he wanted to “end the cycle” and pursue a career instead. Javier stated:

I’ve been to, like, the fields. I’ve worked with my dad. I see a lot of young people there and their parents and they never get out of the same place, they just start doing field work, so I, it’s like they just keep working there. What I mean is that they never stopped the cycle, yeah, and that’s what I appreciate from my parents, that they wanted me to stop the cycle and supported me so I can focus on school.

Participants as Parents, Influence on the New Generation

Five study participants were parents themselves. A recurring theme among them was being more involved in the education of their children. Participants who were parents identified they had emotional and financial support from parents, but they wanted to take more of a hands-on approach with their children. These participants acknowledged they had the education, language, and cultural capital their parents did not have in this country.

Denise wanted to be involved in her children’s college journey as much as possible. She commented, “When my kids were graduating high school, I signed them up, I did everything and made sure, you know, they showed up the first day of class.” Hector spoke about his role as a dad, saying, “Now I’m older, I have my own kids, I have to push myself and even my parents, they tell me, you know, ‘You have to do better for them, be present, give them a better life.’”

Elizabeth shared being more involved in her son’s university education, commenting:

My parents saw the support that I gave my son when he went to Berkeley. I mean, I did a lot of the footwork to get him there. You know, financial aid, doing the paperwork, but,

you know, for him to go to one of the best universities, um, you know, there were times he [my son] wanted to quit college, but, you know, we were like, “We’re coming to see you,” and we would drive to see him, encourage him, and I think my parents connected the dots about how important college was. So, when I decided go back to college, they were very supportive. It all made sense.

Conclusion

This chapter detailed the findings of this study in terms of how participants provided evidence needed to answer both research questions. The qualitative data analysis offered an overview of the cultural capital participants reported they possessed and their unique perspectives as children of immigrant parents. It was evident from the data parents had an influence on children regarding (a) whether they went to college, (b) where they went to college, and (c) what they decided to study in college. Being the first in their families to go to college, participants relied on their parents for emotional support and guidance, regardless of their parents’ educational achievements. Although participants expressed they often relied on school professionals, family, and others for information, they reported they ultimately confided in parents and deeply valued their input. Participants put a high value on the opinions, feedback, suggestions, and personal stories of parents.

Chapter 5 - Discussions and Conclusion

This chapter includes an overview of the problem, purpose, theoretical and conceptual lenses, and a review of the methodology and data analysis for this study. Next is a discussion and interpretation of the study's findings presented in Chapter 4. Finally, recommendations for future research and a conclusion are provided.

Overview of the Problem

Although rates of Latinx students enrolling in college have continued to grow consistently, data show their graduation rates remain low, and in California, only 18% of Latinx adults have a college degree (Campaign for College Opportunity, 2018). Research has indicated parental involvement plays a role in academic achievement of students (Goldsmith et al., 2018). However, most research on parental involvement has focused on White, middle-class families (Auerbach, 2017).

When it comes to the Latinx population, there are misconceptions surrounding parent involvement. Latinx parents have been characterized with a deficit perspective, as uninterested and uninvolved in the education of their children (Aragon, 2018; Ceja, 2004). In addition, researchers have noted the need to examine differences in perceptions and experiences in the Latinx community (Auerbach, 2006; Ortiz, 2004). Ortiz (2004) noted families who have been the United States longer have had a different experience from more recent generations. Latinx college students whose parents did not experience the U.S. K–12 education system have a different perspective on their education and that of their children. This study focused on children of immigrant parents living in the United States and how parents influenced college decisions.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to understand the role immigrant parents play in the college education decisions of Latinx first-generation community college students. Additionally, this study was an exploration of parental influence as students made decisions on (a) whether to go to college, (b) where to go to college, and (c) what to study in college. This study focused on describing parental influence from the perspective of participants who were first-generation community college students.

Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks

Together, critical race theory (CRT), Latinx critical race theory (LatCrit), and Yosso's (2005) community cultural wealth (CCW) model were used to understand Latinx participants' experiences and perceptions about parental influence, guidance, and decision-making process in the pursuit of a college education. Yosso's CCW model, grounded in CRT and LatCrit, was used as the conceptual lens to explore if having immigrant parents contributed to participants' acquisition of CCW. Yosso's rooted focus in CRT also challenges deficit thinking when referring to students of color (Solórzano & Yosso, 2001; Valdes, 1996, 1997; Yosso, 2005).

Review of Methodology and Data Analysis

A qualitative phenomenological methodology was selected for this study. Lochmiller and Lester (2017) described a qualitative approach as best when the researcher is looking to collect data that will document the rich and detailed experiences of its participants. The researcher used semistructured interviews and a storytelling approach to capture the lived experiences of children of immigrants' college decision-making processes and acquisition of various forms of cultural capital based on Yosso's (2005) CCW model. As Bogdan and Biklen (1998) noted, one-on-one, semistructured interviews allow the researcher to obtain detailed data from the participants' own

words. Osorio (2015) described using storytelling as a cultural approach for people of color to narrate their experiences in a way that is familiar to them. This study focused on how participants, who were Latinx community college students, identified parental influence on their educational journey, specifically addressing parents' experiences as immigrants in the United States. To address the study's purpose, two research questions guided this study:

Research Question 1: In what ways do Latinx students perceive having immigrant parents contributed to their acquisition of community cultural capital and influenced their decisions about college?

Research Question 2: How do immigrant parents influence Latinx community college students' decisions in three areas: (a) whether to go to college, (b) where to go to college, and (c) what to study in college?

Data for this study were collected from 17 community college participants enrolled in a mid-sized community college. An eligibility questionnaire and semistructured interviews were used to gather data. Potential participants completed an eligibility questionnaire through Google Forms, which was used to determine if prospective participants met the criteria to be selected for an interview. The researcher used purposeful sampling to select eligible participants for one-on-one, semistructured interviews to be conducted through Zoom software. During interviews, participants were audio and video recorded. Once interview transcripts were transcribed verbatim into Microsoft Word documents, the researcher uploaded them into NVivo software for coding, organization, and analysis. Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis process in qualitative studies was used to conduct the data analysis. Through thematic analysis, the researcher identified initial codes, which were later aggregated into categories and ultimately became

themes. A journal was used to write notes during the interviews, which included observations, questions, or comments made that added meaning to responses.

Interpretation of Study Findings

Analysis of the data collected from all study participants revealed several key findings. First, regardless of parent educational achievement or language, first-generation Latinx students sought parental input when considering college. The study also established having immigrant parents contributed to participants' cultural wealth because all six forms of Yosso's (2005) cultural capital were found in participants' responses. Differences in the amount of capital presented themselves in terms of the number of times participants spoke about their experiences that reflected each form of capital when answering the interview questions. Throughout the interviews, all participants gave examples of cultural wealth in the six forms of capital, but they referenced some forms of capital much more than others. The frequencies of responses about the six forms of capital were (a) 177 references to familial capital, (b) 138 references to navigational capital, (c) 83 references to resistant capital, (d) 73 references to social capital, (e) 56 references to linguistic capital, and (f) 29 references to aspirational capital (see Table 4). The frequencies highlight the importance of all six forms of capital to participants' college experiences. However, because this study was about parental influence, participants had more opportunities to accentuate their familial capital. Similarly, when telling stories about applying to college, looking for resources, and overcoming challenges while in college, participants often mentioned characteristics of navigational capital.

This study showed participants identified more familial and navigational capital in their personal stories due to the topic of the study itself. However, the forms of capital with fewer responses should not be interpreted as a deficit in capital of Latinx students. Yosso (2005) stated

“looking through a CRT lens means critiquing deficit theorizing” (p. 75). Deficit-informed research and deficit thinking assume deprivation in students of color (Yosso, 2005). Some researchers have countered analyzing Latinx students with deficit assumptions and have attempted to show a more accurate representation of Latinx families’ perspectives on education (Aragon, 2018; Cuyjet et al., 2016; Durand & Perez, 2013; Yosso, 2005; Yosso & Solórzano, 2005). The lower number of responses in certain categories of cultural capital documented in this study (e.g., aspirational capital) do not necessarily indicate a deficit in participants’ capital. The inevitable subtext and crossover of themes in a storytelling interview were difficult to measure precisely, especially because participants were unaware of how their answers would be linked to six forms of cultural capital with specific characteristics. It is possible a different set of interview questions focusing on key characteristics of each capital would have led to a different ranking in responses or different themes entirely. The following sections presents results pertaining to each research question. The discussion is based on the literature and analysis through the theoretical and conceptual lenses used to frame this study.

Findings: Research Question 1

The researcher used Yosso’s (2005) CCW model in Research Question 1 as the conceptual framework to (a) investigate whether participants perceived having immigrant parents was a factor in acquisition of cultural capital and (b) analyze subthemes in each form of capital. The study confirmed all 17 participants reported having all six forms of cultural capital to varying degrees. The two forms of community cultural capital participants reported most frequently were familial capital (177 references) and navigational capital (138 references). Findings related to Research Question 1 are explicated separately for each form of cultural capital.

Aspirational Capital

The subthemes that emerged from findings on aspirational capital were (a) Parents Dreams for Future and (b) Finding Purpose. These themes revealed, when thinking of an education, participants did not view higher education as unattainable but instead were hopeful for the future. These findings are also consistent with Yosso's (2005) explanation of aspirational capital as having hopes and dreams, despite challenges and barriers. Despite multiple examples of difficulties participants faced as children of immigrant parents, they were convinced an education would make things better for their future. In a way, participants spoke of an education as the only way to avoid the difficulties parents faced. This finding supports Ceja's (2004) findings on first-generation Chicana students and their awareness of parents' struggles as sources of motivation to pursue a college education. Similarly, Auerbach's (2006) findings on immigrant parents' moral support corroborates immigrant parents use their lack of educational opportunities in their original countries to motivate children.

When speaking about aspirations for their future, participants referred to achieving dreams, not only for themselves but also for families. This study substantiates Ceballo et al.'s (2014) results on parental involvement in Latinx high school students. The authors found parents' aspirations for better opportunities in the United States were a major motivator for students to seek a college education. Although Ceballo et al. documented Latinx immigrant parents' involvement beginning in the ninth grade, this study revealed college encouragement from parents in high school helped students in transitioning to college, even as they got older. Most participants in this study described having a college education as a collective aspiration of the family, not only an individual goal. These participants' aspirational capital also offers

support for Ceja's (2004, 2006) findings, which demonstrated parental encouragement and support are influential factors in participants' educational aspirations.

Linguistic Capital

In terms of linguistic capital, this study revealed (a) Translating and (b) Bilingualism as subthemes. Participants put high emphasis on their linguistic abilities and were proud of their first language. Not only did they think of being bilingual as an asset, but several participants linked language to identity. This finding coincides with Cuyjet et al.'s (2016) point that bilingualism is a form of ethnic identity for Latinx students. A predominant way participants expressed linguistic capital was being able to translate and educate parents about the college process. Although participants recognized translating for parents was a normal responsibility for them, some mentioned difficulty translating and educating parents on topics they had trouble understanding themselves, such as the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). This finding relates to Auerbach's (2006) argument that being children of immigrant parents is often linked with "relatively low incomes, education, English fluency and knowledge of the U.S. system" (p. 286), which naturally make parents more dependent on children. Despite mentions of stressful situations when translating important documents, the overwhelming consensus of participants when speaking about language was being bilingual was an advantage.

In the subtheme Bilingualism, participants expressed speaking in both English and Spanish interchangeably, something they referred to "Spanglish." Participants linked this behavior with their upbringing of learning Spanish at home while learning English at school. These examples of linguistic capital coincide with Yosso's (2005) argument that "cross-cultural awareness and 'real-world' literacy skills" (p. 79) are assets Latinx students possess.

Familial Capital

Because this study focused on parental influence, familial capital became the predominant form of cultural wealth participants spoke about in their responses. Participants also commonly spoke about how relatives swayed their college decisions. In the subthemes that emerged on familial capital—(a) Parent Emotional Support, (b) Parent Financial Support, and (c) Support from Relatives— participants shared who made up their support systems during college. As referred in Auerbach’s (2006) study, moral support is the basis of how Latinx immigrant parents play a role in children’s education. Nichols and Islas’s (2016) and Ceja’s (2004, 2006) studies also corroborated the fact that first-generation college students identify parents as their primary source of support in college. Even though none of the participants’ parents in this study had a university education, the emotional support and encouragement parents provided was fundamental when participants faced challenges. Ceja (2006) had similar findings to this study’s Support from Relatives subtheme, which revealed how siblings also contributed to first-generation Latinx students’ college decisions by sharing first-hand knowledge on the process. Additionally, participants expressed a silent influence from extended family members such as aunts, uncles, cousins, and stepparents, who may not have talked with them about college; however, it was evident having relatives as role models for being college graduates also had a positive effect on participants.

When discussing financial support, none of the participants referred to receiving an allowance. Participants described financial support as being able to depend on their parents while attending college. Examples of support such as living with parents, driving a parent’s car to school, or not having to buy groceries or pay for utilities were coded as financial support. Participants who were married referred to being able to depend on their parents for things they

would have had to pay themselves if they did not have familial capital, such as childcare. Although participants referred to financial concerns, they stated parents were proud to have a son or daughter in college and would make sacrifices to support them financially if needed. Participants expressed a family understanding that a college graduate would benefit the entire family. Other studies (e.g., Auerbach, 2006; Ceja, 2004) documented immigrant parents' perceptions of higher education as signifying upward mobility and instilling that belief in their children. Conveying the message hard work and going to college led to a successful career with financial gain was evident in this and prior studies.

Social Capital

All participants indicated they relied on others beyond their family for support. This asset, which Yosso (2005) framed as social capital, was prevalent during participants' discussions of the subthemes (a) Peer Network, (b) Faculty Support, (c) Counselor Support. It was evident participants sought and secured a support system beyond their home. Similar to Cahill's (2019) study, in which students reported networking with people as a major nonfinancial asset to help them succeed in college, this study revealed participants identified their social capital with connections they built in college.

This study's findings align with those of Yosso (2005), which indicated students display social capital when they build a community among their peers and a support system they can rely on, such as faculty and counselors. Yosso (2005) stated college agents "reassure the student emotionally that [they] are not alone in the process of pursuing higher education" (p. 79). An interesting finding was the subthemes Counselor Support and Peer Network were mentioned three times more often than Faculty Support. The researcher's interpretation of this result is the drastic shift to online instruction during the 2020–2021 campus closure during the COVID-19

global pandemic. The various modalities (i.e., asynchronous, synchronous, or a combination) of online instruction during the global pandemic were a completely new experience for students and the majority of faculty who had never taught online. Online instruction during a global pandemic was not the normal setting to allow one-on-one interactions that happen during faculty office hours and before or after class. Instead, during the campus closure, students relied more on support from friends and classmates through texts or social media. When reaching out for resources during the campus closure, students were connected to phone or online counseling assistance, which may explain the more frequent mentions of counselor support at the time of this study. Another interpretation of higher references to counselors is the researcher, being a counselor herself, may have inadvertently reminded participants during the interview of interactions with counselors. Despite numerical differences in responses, participants' references to support from peers, faculty, and counselors corroborate Acevedo-Gil's (2017) findings that besides parents, students rely on others for information. Participants of this study recognized their social capital assets as the institutional agents who provided information or encouragement outside the home.

Navigational Capital

Despite parents not having a college education to share first-hand experiences, participants' navigational capital was extensively described in 138 responses, the second highest form of community cultural wealth reported. Participants' responses on questions related to navigational capital included extensive examples of having adult responsibilities as children, which may have contributed to their high acquisition of navigational capital as adults. The subthemes (a) Looking for Resources and (b) Educating Parents demonstrated how participants had the ability to use their skills to look for answers. Yosso (2005) described a unique

characteristic in navigational capital of having resilience, a set of inner resources and strategies that allow individuals to not only survive but also excel. Participants' high numbers of responses in describing how they navigated college demonstrated perseverance, drive, and determination, values generally taught at home.

Responses related to the subtheme Educating Parents detailed the college process as being a learning experience for both participants and parents. Participants made references to explaining the college process to their parents and explaining differences in the education system of the United States versus that of their parents' home country (e.g., community college versus university). This finding is significant because it is distinctive to immigrant parents who did not go through the U.S. K–12 education system (Aragon, 2018; Auerbach, 2006; Ceballo et al.; Ceja, 2004, 2006; Espino, 2016). However, parents' lack of understanding of the educational processes in the United States did not dissuade participants from continuing their studies after high school. Participants mentioned challenges they encountered, such as not knowing how to schedule college courses, having to manage work with school, not knowing the financial aid process, and struggling with transportation. However, participants sought out college professionals, peers, or siblings for assistance on matters with which they needed help.

Although Aragon (2018) and Espino (2016) focused on different educational levels of Latinx students—high school and doctoral students, respectively—the authors had similar findings in their research. Both researchers documented how immigrant parents educate children in the home by coaching them on skills for navigating life (e.g., working hard, being courageous, having grit), which complement skills taught at school and influenced participants' educational achievement. Clearly, navigating college on their own and educating parents in the process are evidence of grit and perseverance, which align with the navigational assets of participants.

Resistant Capital

Having resistant capital means having the skills to challenge inequality, racism, and oppression (Yosso, 2005). When discussing resistant capital, participants made statements that connected to their identity and experience as a racial or ethnic minority in the United States. The subthemes that emerged on resistant capital were: (a) Latinx Experience in the United States and (b) Cultural Differences. Participants had clear examples of situations in which the dominant racial group did not always embrace their Latinx identity.

Another finding about resistant capital had to do with how the demographics of the high school or college participants had previously attended affected their current college experience. Participants who described incidents of discrimination or bullying noted they happened when Latinx students were racial or ethnic minority populations in the classroom or school they attended at the time. These findings are similar to those of Gonzalez (2016), which demonstrated Latinx students expressed not belonging in classrooms where they were the only Latinx student or there were few Latinx students. One participant mentioned her experience as a Latinx student was completely different in a predominantly White college she had attended years prior. Overall, participants described positive experiences in a Hispanic-serving institution but observed it could be different if they were a racial or ethnic minority.

Another way participants narrated resistant capital was by attaching meaning to graduating from college as Latinx. It was important to participants to stay in college, and several mentioned knowing someone who had dropped out of college. Several participants mentioned the desire to avoid contributing to the stereotype of Latinx students not completing college. These characteristics are part of fighting oppression and being motivated to create transformational change, which are key characteristics in resistant capital (Yosso, 2005; Yosso &

Solórzano, 2005). Similar conclusions were drawn in other studies, when Latinx students perceived attaining a college education was one of the ways of combating stereotypes and discrimination the Latinx community faced (Cahill, 2019; Ceja, 2004).

Findings: Research Question 2

With Research Question 2, the researcher sought to understand how immigrant parents influence Latinx community college students' decisions in three areas: (a) whether to go to college, (b) where to go to college, and (c) what to study in college. Themes emerged from each part of this question. Findings are discussed by addressing each part of Research Question 2 and the themes that emerged from it.

Whether to Go to College

The themes that emerged regarding what influenced participants to decide whether to go to college were (a) Family Pressure and Expectations and (b) Making Parents Proud. Through participant responses, it was clear parents had instilled the importance of a college education on participants since a young age. Many other studies have detailed this study's finding of parents constituting a primary motivator for student's decisions about going to college (Cahill 2019; Ceja 2004; Gonzalez 2016; Nichols & Islas 2016). The findings also coincide with those from Hossler and Gallagher's (1987) statement that students express interest in college at an early age, and parents may shape college decisions. Some participants did not question whether to go to college; it was a natural transition they knew they had to make. Although most made the decision on their own, it was evident they had consulted with parents. It was important for participants to make their parents proud.

Where to Go to College

Themes that appeared in the findings when discussing parental influence on where to go to college included (a) Closer to Home, (b) Financial Concerns, and (c) Alone in the College Process. When focusing on the influence of parents, the overwhelming response from participants was parents preferred they stay close to home. Participants made it clear parents' hints, suggestions, or comments about staying close to home influenced their decision to attend the local college. These findings support the research of Ceja (2006) and Perez and McDounough (2008), who found Latinx students tend to select which college to attend based on parents voicing their preferences.

Having financial concerns was also a major theme when participants decided where to go to college. It was evident many participants and parents lacked information on ways to pay for college, such as financial aid and scholarships. This finding adds to Cuyjet et al.'s (2016) and Hoxby and Avery's (2013) argument that many eligible, high-achieving, low-income students do not apply to selective colleges due to lacking information on resources to pay for college costs.

Prior research has indicated Latinx students entering college disproportionately choose community college over 4-year institutions (Ceja, 2004; Cuyjet et al., 2016; Kurlaender, 2016). The theme Alone in the College Process supports prior research indicating applying to college is a difficult process for students, especially when they do not seek assistance from school professionals. These findings coincide with those of Cahill (2019), which demonstrated first-generation Latinx students may have difficulty asking for help because of negative experiences in the past, not understanding the higher education system, or being taught not to question authority. Moreover, Kim and Nuñez (2013) found Latinx students with limited information were less likely to apply to 4-year universities, findings also shared by this study. Applying to

college without having the information on college and university options and financial resources may have impacted some participants' views of the community college as their only option. Other studies (e.g., Hoxby & Avery, 2013; Kim, 2004; Kim & Gasman, 2011) have also documented college cost and financial concerns are important factors in students' college selection process.

What to Study in College

Three themes emerged from participants' discussions about how they decided on a major: (a) Happiness, (b) Admiration to Profession, and (c) Financial Security. When discussing their major with their parents, the recurring concept in participant responses was their parents wanted them to be happy with their chosen career. Many participants referenced parents reminding them having a choice in what to study was a privilege they never had. These findings are similar to Ceja's (2004), which showed Latinx students realized they had access to educational choices never available to their parents. Auerbach's (2006) study on high school students and children of immigrants revealed students appreciated having the freedom to choose what to study. Prior studies also confirmed Latinx parents used their own examples of hard labor to warn children against repeating that pattern and guiding them to find happiness in their future career (Aragon, 2018; Auerbach, 2006).

Many participants shared, when choosing a major, someone they knew had sparked their interest in that field. These findings relate to Nichols and Islas's (2016) observations first-generation students identified their career with someone in their social network. Participants expressed admiration for people in certain professions who influenced their decisions, suggesting the importance of providing students with professional role models or opportunities for job shadowing to open possibilities for broader career exploration.

The third theme that arose on influences on student's choice of a major was Financial Security. Being able to make more money than their parents, have financial stability, and give back to their parents were common topics brought up when discussing this theme.

Findings: Other Themes That Arose

Findings in the theme Participants as Parents, Influence on the New Generation revealed an important goal for participants of this study who were parents: for their children to have first-hand guidance for the college experience they did not have. Similar to the findings in the theme Children of Farmworkers, participants highlighted how their parents wanted them to have a better life than they did, meaning jobs with higher pay and better working conditions. As found in prior studies (e.g., Ceja 2004, 2006; Nichols & Islas 2016), parents' financial hardship and employment struggles became a catalyst for pursuing a college education. The commonality among the unexpected themes of this study was the goal of parents wanting the next generation to have a better life than they had.

The overarching theme, American Dream, was a recurring ideal expressed by all participants in phrases such as "making it in this country," "having the dream job," and "becoming financially stable." It was clear in participants' storytelling they believed graduating from college would be the gateway to achieving the American dream. Parental influence on this theme was prevalent as participants mentioned the constant reminders from parents' that the United States is the country of opportunities, and the reason parents migrated was so participants could have the chance to achieve the American dream.

Implications

Although this study was a phenomenological exploration of the experiences of a limited group of Latinx students whose parents were immigrants, experiences reported by these

participants were so consistent as to suggest several considerations for practical application.

First, these findings could help administrators at institutions of higher education better understand how some Latinx students make college decisions outside the college campus.

Findings of this study suggest Latinx children of immigrants highly value parental input and advice on college decisions. Participants' lived experiences provide an insider's perspective into how college decisions are discussed at home. Findings could inspire community college leaders to engage Latinx students in ways that include families, giving special attention to those with immigrant parents.

This study underscores findings from prior research suggesting a need for educators to find alternative ways to engage Latinx communities. Findings showed, although college is foreign to many immigrant parents, participants' navigational capital gave them the skills to seek needed resources. Moreover, participants found ways to educate parents and translate college documents and information for them when necessary. These findings indicate immigrant parents want to be involved in a system they do not understand.

One simple approach to engaging this population would be for institutions to provide information on resources and support services to students and parents in Spanish. Outreach in the community that presents information in Spanish could make college bureaucracy less intimidating and more welcoming to immigrant communities. Institutions of higher education could also consider taking the responsibility of educating parents who have not attended college or who are new to the United States on the college process to relieve new college students from that responsibility. Experiences participants reported suggest motivational factors of immigrant families extend beyond the student. A college education is part of the American dream for these

first-generation students, but the American dream of immigrant parents is seeing their children graduate from college.

Another practical implication for practice could be for college leaders to seek alternative ways to support nontraditional students. Participants from this study looked to parents for transportation, childcare, and cash for food and books, essentials not all parents can provide for children. These basic needs are critical barriers that can limit college retention and success, particularly for vulnerable populations. Although colleges offer numerous resources to help students, many nontraditional students do not seek help. Implementing practical, effective ways of communicating the availability of these resources to nontraditional students is surely a best practice for colleges seeking to open more equitable pathways to student success.

Recommendations for Future Research

Implications described in this chapter offer several potential areas for future research that could further understanding of ways immigrant parents influence their children's college decisions. This study's findings on the influence immigrant parents have on their children's college decisions can extend to multiple areas of research. The most relevant areas are presented in this section.

As discussed in Chapter 2, colleges and universities have viewed the Latinx community as a monolithic group. The diversity in Latin American countries and the generation of Latinx living in the United States impact the Latinx experience. This study's findings reinforce prior research indicating generational factors bring additional challenges to students that educational institutions may overlook. A major finding in this study was parents of these participants did not have the information required to assist children with college. Most participants expressed they had to explain the college process to parents. The first recommendation for future research is to

conduct more qualitative studies from the perspective of Latinx immigrant parents on their experiences in helping their children attend their local community college. Documenting the experience of immigrant parents and involvement in the college education of their children may provide valuable data on the type of college information immigrant parents need to better understand the college process and assist their children.

Although the focus of this study was parental influence, participants identified influence from other family members in the subtheme Support From Relatives. The second recommendation for future research is to consider how other immigrant family members influence first-generation college students. For example, the role of immigrant grandparents may impact the experiences of second- and third-generation immigrants, whose parents may have experienced schooling in the United States but whose immigrant grandparents may play a role in their ethnic identity (e.g., culture, language, religion).

The third recommendation for future studies is to explore the Latinx male perspective more thoroughly. The limited male perspective in this study conveyed men drew a strong linkage between a college education and financial gain, which is significant when men in Latinx families are mentored to be financial providers of the household. Taking too much time to graduate and not contributing financially were concerns men in this study expressed primarily. This tendency of men in Latinx families to be financial providers may have been the reason male, more than female, participants referenced fathers or father figures during interviews. These men, as their families' providers, were men male participants looked up to as examples to follow. Conducting more studies focusing on male Latinx students could shed light on how they view masculinity in their community and how this view relates to their decision to pursue college and graduate.

Another recommendation for future studies focusing on the experience of children of immigrants is having diversity of study participants from different countries. Although this study presented experiences with parents from three countries—Mexico, Guatemala, and Peru—more can be gained from including participants from other countries of origin. This diversity can be achieved if community colleges in different states conduct studies on their immigrant population, as the diversity in immigrants varies in each state due to geographical location. For example, the experience of Latinx Cuban immigrants living in Florida could differ from the predominantly Latinx Mexican immigrant experience in California because social, political, and cultural experiences in countries of birth shape immigrant experiences. Also tied to the experience of children of immigrants is the reason parents migrated to the United States. One participant in this study explained their parents immigrated to the United States on an athletic sponsorship. This student's experience calls for more studies documenting the experience of children of immigrant athletes and how their journey starting a life as a professional athlete in the United States differs from that of other immigrants and their children.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to understand the influence of immigrant parents on the college decisions of Latinx community college students. This study addressed how immigrant parents' experiences influence the cultural capital of students. In addition, this study addressed influence on (a) whether students go to college, (b) where they go to college, and (c) what they study. The study's findings show the immigrant experience of parents is reflected in their acquisition of CCW, as framed by Yosso's (2005) six forms of cultural capital. However, some forms of cultural capital have a greater impact than others. By stressing educational opportunities for children as a major reason for migrating to the United States, immigrant parents have a

distinct influence on whether students go to college. Secondly, parents influence where children go to college by expressing their preference of staying closer to home and providing the financial and emotional support their children need as first-generation students in college. In regard to influence on the choice of the major field of study, parents prioritize children's happiness while highlighting the importance of having financial security in one's career. Although community college students are adults and make their own decisions, Latinx children of immigrants highly value and rely on parental advice throughout their college experience. The emergent understanding of this population suggests community college leaders should seek ways to educate parents and make the family's experience less complex and more enjoyable for future generations. Immigrant parents and their children share a commitment to realizing the American dream, and colleges can help by developing inclusive ways to bridge immigrant communities with the college experience.

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Appendix A - Questionnaire

Dear Prospective Study Participant,

As noted in the invitation email, your responses will be kept confidential and your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. This questionnaire should take no more than 3 minutes to complete. You may exit the survey and opt-out at any time in the process.

Thank you for your time and support,

Monica Lopez (Researcher)

1. Name (First, Last)

2. Do you identify as Latinx?
☐ Yes
☐ No
3. Are you a first-generation* college student?
*defined as a person whose parents do not have a college degree
☐ Yes
☐ No
4. Are you a child of immigrant* parents or a child of a single parent who is an immigrant?
*defined as born in another country regardless of citizenship status
☐ Yes
☐ No
5. Would you be willing to participate in an interview to contribute to this study?
☐ Yes
☐ No
6. What is your major?

7. Select your Gender
☐ Female
☐ Male
☐ Prefer not to say
☐ Other: _____
8. What is the country or countries of origin of your parents?

Appendix B - Interview Invitation Protocol

Dear [participant name],

Thank you again for participating in the questionnaire portion of my research study as part of my doctoral degree requirements. As a reminder, my study is entitled, The Influence of Immigrant Parents on the College Decisions of Latinx Community College Students.

You indicated willingness to participate in the next phase of research that will consist of a Zoom interview lasting no more than one hour of your time. You will receive a \$20 Amazon gift card for your time. The results of this research project will be published in a dissertation, but your identity will remain confidential.

To schedule this study's interview component, please reply to this email with at least three dates and times convenient for you. Once confirmed, you will receive a meeting invitation with the Zoom link and the Pre-Interview Consent Form. With your permission, the session will be recorded and transcribed, but these data will be available only to you and me. Again, your participation is voluntary.

Questions and comments about this study may be directed to any of the following:

- Monica Lopez, xxxxxx@ksu.edu
- KSU Dissertation Co-chair Dr. Cindy Miles, xxxxxx @ksu.edu
- KSU Dissertation Co-chair Dr. Linda Garcia, xxxxxx@ksu.edu
- KSU University Research Compliance Office, xxxxxx@k-state.edu
- KSU IRB Chair, Rick Scheidt, Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects, 203 Fairchild Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506, XXX-XXX-XXXX.

Thank you for your consideration,

Monica Lopez

Appendix C - Pre-Interview Consent Form

Dear Student,

Thank you for your interest in participating in this study. Please review the project consent form.

Project title: The Influence of Immigrant Parents on the College Decisions of Latinx Community College Students.

Purpose/Benefit: The purpose of this study is to analyze the influence of immigrant parents (born outside the U.S. regardless of citizenship status) on the college decisions of their children. Your participation in this study will help shine a light on the role parents have on the education of community college Latinx students. More importantly, you have the opportunity to share your story as a Latinx, first-generation college student, whose parents migrated to the U.S. from another country.

I obtained your e-mail address from the college dataset with self-disclosed student information. The dataset indicated you identified as (a) first-generation, and (b) Latinx. This research project is being conducted independently by Monica Lopez, under the direction of Dr. Miles and Dr. Linda Garcia.

Your participation in this research project is greatly appreciated and will consist of participating in a video and audio interview conducted through Zoom. The interview is designed to take no more than one hour, and there are no foreseeable risks to you. By responding to this email with your preferred date, you are consenting to participate in the interview. With your permission, the session will be recorded and transcribed, but these data will be available only to you and me. Your responses will not be shared, will not be identified with you, and data will be confidentially stored using pseudonyms. Individual responses will not be reported, but data will be coded for common themes among the participants. After the zoom interview is transcribed, the recording will be deleted.

By agreeing to participate in the study, you will be giving your consent for the researcher to include your responses in the data analysis. Your participation in this research study is strictly voluntary, and you may choose not to participate without fear of penalty or any negative consequences. By completing this interview, you will receive a \$20 Amazon gift card in appreciation of your time.

If you have any questions about this study, you may email Monica Lopez at xxxxxx@ksu.edu or the committee co-chairs: Dr. Cindy Miles at xxxxxx@ksu.edu or Dr. Linda Garcia at xxxxxx@ksu.edu. You may also contact KSU IRB Chair, Rick Scheidt, Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects, 203 Fairchild Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506, XXX-XXX-XXXX.

The results of this research project will be published in a dissertation, but your identity will remain confidential using pseudonyms. The information that will be collected as part of this research will not be shared with other investigators. Again, your participation is voluntary.

With gratitude,

Monica Lopez

Appendix D - Student Interview Questions

Storytelling

1. Tell me, what has been your experience as a child of immigrant parents living in the United States?

Yosso Community Capital Wealth Questions (RQ1)

Aspirational Capital

1. What are your parents dreams for your future?
 - How have they shared these dreams with you over the years?

Linguistic Capital

2. What language do you speak with your parents?
 - Are you bilingual?

Familial Capital

3. Did your parents speak to you about applying to college?
 - Did you receive any input from your parents during the college process?
 - In what ways do you feel parents support you now that you are in college?

Social Capital

4. Have other people influenced you?
 - If yes, describe the person's relationship and support given.

Navigational Capital

5. What type of difficulties (if any) did you face navigating college? For example, knowing where to go for certain things?
 - How did you work through those challenges?
 - Did your parents support you during this time?

Resistant Capital

6. How do you describe your college experience as a Latinx student?
 - Do you think being Latinx has an impact on your college experience?

Questions on College Decisions (RQ2)

1. Tell me about how you decided to go to college.
 - Who did you talk to about whether to go or not (if anyone)?
2. How did you decide what college or university to go to?
 - Did you apply to universities?
 - Did anyone help you or suggest which college to go to?
3. What is your major?
 - Tell me how you decided on this major.