THE EXPERIENCES OF UNDOCUMENTED LATIN@ STUDENTS WHO DEMONSTRATE RESILIENCE NAVIGATING HIGHER EDUCATION

By
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Research Questions

- How do undocumented Latina@ college students demonstrate resilience as they navigate higher education?

1. How does being undocumented shape a student’s college experience?

2. What factors contribute to overcoming challenges these students encounter in higher education?
Study Background

- **Problem Statement and Significance**
  - Economic, Ethical, and Humanistic

- **Purpose of Study**
  - Hearing directly from students → Informing practice for serving undocumented students

- **Sample**
  - 16 participants
  - Two rounds of interviews
  - Various four-year institutions across the U.S.
  - Testimonios
  - Narrative inquiry

- **Literature Review**
CRT and LatCrit

- Critical Race Theory (CRT)
  - A lens used to examine the relationship amongst race, racism, and power (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).

- LatCrit
  - Examines “immigration theory and policy, as well as language rights and discrimination based on accent or national origin” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 6).

“The ‘gift’ of CRT is that it unapologetically challenges the scholarship that would dehumanize and depersonalize us” (Ladson-Billings, 2000, p. 272).
Resilience Theory

- Adapting to risk factors successfully as a result of protective factors and actively dealing with stress and adversity.

- “Individuals with resilience capacities can prevent, minimize, and even overcome adversity” (Beltran, 2011, p. 7).

- Educational resilience theory
  - “Commonly refers to the ability to succeed in school despite difficult or adverse circumstances, often through the presence or development of protective factors” (Waxman, Gray, & Padron, 2003).
Findings: Question 1

- Perception of campus climate
  - Sense of belonging

- Educator and non-peer interactions
  - Unaware and unsupportive educators

- Emotional challenges
  - Stigma
  - Fear

- Academic and career limitations

- Organizational involvement
Findings: Question 2

- Environmental Factors
  - Family
  - Maintaining ties to home community
  - Peer relationships
  - Involvement in organizations
  - Mentor and supporter relationships

- Personal Factors
  - Future oriented
  - Effective coping behaviors
  - Effectively navigating the system
  - Embracing the connection between the personal and political
Suggestions for Practice

- Educator efforts
  - Raising awareness
  - Support network
  - Ethic of care

- University resources
  - Personnel
  - Physical spaces
  - Inclusive practices

- Building connections external to the institution
  - K-12 and community college partnerships
  - Community groups including religious organizations
  - Family involvement
Thank you!

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