Family Influence as it Relates to College Persistence of Latinx College Students: An Examination of Major Satisfaction as a Mediator
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Introduction

Latinx college students are increasing their enrollment compared to other ethnic groups that have remained stable over time (Field, 2018; Musu-Gillette, et al, 2017).

Latinx college students face obstacles such as receiving financial aid, class enrollment help, perceived social support from parents without a degree (Garcia, 2010; Allen, 1999; Castellanos, et al., 2005).

Family Influence

Family influence is present in Latinx families, and typically it involves immediate and extended family (Piña-Watson, et al., 2013). Latinx college students may feel obligated to continue higher education to fulfill their family wishes or increase their social status.

College Persistence

Previous literature has found that college persistence increases when an individual is part of the academic community (faculty and peers; Castillo, et al., 2006).

Major Satisfaction

A relationship between family influence and major satisfaction has not been significant when determined a major (Porter & Umbach, 2006).

Factors have shown significant relationships in major satisfaction are an individual’s personality fit, gender-dominating careers, and racial differences (Dawson-Threat & Huba, 1996).

Gaps in the Literature

Family is a form of social support for Latinx college students. Although there is research on higher levels of college persistence based on social support from peers, less has been done in relation to family influences.

Purpose & Hypotheses

Purpose

The purpose of the present study is to examine the mediating effect of major satisfaction in the relationship between family expectations and college persistence among Latinx college students.

Hypothesized Model

HYPOTHESESIZED MODEL

TRIMMED MODEL

Methods

Participants

198 (M = 19.24, SD = 1.67; 61.3% women) all of which identified as Latinx and were collected at a university in West Texas.

Instruments

Family Influence Scale (subscales α = .90-.95; Fouad, et al., 2010)
Academic Major Satisfaction (α = .90; Nauta, 2007)
College Persistence (subscales α = .82-.94; Davidson, et al., 2009)

Procedure

Online questionnaire through Qualtrics
Data collected through SONA
Participants were given course credit for participating

Results

Model Fit Indices:
- CFI = .909
- RMSEA = .084
- SRMR = .107

Model was trimmed of all non-significant paths in order to improve model fit.

Conclusions

As family expectations increase, Latinx college students’ major satisfaction seems to decrease.

Further investigation into potential moderators of this relationship is needed. For example, concordance with familial expectations in academics could be protective whereas a discrepancy between familial expectations in academics with the college students wishes may put them at risk for being less satisfied with their major.

It is also interesting to note that other family influence variables did not show an association with major satisfaction (e.g., informational support, financial support, and values/beliefs).

Finally, there were inconsistent findings in the direct and mediating relationships of major satisfaction on college persistence.

As expected, higher major satisfaction was related to higher levels of academic integration, support services satisfaction and degree commitment. Contrary to the hypotheses, higher major satisfaction was related to lower academic conscientiousness. Future research should also investigate potential variables that could explain this finding.

References


