THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL CAPITAL ON LATINX STUDENTS‘ ATTITUDES TOWARDS POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

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Dedication

This is dedicated to my father and mother, Mr. Rix Watson Sr. and Mrs. Helen Watson. They were unschooled but not uneducated.

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I am grateful to all who have supported me in this journey. I want to thank my husband and daughter for keeping me motivated. Without your understanding and support this would have been very difficult. I also want to thank my deceased father and mother. The two of them instilled in me a strong work ethic and the perseverance necessary to complete this accomplishment. Thank you to Dr. Ley for your assistance with editing as well as your words of encouragement. Finally, I must thank my committee for their patience and expert advice. Thank you to Dr. Brown, Dr. Carman, Dr. Orange, Dr. Kahan and Dr. Browning. Each of you have helped me to keep pressing forward when there were times that I could not see the end of the tunnel. A special thanks to Dr. Browning for stepping in when I needed an additional committee member. Your guidance and support through this process was immensely appreciated.

ABSTRACT

THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL CAPITAL ON LATINX STUDENTS'ATTITUDES TOWARDS POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

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Latinx students have been graduating high school and enrolling in college at lower rates than their Caucasian counterparts. Sufficient positive social capital can be beneficial in shaping Latinx students' attitudes towards college enrollment. The purpose of this study was to examine the potential differences between AP and IB Latinx students' perceptions of their college readiness. The study examined students' attitudes towards attitudes toward college, academic achievement, teacher expectations and interactions, college readiness, school-wide support, guidance and counseling, and parent engagement. Data were collected from a purposive sample of high school seniors. The 143 participants were placed in three groups; students not enrolled in AP/IB courses, students enrolled in one or two AP/IB courses and students enrolled in three or more AP/IB courses. Approximately 85% of the 143 participants answered four open-ended questions and three students, one from each group participated in a focus group. The data

collected from the opened ended questions and focus group were used to gain a deeper understanding of students' perceptions of their college readiness and understanding of requirements for college enrollment. The findings of the study show that being enrolled in AP/IB courses had no effect on students' attitudes towards college, academic achievement, teacher expectations and interactions, college readiness, school-wide support, guidance and counseling, and parent engagement. Overall students had positive attitudes towards college and school-wide support. The open-ended questions and focus group revealed that enrollment in AP/IB courses was important for college readiness and all students should be allowed to enroll in them. Students also felt that an earlier than senior year introduction to college enrollment requirements would help them to be better prepared for college.

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CHAPTER I:

INTRODUCTION

African Americans and Latinx minority populations have increased but have been underrepresented in professional fields (Vespa, Armstrong & Medina, 2018). The United States has predicted a personnel shortfall in people required to fill professional positions by 2030 (Frey, 2015). This research indicated that these populations have not been expected to gain the credentials necessary to fill this deficit (Frey, 2015). Why have African Americans and Latinxs, not acquired the requisite skills to become professionals? Does this lack of skilled professional workers threaten the USA's position as a highly-ranked technological country?

Latinxs have been one of the fastest growing U. S. populations with the highest poverty rates (Vélez & Sáenz, 2001). The USA has predicted that by the year 2060 the Latinx population will have increased by more than 93 percent (Vespa, Armstrong, & Medina, 2018). If by 2020 Texas Latinxs become the predicted demographic majority, they will be an important demographic affecting the state economy. Decreasing Latinx's high poverty rate would blunt the negative economic impact on the State's economy.

Individual educational level has corresponded to his or her socio-economic success (Velez & Saenz, 2001). More Latinx students have entered college than 50 years ago (Musu-Gillette, Robinson, McFarland, KewalRamani, Zhang, & Wilkinson-Flicker, 2016). Despite decades of increasing college enrollment, Latinxs have remained underrepresented as a proportion of the total college population, (13%) and far lower percentage than their Caucasian peers, (63%), (Musu-Gillette et al., 2016). To add to the disparity, Latinxs have chosen technical careers at a lower rate than Caucasians (NCES, 2016).

Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) college coursework has been academically demanding. Latinx students have been discouraged from majoring in STEM programs due to these students perceived low academic ability to perform well in these courses (Crisp, 2012). Many Latinx students have had negative educational experiences which has often left them academically unprepared for challenging STEM courses (Crisp, 2012). However, despite the academic challenges some Latinx students have chosen STEM careers (NCES, 2016). They have benefitted from cultural and social factors that positively affect Latinx students' decisions to enroll in college (Altshuler &Schmautz, 2006). This chapter presents the research problem, significance of the study, the research purpose, the research questions and definitions of key terms.

The Research Problem

Almost 95% of U.S. Caucasians have graduated from high school; however, less than 72% of Latinxs have graduated high school (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). Consequently, fewer Latinxs have proportionately entered college and even fewer have graduated. Although there has been significant improvement in the number of minority students attending college, a significant gap between the number of Latinx students enrolling in college, 3 million and their Caucasian counterparts, 9.3 million has remained (Musu-Gillette et al., 2016). This study has attempted to understand why the gap still exists with the improvements in educational reform as well as the evidence of the benefits of college attendance.

Educational outcomes of Latinx students and Caucasian students have differed due to unequal access to rigorous educational programs. Advanced courses such as Advanced Placement courses or International Baccalaureate courses with their rigorous content have been considered college preparatory courses that aid in college readiness. Traditionally, college preparatory courses have been filled with and have been more

common to Caucasian students (Stearns, Potochnick, Moller, & Soughworth, 2009). At many high schools, the student enrollment in advanced courses has not accurately represented the school's demographics. Even schools with high minority populations have lower percentages of students enrolled in these courses, leaving the majority of the students unequipped for college.

Equipping Latinx students for college has been essential for their college success. Both academic experiences and community experiences have been necessary to prepare students for the demands of college (Lewallen, Hunt, Potts-Datema, Zaza & Giles, 2015). Since many low socio-economic students have been first generation college students, knowledge regarding college entrance requirements, fiscal requirements and college routines has not been readily available to them. Social capital has become necessary to successfully navigate through this process, since family experience has not been available (Altshuler & Schmautz, 2006).

Social capital is defined as expected benefits gained from investment and use of resources obtained from social relations (Lin, 2001). These resources include both school systems and community resources that aid student success (Altshuler &Schmautz, 2006). Family and friends have been an essential part of the community which is also an essential resource for students. Students who have the support of family and friends have been more focused on educational achievement and academic success.

Student academic success has contributed to college readiness. Students have been more likely to attend college if they have been prepared for college (Conley, 2008). Enrollment in college preparatory courses such as Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate has been one way to increase college readiness. These courses provide a more rigorous content that encourage a better work ethic as well as academic understanding.

AP and IB courses have not been enough to ensure Latinx student academic advancement. Other educational systems have been required to prepare students for college. Guidance counseling, teacher expectations, school environment and other school programs have also added to the social capital necessary to boost college enrollment among Latinxs students (Belasco, 2013).

Significance of the Study

The Latinx population has grown rapidly but Latinxs students have not been entering college at the same rate as other populations and those who have enrolled in college have not been completing college (Velez & Saenz, 2008; Musu-Gillette et al., 2016). The risk of high poverty in this country justifies a need for Latinx students to enter college. Because those with degrees earn more money than those without, attaining a college degree has been one vehicle in which a person can move from one socio-economic status to another (NCES, 2016). With the expected shortfalls in the number of personnel needed for professional positions (Frey, 2015), Latinx students can bridge the gap and fill the future technological positions.

The Latinx population has continued to be one of the smallest populations completing postsecondary degrees (Musu-Gillette et al., 2016). The majority of the population have been lower wage earners, since only a small percentage of the population has completed college. Those who do enroll in college have been more likely to be first generation college students as their parents have attained lower levels of education. Without family experience or assistance, there has been a need for educators to assist Latinxs students with educational planning and decisions (Lewallen, Hunt, Potts-Datema, Zaza, & Giles, 2015). Understanding how social capital relates to Latinx student's educational attainment will likely help to encourage students to choose more rigorous courses, thereby preparing them for college. Social capital can have a positive

influence on Latinx students' educational outcomes. Higher educational outcomes lead to more productive individuals and a better quality of life.

Research Purpose and Questions

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between Latinx students' attitude toward college, academic achievement, teacher expectations and interactions, college readiness, school-wide support, guidance and counseling, parent engagement and the students' course selection (AP and IB courses). The research questions that guided this study were:

1. Was there a statistically significant mean difference between the attitudes toward college of Latinx students enrolled in AP and/ or IB courses and that of Latinx students not enrolled in AP and/or IB courses?

Hypothesis: There was a statistically significant mean difference between the attitudes toward college of Latinx students enrolled in AP and/or IB courses and that of Latinx students not enrolled in AP and/or IB courses.

2. Was there a statistically significant mean difference between the attitudes towards academic preparedness of Latinx students enrolled in AP and/or IB courses and that of Latinx students not enrolled in AP and/or IB courses?

Hypothesis: There was a statistically significant mean difference between the attitudes towards academic achievement of Latinx students enrolled in AP and/or IB courses and that of Latinx students not enrolled in advanced placement courses.

3. Was there a statistically significant mean difference between the attitudes towards teacher expectations and interactions of Latinx students enrolled in AP and/or IB courses and that of Latinx students not enrolled in AP and/or IB courses?

Hypothesis: There was a statistically significant mean difference between the attitudes towards teacher expectations and interactions of Latinx students enrolled in AP and/or IB courses and that of Latinx students not enrolled in AP and/or IB courses.

4. Was there a statistically significant mean difference between the attitudes towards college readiness of Latinx students enrolled in AP and/or IB courses and that of Latinx students not enrolled in advanced placement courses?

Hypothesis: There was a statistically significant mean difference between the attitudes towards college readiness of Latinx students enrolled in AP and/or IB courses and that of Latinx students not enrolled in AP and/or IB courses.

5. Was there a statistically significant mean difference between the attitudes towards school-wide support of Latinx students enrolled in AP and/or IB courses and that of Latinx students not enrolled in AP and/or IB courses?

Hypothesis: There was a statistically significant mean difference between the attitudes towards schoolwide support of Latinx students enrolled in AP and/or IB courses and that of Latinx students not enrolled in AP and/or IB courses.

6. Was there a statistically significant mean difference between the attitudes towards guidance and counseling of Latinx students enrolled in AP and/or IB courses and that of Latinx students not enrolled in AP and/or IB courses?

Hypothesis: There was a statistically significant mean difference between the attitudes towards guidance and counseling of Latinx students enrolled in AP and/or IB courses and that of Latinx students not enrolled in AP and/or IB courses.

7. Was there a statistically significant mean difference between the attitudes towards school and parent influence of Latinx students enrolled in AP and/or IB courses and that of Latinx students not enrolled in AP and/or IB courses?

Hypothesis: There was a statistically significant mean difference between the attitudes towards school and parent influence of Latinx students enrolled in AP and/or IB courses and that of Latinx students not enrolled in AP and/or IB courses.

8. What were Latinx students' perceptions of their academic preparedness and college knowledge based on their participation in AP or IB courses?

Definition of Key Terms

The key terms used throughout this dissertation have been defined below.

Advanced Placement (AP) – The AP program is a rigorous selection of courses which allows students to earn college credit. College credit is obtained by receiving a passing grade on an AP exam (Arce-Trigatti, 2018).

High School Follow-UP Survey – A pre-existing survey used to measure students' perceptions of high school experiences (Leal, 2008).

Hispanic or Latinx – People who originate from Spanish speaking countries which include Spain, Mexico, and countries of Central and South America (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011).

International Baccalaureate (IB) - The IB program is a challenging international education with rigorous assessment. Students are groomed to become international citizens who can understand and work with people of multiple cultures (International Baccalaureate, 2013)

Social Capital – Expected benefits gained from investment and use of resources obtained from social relations (Lin, 2001)

Socio-Economic Status – An economic and sociological combined measure of work experience of an individual or family's economic and social position relative to others (National Forum on Education Statistics, 2015)

CHAPTER II:

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The research presented in this chapter collectively points to the influential role that student self-concept, family, high school services, teacher expectations and stereotypes play in shaping students' attitudes towards education and educational attainment. These constructs have contributed to the social capital that was available to students. The word capital has financial implications. Social capital, however, refers to any resource, not only financial, that can act as a common benefit (Lin, 2000). Therefore, educational programs, school climate, and family involvement can all be considered social capital as each can benefit or negatively affect educational attainment and success.

These constructs have individual implications on student attitudes towards attending college. Family, teachers and school have comprised a social capital network that has assisted students with career and college attendance decisions, whereas student self-concept and stereotypes have promoted or hindered student achievement (Mortimer, Zhang, Wu, Hussemann, & Johnson, 2017).

Student Conditions and Their Influence on Student Attitudes Towards College

Academic Self Concept

Self-concept has been an important motivational predictor of educational outcomes. Self-concept has been defined as the mental image that someone has of themselves and involves all areas of self-image (Rosenburg, 1979). Research has shown that positive responses from others have been investments in self-concept that supports students' confidence in higher education (Mortimer, 2017). Improved student attitudes about academic success from achievement feedback has been positively related to self-concept (Gniewosz, Eccles, & Noack, 2015). Students who receive high marks have

been found to have high self-concept thereby impacting attitudes regarding academic success (Gniewosz, Eccles, & Noack, 2015).

Social scientists have conducted extensive research on self-efficacy and self-concept as they relate to academic outcomes. In a study which utilized 2006 German Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) data, researchers found that self-concept better predicted students' aspirations and motivations towards careers than self-efficacy. However, self-efficacy was a better predictor of current ability (Jansen et al., 2015). This implies that self-concept can be influential in a high school student's attitudes towards college.

The ideology of college for all during the Obama administration has given rise to student expectations to attain higher education in the United States. Not only did this ideology give every student the right to have and access higher education, but it gave the impression that every student must strive for higher education (Domina, Conley, & Farkas, 2011). With higher student expectations regarding college, the researchers Domina, Conley, & Farkas, (2011) found this culture encouraged higher student academic effort and supported positive student self-concept.

Consequently, even lower achieving students have benefited from increased student expectations by positively shaping their behaviors and efforts. Domina, Conley, and Farkas (2011) found higher levels of student engagement and assignment/homework completion resulted in a shift in work ethic and desired achievement. Although low achieving student attitudes were positive, higher student achievement levels and academic self-concept were not enough to change student's attitudes towards college. Other constructs must be considered when examining students' attitudes towards college.

Family Capital

Family capital, in this study, included the culture, structure, educational attainment, socio-economic status (SES), and beliefs that have influenced student's attitudes towards educational attainment. Sufficient student family capital has supported students' college and career goals (Mortimer et al., 2017). Conversely, insufficient family capital has failed to support students' college and career goals (Mortimer et al., 2017).

Family ideals, environment, and structure have guided student well-being, self-concept, and academic achievement (Stubbs & Maynard, 2017). Students from cohesive families were shown to have balance and higher beliefs in their academic ability. Stubbs & Maynard (2011), define cohesive families as those that have unity and have been closely connected, however they offered students independence and the ability to make their own choices with family support. Students from less cohesive families had lower beliefs in themselves academically (Stubbs & Maynard, 2017).

A student's generational family educational attainment has been associated with subsequent student educational attainment (Mortimer et al., 2017). Mortimer et al. (2017) found parent and grandparent educational attainment was associated with student achievement in 422 multigenerational families. Students who had parents and grandparents who attended college were more likely to have a positive attitude about attending college, which suggests that multiple generations of college graduates were significant in student achievement. Students in families with multiple generations of college graduates have had role models who may have inspired students with academic self-confidence and self-concept.

Student exposure to family members who have attained college or encouraged college enrollment have higher aspirations for college. Students with family members that have attained college see college as the next step in life after high school rather than

an unattainable or extraordinary task. This family capital not only includes parents, but it includes other relatives and even close friends that add to the student's circle of influence. The larger the number of influences, the more positive the effect on student attitudes towards college (Engber & Wolniak, 2010).

Family relationships, family involvement, and community have also promoted educational attainment and students' success (Miekiewicz, Torfi, Gudmundsson, Blondal, & Kirezewska, 2011). Parental involvement in their children's education has been critical to students' educational success (Wang, Deng, &Yang, 2016). Parental involvement communicates parents' higher expectations for their student's higher educational achievement than has lower parental involvement more often associated with economically disadvantaged families. Furthermore, parents in economically disadvantaged families have had lower expectations due to perceived financial limitations (Wang, Deng, &Yang, 2016).

Family Socio-economic Status

Family socio-economic status (SES) has been associated with social stratification (Palardy, 2014). Cultural norms can be a result of social class differences which can be measured by educational attainment. Family members who have maintained the family's educational achievement level tend to have perpetuated their family's SES as the two were positively correlated. This does not mean that marginalized students cannot benefit from social capital instead, research has shown rich social capital enhanced low SES students' aspirations for higher educational attainment (Strayhorn, 2010).

High SES families begin to give students college endorsements and encouragement in the elementary years (Bozick, Alexander, Entwisle, Dauber, & Kerr, 2010). Students' attitudes about college were based on and were compared to parental college attainment. Second generation college students have used their parents' success

as inspiration to attend college (Langenkamp & Shifrer, 2018). Therefore, college enrollment aligns with the cultural family norms.

Low SES families provide little to no positive social signals regarding expectations of their students attending college (Bozick et al., 2010). The researchers found that social signals become habitual due to social networks and were consistent with SES. Economically disadvantaged students' attitudes towards college can be uncertain when in most cases they were typically first-generation college students' attitudes (Langenkamp & Shifrer, 2018). If students choose to be different than their parents, the struggles that parents of low SES students experience can motivate their students to higher achievement (Langenkamp & Shifrer, 2018).

Bozick et al., (2010) sought to show that academic attainment has impacted by family structure and social structures using data from high school and elementary years and evaluating the differences in the three SES groups, high, medium, and low. According to the study, students' college expectations were impacted by family expectations and other social capital. However, the effects began much earlier than high school and were different for students in different SES groups (Bozick et al., 2010). According to the study, low SES students were less likely to be interested in attending college having received limited family involvements and showing lower academic achievement over the years. Middle SES students showed both elements, family involvement and other social influences, which could have both positive and negative implications on college enrollment. With the introduction of postsecondary educational goals and postsecondary graduate examples, students from high SES backgrounds were most likely to attend college, indicating that poverty can be a barrier to academic success.

Low SES has negatively affected a range of factors that contribute to a student's educational attainment. These include resources, beliefs, experiences, social capital,

academic achievement and comprehension of the world (Aronson, 2008). High and low-income groups were unequal due to the lack of these factors. These inequalities most often begin at an early age and persist through the K-12 years. Because of these inequalities, students' perceptions of a postsecondary degree's usefulness were different (Aronson, 2008). Students from higher SES equate a college education as a means to improve themselves. Whereas students from lower SES attribute college as an entry point to a job or career (Aronson, 2008). Each promotes a different expectation of the postsecondary experience. This suggests that economically disadvantaged students have been more focused on having the necessities to survive before educational achievement.

High self- concept has mitigated the effect of poverty on students' achievement (Sellers & Neighbors, 2008). Poorer individuals who have high aspirations also have high levels of happiness and life satisfaction (Sellers & Neighbors, 2008). SES also relates to goal setting, both the level at which someone strives, and the stress associated with goal setting. While there were individuals who possess high self-concept, the economically disadvantaged still feel the stress associated with goal setting, especially goal setting in an academia. Therefore, postsecondary education has not been a goal in which underrepresented students prioritize.

The School Influence on Student Attitudes Towards College

School services such as guidance counseling and college preparation classes have been implemented to positively impact student attainment. These services along with teacher practices and expectations have all been components related to the school's social capital. Yet, they can be important to student achievement and decisions about college. These elements have been particularly important for marginalized students who have minimal exposure to college graduates and have not been informed of the requirements for college (Belasco, 2013).

School programs which help to prepare students for life after K-12 typically become available to students in high school more than in earlier years. However, attitudes towards higher educational attainment have been planted in earlier years (Ball, Huang, Cotton, & Coleman, 2016). In a study of minority elementary students, Ball et al. (2016), found that by introducing high expectancy to achieve goals to young students, attitudes towards completing high school and college were changed.

Research has shown that school programs and college preparatory courses of study have been a positive influence on students' attitudes towards college (Engber & Wolniak, 2010). In fact, participation in college preparatory courses has been reported having the greatest impact on college enrollment (Engber & Wolniak, 2010). However, programs such as career and technology education (CATE) and career pathways have yielded students with higher grade point averages and students who have been more likely to complete their programs of study (Castellano, Ewart, Sundell, & Richardson, 2017). These programs coupled with guidance counseling support high school graduation initiatives, but how they impact postsecondary programs has not been studied extensively (Stipanovic, Stringfield, & Witherell, 2017).

Traditional learning models and how students have experienced learning has changed. Online learning, a new model has grown rapidly. Kumi-Yeboah, Dogbey and Yuan (2017) found that minority students who have studied online showed academic improvement when the learning was collaborative and convenient. Collaboration included both student to student and teacher to student interaction. Minimal social interaction and lack of cultural content had the adverse effect on learning outcomes. Cultural content would include content that has relevance to that population. Understanding the needs of minority students can improve student learning in any setting. Teachers of minority students should be trained to understand the cultural backgrounds of

their students and to use that knowledge to improve teaching practices (Kumi-Yeboah, et al., 2017).

Guidance Counseling

The primary role of a guidance counselor has been to assist students with the transition from high school to college (Belasco, 2013). Their duties include, academic assistance, assisting with the college enrollment as it relates to the application and financial aid process, and assisting both students and parents with the college planning process. Although the guidance counselors have been asked to support the entire population, the role of a guidance counselor has been particularly important to marginalized students, since most knowledge about college enrollment will come through this service (Belasco, 2013).

While guidance counseling has been designed to positively impact college enrollment, many high school students have limited access to counselors. One reason has been the small number of counselors available to students. The National Council of Education Statistics (2016) reports that in the United States there was only one counselor for every 482 high school students. Guidance counselors also serve in other roles outside of student needs for the transition from high school to college, which leaves limited time for college enrollment needs (Belasco, 2013).

As previously discussed, SES has been used to explain the gap in the number of low SES students enrolling in college as compared to the number of high SES students enrolling in college. Studies attribute lack of finance and academic preparedness of low income students to their low college enrollment. However, Belasco (2013) investigated the difference in the use of guidance counseling services amongst students from different socio-economic backgrounds and how the counseling relationship contributed to college enrollment. The study found that guidance counseling significantly impacted college

enrollment and was particularly important to disadvantaged students (Belasco, 2013). The study suggested that low SES students have higher need of guidance counseling services but have been less likely to use counselors for college planning. Instead counselors have been used for other issues that low SES students experience such as discipline and financial assistance (Belasco, 2013). With the role of counselors becoming more multifaceted, students who need assistance with college planning have not been receiving it.

Low SES Latinxs students see counselors as "gate keepers" when discussing postsecondary goals since students have limited access to role models outside of the school environment (Martinez & Deil-Amen, 2015). Counselors can either withhold or control information necessary to enhance student knowledge about college. Counselors provide services to those that seek it. How students perceive their academic abilities relates to the student/guidance counselor relationship and transfers to student attitudes about college enrollment.

To increase guidance counselor presence in student communities, parent to counselor relationships must be cultivated. Parents relationships with school service providers increases the social capital influence and significantly improves students' likelihood to attend college (Engber & Wolniak, 2010).

Teacher Expectations and Practice

Student teacher relationships have been a product of teacher expectations and can be an important component of student self-concept and school engagement (Raufelder, Sanabandu, Martinez, & Escobar, 2015). Teacher expectation can also influence student outcomes. Martinez and Deil-Amen (2015) found teachers were important in shaping student academic self-concept. The study showed that teachers of advanced students encouraged their students to attend college because advanced students were expected to

attend college. This leads students to internalize the idea of college enrollment. Lower performing students, a larger percentage of the student population, have limited influences regarding college enrollment (McKown & Weinstein, 2008). Therefore, academic bias exists, and academic placement does impact self-concept of academic abilities (McKown & Weinstein, 2008).

In a study that examined how teacher racial bias impacted student attainment, Gershenson and Papageorge (2018) found that teacher expectations can be important to student achievement. Students whose teachers had high expectations tended to have better outcomes than students whose teachers had lower expectations. The study implied that teacher expectations varied by race. In fact, students of color experienced limited educational attainment due to perceived limitations by white teachers. This suggests that racial bias exists in schools and teacher practices.

Teachers have relied on stereotypical beliefs that have impaired good practice (Sue et al., 2007). Sue et. al., in found that teachers have the potential to participate in intentional or unintentional racial and gender biases. Stereotypical examples such as people of color must work harder to succeed insinuates that they can be lazy or incompetent. Other examples include the belief that racial experiences be not important or that males may be better in mathematics than females. These beliefs can be transferred to the students and impact student self-concept (Wach, Spengler, Gottschling, & Spinath, 2015).

Teacher influence becomes even more important when considering Latinxs choosing STEM majors in college. In 2015, Moller and colleagues found that students were more likely to choose STEM majors, if their STEM teacher(s) was engaged and excited about STEM content. These same teachers collaborated with other content teachers and were actively involved in professional communities. High teacher

satisfaction and enjoyment have been necessary for Latinx students to have positive attitudes towards STEM subjects. The teacher workforce should be diverse in race and gender to help reduce the attainment gaps of students of color (Gershenson & Papageorge, 2018).

Identity Threat

Urban school districts struggle with race equity. Urban schools attribute their limitations to SES rather than citing the influence of racism (Kumansi, 2011). Students of color have often been exposed to white identity and white cultural norms. However, when students of color utilize their cultural practices, those practices have been viewed as inferior to white cultural norms (Kumansi, 2011). Some examples of cultural practices can be coding when communicating and differences in physical appearance such as hairstyles and clothes. Critical race theorists challenge the way race has been used in pedagogy and strive to make racial difference a central theme (Aleman & Gaytan, 2017). By infusing students' voice and experiences in classroom learning, students of color can feel valid and not marginalized.

Through qualitative methods, Madrigal-Garcia and Acevedo-Gil (2016) found that urban schools with high Latinx populations have high levels of security and high police presence. This militarized environment promotes a school culture of criminalization and control, which negatively impacts school wide expectations of students. However, despite lower student expectations promoted by administrators, teachers continued to give students hope and encourage postsecondary educational goals. This reiterates the importance of teacher social influence on student educational success. However, Latinx students in large urban school districts often experience a culture of control and limited resources which hinders postsecondary outcomes (Madrigal-Garcia & Acevedo-Gil, 2016).

Latinx students also face stereotypes as a limitation for race equity. Machismo and marianism have been prevalent stereotypical aspects of Latinx gender roles (Faulkner, 2003). The machismo gender role describes Latinx men as dominant rulers of their wives and children. Marianism describes Latina women as those who should be subservient to their husbands and should be the caretakers of households and the children (Faulkner, 2003).

These cultural ideologies, machismo and marianism, emerge in professional interactions both positively and negatively. Latina women in STEM positions described themselves with machismo characteristics, rebellious and tough (Englander, Yanez, & Barney, 2012). The scientists expressed that machismo characteristics were necessary to be in these roles recognizing that they were not operating in the traditional marianism gender role (Englander, Yanez, & Barney, 2012). These researchers also found that female scientists characterized other women as emotional and weak. The same female scientists expressed that when they interacted with male underlings, the men were prideful and wanted to be treated like kings. Female scientists were expected to operate within the boundaries of marianism (Englander, Yanez, & Barney, 2012). However, men in higher positions were not threatened by the female scientist. The study showed that women believed to be in these STEM roles, must set aside the feminine values of marianism.

Images portrayed in the media of Latinxs have emphasized machismo and marianism. The media has portrayed those who do not follow these prescribed roles as negative examples of the Latinx population (Erba, 2018). These negative characteristics include teenage pregnancy, drug abuse, and gang membership. Young Latinas who have children have been often accused of wanting children to obtain government assistance for

economic purposes (Erba, 2018). Further, other negative portrayals of Latino men present a view of alcoholics who abuse their wives.

These stereotypes tend to be the way society perceives Latinx families, as stereotypes have been attributed to every culture and often have no cultural relevance. Those who work and interact with Latinx students have been inclined to treat students as if these stereotypes have defined the final outcomes for students and college and careers have no impact on student futures (Sue et al., 2007). Issues such as teenage pregnancy, drug abuse, and gang membership can be concerns for any ethnic group. In fact, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported that teenage pregnancy rates have decreased by an average of 8% from 2014 to 2015 (CDC, 2017). The teenage pregnancy rate amongst Latina's and African Americans was reported at similar rates of less than 3.5% by the CDC (2017). Although these rates have been twice as high as those of Caucasian teenagers, this proves that this social problem has not been unique to Latinxs and vary amongst many ethnic groups.

The reliance on stereotypes to inform practice has been problematic when these practices can cause professionals to unintentionally discriminate against Latinx students (Sue et al., 2007). For example, there have been both positive and negative academic outcomes associated with marianism and machismo. Female Latina students who perceive themselves as both a family leader and spiritual provider rather than subservient had positive attitudes about academic achievement (Pina-Watson, Lorenzo-Blanco, Dornhecker, Martinez, & Nagoshi, 2016). Positive outcomes were also realized for male students who perceived themselves as nurturing and connected to family rather than domineering and aggressive.

Some theorists believe that the inherent problem has been institutional racism (Rolon-Dow, 2004; Schaffner, 2008). Schools have implemented practices such as

translating documents and interventions which have not often changed impacted school structures (Paredes Scribner & Fernandez, 2017). Latinx populations have not been adequately served due to the resistance to change and policies that continue to keep Latinx communities from true partnerships with schools (Paredes Scribner & Fernandez, 2017). Although those who work in schools have good intentions, marginalized students can be greatly impacted by this inherent discrimination (López & Chesney-Lind, 2014).

Theoretical Framework

An integration of Coleman's theory of social capital (1988) and Bourdieu's theory of social reproduction (1977) will be used as the theoretical framework for this research. These two bodies of work help to explain how social capital influences Latinx students' choice to attend or not attend college. Both theories have distinct advantages and limitations to this study. Each theory will be outlined as they relate to this study.

Coleman's work centers on social structures that assist an individual in that structured environment (Coleman, 1990). These include school programs and support systems such as teacher expectations, guidance counseling and other academic programs that have been examined in this study. Coleman argues that social capital in this sense has a stronger influence on educational outcomes than systems or variables that exist outside of the school environment. Coleman describes the social structure as a network of relationships. The quality of those relationships has impacted the benefits from the relationships. Although choice plays an important role in attainment, Coleman claims that social capital can help give an optimistic view of the benefits, which helps an individual to see the usefulness of the resources.

Family relationships, family involvement, and community have also promoted educational attainment and success (Miekiewicz, Torfi, Gudmundsson, Blondal, & Kirezewska, 2011). Parental involvement in their children's education has been critical to

students' educational success (Wang, Deng, &Yang, 2016). Parental involvement communicates parents' higher expectations for their student's higher educational achievement than has lower parental involvement more often associated with economically disadvantaged families. Furthermore, parents in economically disadvantaged families have had lower expectations due to perceived financial limitations (Wang, et al., 2016).

Bourdieu's (1986) concept of social capital suggested that external forces such as SES or access to capital contributed more to goal attainment. Bourdieu insisted that all capital was economic. Relationships outside of the school environment have also assisted with goal attainment. Without an understanding of resources related to other networks that a person experiences, it has been difficult to distinguish how all resources add value. Bourdieu viewed social capital from a broader sense which involved both economic and cultural capital. Individuals have different backgrounds. Bourdieu's theory of social reproduction implied that the acts of an individual can be related to circumstances in which they were born, and those circumstances can be transferred from generation to generation.

Fields and habitus were the terms used by Bourdieu to describe environment and social background. Fields were the social arena in which competition for social status exist. For example, a field could have been education in which educators competed to utilize the social resources in that arena. A field could have also been an economic status such as rich or poor. In this case, how a participant has utilized the resources in a field would have depended on their habitus. Habitus were group's shared dispositions and how that group viewed and reacted to society. Bourdieu's theory described views of the social world around a certain group to be impacted by experiences that shape the body and mind.

Both Coleman's theory of social capital and Bourdieu's theory of social reproduction provided the theoretical perspective for this study. The examination of Latinxs students' attitudes towards school programs and teacher expectations and how this impacted the decision to attend college aligned with the social capital theory. The examination of students' attitudes towards parental involvement in their decisions to attend college aligned with the social reproduction theory.

Summary

When considering the importance of college education, attainment rates in the United States regarding its correlation to economic advantage, Latinx college enrollment was critical (Nunez & Dongbin, 2012). By the year 2022, over fifty percent of the college age students in the United States will be Latinx, yet their college attainment rates remain the lowest of all ethnic groups (Gandara & Contreras, 2009). Assessing ways to improve Latinx education attainment rates becomes necessary to the United States economic stability.

Low SES and poverty have been prevalent in Latinx communities. Social scientists have conducted extensive research on SES and self-efficacy in minority communities. Studies have found that social distress and poverty lead to academic difficulties (Monaghan, 2011). Differences in SES and self-efficacy has tended to persist throughout life (Monaghan, 2011). Where the research was lacking has been understanding why some underrepresented students from low socio-economic backgrounds do enroll in college.

There has been little change in the way students have been educated in K-12 schools in the United States. Students attend K-12 schools in a structured classroom of segregated content that may not include content that has been relatable to marginalized students (Sue et al., 2007). Although school districts have strived to equitably educate all

students, minority students still score lower on college entrance exams and take fewer advanced courses than Caucasian students (Contreras, 2005). The literature suggested that the addition of cultural relevance could help to bridge the gap between minority students and Caucasian students entering college.

Culture did not appear to relate to Latinx student college enrollment. However, perception of student abilities based on cultural stereotypes could cause educators to have lower expectations and not encourage students to achieve higher goals. Having minimum expectations or encouragement can have a negative impact on Latinxs students' attitudes towards college enrollment.

Family influence, self- concept, and school programs all impact attitudes towards academic achievement. These constructs work to mediate Latinx student college enrollment.

CHAPTER III:

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to examine how high school support systems impact Latinx students' attitudes towards postsecondary education. This study utilized a mixed methods causal comparison model in which a survey instrument and focus groups were used to collect data. The researcher collected survey responses from a purposive sample of southeast Texas urban high school students and analyzed to determine frequencies and percentages. The researcher collected, and coded qualitative data from the focus groups and open-ended survey question data with the intent of finding consistent themes. The research problem, operational and theoretical constructs, the research purpose, questions and design were outlined in this chapter. The sample population, instrumentation, procedures for data collection and analysis, along with all ethical considerations and anticipated study limitations have also included in this chapter.

Overview of Research Problem

Self-efficacy and socio-economic status have been shown to impact the underrepresented, African Americans and Hispanics, socially and professionally (Karimshah et al., 2013). This has been evident as college enrollment of underrepresented students in the last three decades has increased yet has been lower than college entry rates of Caucasian students (Musu-Gillette et al., 2016). There have been other factors to consider when examining students' decisions to enroll in college. Parental involvement, high school support systems and academic achievement could also have some bearing on career decisions.

Operationalization of Theoretical Constructs

This study consisted of two constructs, social capital and academic preparedness. Social capital was defined as school support systems such as teacher expectations, school wide support, guidance counseling, and parent engagement (Borg, 2010). School programs and administrative support can be those that relay expectations and assistance to facilitate decisions for success after high school and career choice. The High School Follow-Up Survey was used to collect data on students' attitudes toward college, academic achievement, teacher expectations and interactions, college readiness, school-wide support, guidance and counseling, and parent engagement (Leal, 2008). Academic preparedness in this study refers to students' participation in advanced placement (AP) courses and/or international baccalaureate (IB) courses. Students who have been enrolled in these courses have been exposed to more rigorous content which in turn makes them more academically prepared (Reid & Moore, 2008). Information on participant enrollment in AP and IB courses was obtained through the students' response to a survey question regarding enrollment in these courses.

Research Purpose, Questions and Hypotheses

The purpose of this study was to examine the potential differences between AP and IB Latinx students' and traditional students' attitudes toward college, academic achievement, teacher expectations and interactions, college readiness, school-wide support, guidance and counseling, and parent engagement. The research questions that guided this study were:

1. Was there a statistically significant mean difference between the attitudes towards college of Latinx students enrolled in AP and/ or IB courses and that of Latinx students not enrolled in AP and/or IB courses?

Hypothesis: There was a statistically significant mean difference between the attitudes towards college of Latinx students enrolled in AP and/or IB courses and that of Latinx students not enrolled in AP and/or IB courses.

2. Was there a statistically significant mean difference between the attitudes towards academic preparedness of Latinx students enrolled in AP and/or IB courses and that of Latinx students not enrolled in AP and/or IB courses?

Hypothesis: There was a statistically significant mean difference between the attitudes towards academic achievement of Latinx students enrolled in AP and/or IB courses and that of Latinx students not enrolled in advanced placement courses.

3. Was there a statistically significant mean difference between the attitudes towards teacher expectations and interactions of Latinx students enrolled in AP and/or IB courses and that of Latinx students not enrolled in AP and/or IB courses?

Hypothesis: There was a statistically significant mean difference between the attitudes towards teacher expectations and interactions of Latinx students enrolled in AP and/or IB courses and that of Latinx students not enrolled in AP and/or IB courses.

4. Was there a statistically significant mean difference between the attitudes towards college readiness of Latinx students enrolled in AP and/or IB courses and that of Latinx students not enrolled in advanced placement courses?

Hypothesis: There was a statistically significant mean difference between the attitudes towards college readiness of Latinx students enrolled in AP and/or IB courses and that of Latinx students not enrolled in AP and/or IB courses.

5. Was there a statistically significant mean difference between the attitudes towards school-wide support of Latinx students enrolled in college preparatory courses and that of Latinx students not enrolled in AP and/or IB courses?

Hypothesis: There was a statistically significant mean difference between the attitudes towards schoolwide support of Latinx students enrolled in AP and/or IB courses and that of Latinx students not enrolled in AP and/or IB courses.

6. Was there a statistically significant mean difference between the attitudes towards guidance and counseling of Latinx students enrolled in AP and/or IB courses and that of Latinx students not enrolled in AP and/or IB courses?

Hypothesis: There was a statistically significant mean difference between the attitudes towards guidance and counseling of Latinx students enrolled in AP and/or IB courses and that of Latinx students not enrolled in AP and/or IB courses.

7. Was there a statistically significant mean difference between the attitudes towards school and parent influence of Latinx students enrolled in AP and/or IB courses and that of Latinx students not enrolled in AP and/or IB courses?

Hypothesis: There was a statistically significant mean difference between the attitudes towards school and parent influence of Latinx students enrolled in AP and/or IB courses and that of Latinx students not enrolled in AP and/or IB courses.

8. What were Latinx students' perceptions of their academic preparedness and college knowledge based on their participation in AP or IB courses?

Research Design

A mixed methods causal comparative research design was used to examine the relationship between Latinx students' attitude toward college, academic achievement, teacher expectations and interactions, college readiness, school-wide support, guidance and counseling, parent engagement and the students' course selection (AP and IB courses). A purposive sample of Latinx high school seniors at an urban high school in southeast Texas was recruited to complete the High School Follow-up survey. Multiple one-way ANOVAs were performed to assess the statistical variances within the above-mentioned constructs. Qualitative data were collected from open-ended survey questions and a focus group. Responses from these data sources gave clarity to the quantitative results, by offering examples to validate results through an inductive coding process.

Population and Sample

The population for this study were Latinx male and female senior students in an urban high school in southeast Texas. The sample was a purposive sample and the participants were asked to volunteer and were not chosen randomly as to use participants who were available rather than choosing participants from the entire population. Table 3.1 shows the demographic breakdown of the school by grade level, gender and social economic status. Low socioeconomic status (SES) has been defined by the United States' federal government as a household with an income below the poverty threshold (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2016). One hundred forty- three (143) students participated in this study. Fifty students who were not enrolled in AP/IB courses, sixty-one students who were enrolled in one or two AP/IB courses and thirty-one students who were enrolled in three or more AP/IB courses were compared. The total number of graduating seniors was 541 students. Table 3.2 shows the demographic breakdown of the seniors including the breakdown of those enrolled in advanced placement courses.

Table 3.1

High School Latinx Student Demographic Data

Grade	Male %	Female %	Low SES %	Total
9th	40 (n=314)	60 (n=472)	90.3 (n=710)	786
10th	42 (n=281)	58 (n=289)	85.7 (n=488)	570
11th	45 (n=271)	55 (n=332)	83.7 (n=505)	603
12th	40 (n=216)	60 (n=325)	87.6 (n=474)	541
Total	41.6 (n=1082)	58.4 (n=1518)	87 (n=1968)	2263

Table 3.2

Senior Latinx Student Demographic Data and College Preparatory Courses

AP/IB Courses	Male	Female	Low SES	Total
None	164	247	360	411
Some	52	78	114	130
Total	216	325	474	541

Note: Some was defined as one or more AP and/or IB course

Focus Group Participant Selection

Focus group participants were also a purposeful sample and participants volunteered to participate while taking the survey. Students from each group were recruited to participate in the focus group through English language arts classes. Three volunteers, one from each group, were randomly chosen by the researcher to form the focus group. All three participants were low SES based on demographic information provided in the survey.

Instrumentation

The study utilized a pre-existing survey instrument, High School Follow-Up Survey (Leal, 2008). The High School Follow-Up Survey was used to assess students' perceptions of high school experiences and factors leading to attitudes about attending college, college readiness, and parental expectations. The survey contained nine sections that were validated by a panel of experts who had conducted similar content validity studies (Leal, 2008). Internal reliability coefficients ranging from 0.71 to 0.83 for each section were gained from a previous study (Windsor, 2013). Reliability coefficients above 0.7 showed the instrument to be reliable (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006). A copy of the survey can be found in Appendix A.

Section one of the survey was student family and background information. This section contained seventeen questions. Participants typed in their name and identification number. Participants continued in this section responding to close ended questions regarding household and family status.

Sections two through eight consisted of attitude toward college (6 questions), academic achievement (7 questions), teacher expectations and interaction (5 questions), college readiness (5 questions), school-wide support (9 questions), guidance counseling (9 questions) and parent engagement (5 questions). In these sections participants used a

5-point Likert scale (1=Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree) to answer questions in each section. Responses to questions were summed within each section. Scores for each section could range from 5 to 45 points. The higher the scores in these sections indicated a higher amount of social capital perceived by the student.

The final section of the survey consisted of four open-ended questions which allowed participants to explain in their own words their perception of how their high school helped to prepare them or did not help to prepare them for college. These questions added a qualitative portion to the study in addition to the focus group interviews that were performed

Data Collection Procedures

Approval was obtained from the school district's Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the school administration along with the Committee for Protection of Human Subjects (CPHS) at the University of Houston-Clear Lake. After all approvals had been received, assent/consent forms were issued to senior students to request participation in the study one week before the survey was administered. Participants under the age of 18 required parental consent. Potential participants were informed that their involvement in this study was strictly voluntary. The estimated time to complete the survey, thirty minutes, was also shared. Participants' identities were held confidential and participants could withdraw at any time without penalty.

After collecting assent/consent forms, the classroom teacher gave students the survey online during their English Language Arts classes. All senior students were required to take English Language Arts, but they were not all required to take the survey. Administering the survey in this class increased the sampling frame. The school which was chosen for this study utilizes one-to-one technology in which each student had been

issued a laptop. Students have regular use of the technology in the classroom. Administering the survey electronically assisted with efficient data collection and aided the sampling frame.

The collected data has been stored on the researcher's hard drive and an external drive for safe keeping. Survey responses have been transferred to Statistical Package for the Social Sciences software, (SPSS), for analysis. The data will be kept for three years and then destroyed in accordance with Internal Review Board procedures.

Focus Group

A focus group was held, to gain more insight on student perceptions. Peer reviews of the interview questions were used for validation. Coding the responses, along with using both survey and interview questions also validated the results through triangulation.

The focus group participants were placed into three groups, those were not enrolled in AP or IB courses, those enrolled in one or two AP or IB courses, and those enrolled in three or more AP or IB courses. The researcher conducted one focus group with one participant from each group. With only three members, an equal gender balance was not possible. Therefore, the focus group comprised of two females and one male.

The researcher conducted the focus group after survey data were collected. The focus group took approximately forty minutes. A cell phone recorder and a voice controlled recorder were used for data collection, with participant consent. Both devices were tested before the focus group was held to ensure the devices were ready for use. Both devices were placed in an area to maximize data collection.

This forty- minute focus group was approximately half of one class period of a school day. Participants returned to class after answering questions since the interview took place on the school campus during the school day. Participants answered questions

regarding their futures after high school, academic preparedness, and the influence of teacher expectations, guidance counselors and family on their future.

Data Analysis

Statistical Package for the Social Sciences software (SPSS) was used to perform the quantitative analysis after the comparison groups have been determined. The comparison groups were disaggregated first by ethnicity, then by gender and finally by student groups. Descriptive statistics were calculated. Statistical mean differences were determined by conducting a one-way ANOVA for each survey section: attitude toward college, academic achievement, teacher expectations and interaction, college readiness, school-wide support, guidance counseling and school and parent influence. The effect size was calculated using eta squared for each section.

The audio data were downloaded and transcribed using Rev.com, an online transcription service. Data were transcribed within five days after focus groups were held. Files were delivered in Microsoft word format so that they can be easily manipulated and coded.

Written transcripts from the digital audio recording of the focus group and data collected from the open-ended question of the survey were analyzed using a constant-comparative method of coding (Litchtman, 2010). Constant-comparative coding allowed the researcher to compare findings with existing findings as they emerge from the data analysis process. Survey concepts were pre-coded based on themes derived from questions. As themes were identified from the collected data, they were grouped and categorized with those that had been pre-coded from the survey. This brought clarity to the constructs the survey was designed to quantitatively analyze.

Qualitative Validity

To increase the validity of the qualitative data and the process, triangulation was used (Lichtman, 2010). Data were collected from multiple methods, open ended survey and a focus group. Multiple data sources, i.e., numerous participants, also served as a method of validation. This allowed for cross validation across different sources.

The researcher sent focus group questions via email to content experts for review. A dissertation abstract and research questions were also sent to reviewers to give them a basis for what data needed to be collected. Peers returned comments and the researcher edited questions for use in the focus group. Edited questions were piloted with a small group of students who matched the targeted population to further validate and ensure accurate student interpretation of the questions.

Privacy and Ethical Considerations

Approval from both the school district's IRB and the University of Houston-Clear Lake's CPHS were obtained before data collection. An assent/consent form was issued to every student who was eligible to participate in the study. Parental consent was required for student under the age of 18.

All correspondence for the study shared the purpose of the study, that participation was strictly voluntary, the time needed to complete the survey, and how participant information was handled carefully to ensure confidentiality. Participants could withdraw without penalty at any time. Participant names were not used, instead they were given a code for identification when taking the survey. Only the researcher has access to the codes. Focus group participant information was handled with the same level of confidentiality. Pseudonyms were used for focus group participants' names instead of codes in the transcripts as to easily document specific descriptors when using participant quotes. Derogatory student interaction was eliminated because only one focus group was

held. All data has been stored on a password protected laptop and a password protected flash drive and will be destroyed after three years.

Research Design Limitations

There were limitations in the study's design regarding instrument administration, internal validity and external validity. One limitation was the inaccuracy of self-reported information. The data were only as accurate as were the participants. Lack of time and participation were identified as limitations that would inhibit study results. However, the number of participants required to complete the study was met and participants could complete the survey with the time constraints. Therefore, coverage error due to non-response did not limit the study. Internal validity threats were inherent due to differential selection of multiple groups (Johnson & Christensen, 2017). Differences in the three groups used for this study could have existed before the survey was administered. However, other student experiences or conditions will not be used to explain results. Since nothing other than survey responses were analyzed, internal validity threats do not exist.

To mitigate the limitation effect of response rate, the survey will be administered online, in a required course, and teachers will offer students incentives for participation such as extra credit. Finally, the study results should not be generalized to other groups because it cannot be known if the sample from this study can represent other populations.

There were also focus group limitations to be considered. Participant availability and participant interaction were the two of concern. To mitigate the limitation of participant availability, only one focus group was held, and student backups were chosen matching any student that was not available from the original list. The researcher encouraged positive participant interaction and kept the focus group flowing by how the questions were being asked.

CHAPTER IV:

RESULTS

This study examined the relationship between Latinx students' attitude toward college, academic achievement, teacher expectations and interactions, college readiness, school-wide programs, guidance and counseling, school and parent engagement and the students' course selection. The purpose of this chapter is to present results of this mixed methods causal comparison study. The chapter presents a description of the participants, the data analysis for each of the eight research questions, and a summary of the findings.

Description of Participants

Data were collected from 143 Latinx senior students at the participating high school. Male participants comprised 42.6% (n= 61) and females comprised 57.4% (n=82). Student participation in AP or IB classes was measured in three categories. Students in category one were not enrolled in AP or IB classes during their high school career. Students in category two were enrolled in one or two AP or IB classes during their high school career. Students in category three were enrolled in three or more AP or IB classes during their high school career. Table 4.1 shows the demographic characteristics of the participants.

Table 4.1

Participant Demographic Characteristics

AP/IB Courses	Male	Female	Low SES	Total	%
None	23	27	50	50	35.0
1 or 2	29	32	61	61	42.7
3+	9	23	32	32	22.3
Total	61	82	143	143	

Factor Analysis

The High School Follow-up survey was the instrument used for this study. The survey contained seven sections with forty-six questions relating to students' attitudes towards college (ATT), academic achievement (AA), teacher expectations and interactions (TE), college preparedness (CP), school wide support (SWS), guidance counseling (GC), and parent expectation (PE). A factor analysis was performed using principal component analysis with varimax (orthogonal) rotation to test the instrument's reliability.

Although the survey contained seven sections, the analysis yielded nine factors explaining 77.1% of the variance for all variables. Eigenvalues greater than one and the scree plot were the two statistical criteria used to determine the factors. Factor 1 explained 33.6% of the variance and contained all seven questions of survey section labeled academic achievement in which students' attitudes towards academic achievement was measured. Factor 2 explained 14.0% of the variance and contained seven of the nine questions of the survey section labeled guidance counseling which measured students' attitudes towards guidance counseling. Factor 3 explained 8.3% of the variance and contained four of the five questions from the parent expectations section of the survey and four of the nine questions from the school wide support sections of the survey which measured student's attitudes towards parent expectations and school wide support. Factor 4 explained 5.8% of the variance and contained all five of the questions in the survey section labeled teacher expectations and interactions which measured students' attitudes towards teacher expectations. Factor 5 explained 4.2% of the variance and contained every question in the section of the survey section labeled attitude towards college which measured students' attitudes towards attending college. Factor 6 explained 3.4% of the variance and contained all questions in the section of the survey labeled

college preparedness in which students' attitudes towards college readiness was measured. Factor 7 explained 3.0% of variance and contained four of the nine questions in the section of the survey labeled school wide support which measured students' attitudes towards school wide support. Factor 8 explained 2.5% of the variance and contained two questions from the guidance counseling section and one question from school wide support section of the survey. Factor 9 explained 2.3% of the variance and contained one question from the parent expectation section. Table 4.2 shows the Factor Analysis loadings.

The communalities of the variables were all high ranging from .575 to .912 indicating that the variables were strongly related. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure (.881) and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity indicate ($p<.005$) the sample was adequate for running a factor analysis.

Table 4.2

Factor Analysis for High School Follow-up Survey

Factor 1		Factor 2		Factor 3		Factor 4		Factor 5	
AA 4	.908	GC 5	.825	PE 1	.766	TE 4	.810	ATT 6	.887
AA 1	.903	GC 8	.820	PE 2	.682	TE 2	.795	ATT 1	.845
AA 5	.900	GC 6	.797	PE 3	.682	TE 1	.780	ATT 2	.839
AA 2	.898	GC 9	.775	SWS 2	.663	TE 5	.777	ATT 5	.795
AA 3	.860	GC 4	.765	SWS 1	.659	TE 3	.768	ATT 4	.771
AA 6	.838	GC 2	.720	SWS 3	.596			ATT 3	.709
AA 7	.736	GC 1	.519	SWS 4	.561				
				PE 4	.555				

Factor 6		Factor 7		Factor 8		Factor 9	
CP 2	.817	SWS 5	.843	GC 7	.760	PE 5	.589
CP 1	.764	SWS 7	.756	SWS 6	-.634		
CP 3	.713	SWS 8	.589	GC 3	.519		
CP 4	.599	SWS 9	.582				
CP 5	.565						

After completing the factor analysis, factor groups were named based on grouping. Since four or more measures should be present to represent a construct, factors 8 and 9 were eliminated since neither met this criterion (Green & Salkind, 2014).

Internal consistency and reliability were tested for factors one through seven. The Cronbach alpha values for each factor ranged from 0.797 to 0.966 indicating that the

extracted factors were reliable. Table 4.3 shows the reliability of each factor in the order of the research questions.

Table 4.3

Cronbach Alpha

Factor (number)	Cronbach Alpha
Attitude Towards College (5)	0.895
Academic Awareness (1)	0.965
Teacher Expectation (4)	0.966
College Preparedness (6)	0.929
School Wide Programs (7)	0.797
Guidance Counseling (2)	0.927
School and Parent Engagement (3)	0.922

Research Question 1

Research Question 1*: Was there a statistically significant mean difference between the attitudes towards college of Latinx students enrolled in AP and/or IB courses and that of Latinx students not enrolled in AP and/or IB courses?* Descriptive statistics and a one-way ANOVA were performed to determine if there was a significant mean difference between the three categories that are listed above. Table 4.4 shows the survey questions in this section.

Table 4.4

Attitude Toward College Survey Questions

Questions	**Likert Scale***				
I believe college is important to get a good job.	1	2	3	4	5
I have expectations to go to college.	1	2	3	4	5
I think everyone has the opportunity to go to college if they want to.	1	2	3	4	5
Most of my friends in high school plan to go to college.	1	2	3	4	5
Most of my friends in high school think it is important to go to college.	1	2	3	4	5
I think continuing my education after high school is important.	1	2	3	4	5

Note 1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Nuetral, 4-Agree, 5- Strongly Agree*

The group of students who were in enrolled in no AP or IB courses (group one) was associated with the smallest mean ($\bar{X} = 23.00$) and the highest mean was associated with the group of students who were enrolled in three or more AP or IB courses (group three), ($\bar{X} = 25.49$). The group of students enrolled in one or two AP or IB courses (group two) had a mean of ($\bar{X} = 24.03$)

To test the hypothesis that there was a significant difference between students' attitudes toward college of those enrolled in AP or IB courses and those that were not, a

one-way ANOVA was performed. Before performing the ANOVA, the assumption of normality was tested and found to be satisfied with the skewness and kurtosis being between -2.0 and 2.0 for each category (Green & Salkind, 2014).). Being enrolled in AP/IB courses does not influence students' attitudes toward college, $F(2,142) = .831$, $p>.05$. The strength of the relationship between enrollment in AP or IB courses and attitude toward college was measured by eta squared, $\eta^2=.012$ indicating a small effect. Although there was no significant difference in the means between groups, the data suggest that all groups perceived a high amount of social capital regarding attitude towards college since the mean scores were over 79% of the maximum mean of 30.

Research Question 2

Research Question 2: *Was there a statistically significant mean difference between the attitudes towards academic preparedness of Latinx students enrolled in AP and/or IB courses and that of Latinx students not enrolled in AP and/or IB courses?* Descriptive statistics and a one-way ANOVA were performed to determine if there was a significant mean difference between the three categories that are listed above. Table 4.5 shows the survey questions in this section.

Table 4.5

Attitude Toward Academic Preparedness Questions

Questions	**Likert Scale***				
In high school, I worked hard to learn as much as I could in class.	1	2	3	4	5
In high school, I did my best to complete assignments and homework.	1	2	3	4	5
In high school, I was aware of tutoring and other ways to get help to improve my grades.	1	2	3	4	5
In high school, it was important to me to get good grades.	1	2	3	4	5
In high school, I had the skills and ability to complete my assignments.	1	2	3	4	5
In high school, I was aware of various graduation plans.	1	2	3	4	5
My high school courses prepared me for college level work.	1	2	3	4	5

Note 1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Nuetral, 4-Agree, 5- Strongly Agree*

Students in group one were associated with the smallest mean ($\bar{X} = 13.32$) and the highest mean was associated with students in group two ($\bar{X} = 15.90$). The mean for students in group three was $\bar{X} = 13.69$.

To test the hypothesis that there was a significant difference between students' attitudes towards academic preparedness of those enrolled in AP or IB courses and those

that were not, a one-way ANOVA was performed. Before performing the ANOVA, the assumption of normality was tested and found to be satisfied with the skewness and kurtosis being between -2.0 and 2.0 for each category (Green & Salkind, 2014). Results of the one-way ANOVA indicate that enrollment in AP and/or IB courses does not influence students' attitudes towards academic preparedness, $F(2,142) = 1.532$, $p>.05$. The strength of the relationship between enrollment in AP or IB courses and attitude toward college was measured by eta squared, $\eta^2=.021$ indicating a small effect. The data also suggested that neither group felt that they were academically prepared for college since the means were below 50% of the maximum mean of 35.

Research Question 3

Research Question 3: *Was there a statistically significant mean difference between the attitudes towards teacher expectations and interactions of Latinx students enrolled in AP and/or IB courses and that of Latinx students not enrolled in AP and/or IB courses?* Descriptive statistics and a one-way ANOVA were performed to determine if there was a significant mean difference between the three categories. Table 4.6 shows the survey questions in this section.

Table 4.6

Teacher Expectations and Interaction Survey Questions

Questions	**Likert Scale**				
In high school, my teachers cared about me.	1	2	3	4	5
In high school, my teachers inspired me and motivated me to do my best.	1	2	3	4	5
My high school teachers had high expectations of me.	1	2	3	4	5
My high school teachers did as much as they could to help me learn.	1	2	3	4	5
My high school teachers did as much as they could to prepare me for college level work.	1	2	3	4	5

Note* 1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Nuetral, 4-Agree, 5- Strongly Agree

Students in group one had the smallest mean ($\bar{X} = 11.4$) and the highest mean was associated with the students in group two ($\bar{X} = 12.26$). Students in group three had a mean of $\bar{X} = 11.65$.

To test the hypothesis that there was a significant difference between students' attitudes towards teacher expectations and interactions of those enrolled in AP or IB courses and those that were not, a one-way ANOVA was performed. Before performing the ANOVA, the assumption of normality was tested and found to be satisfied with the skewness and kurtosis being between -2.0 and 2.0 for each category (Green & Salkind, 2014). Results of the one-way ANOVA indicate that enrollment in AP and/or IB courses

does not influence students' attitudes towards teacher expectations and interactions, $F(2,143) = .314$, $p>.05$. The strength of the relationship between enrollment in AP or IB courses and attitude toward college was measured by eta squared, $\eta^2=.004$ indicating a small effect. The data also suggested that neither group had positive attitudes towards teacher expectations and interactions since the means were below 50% of the maximum mean of 25.

Research Question 4

Research Question 4: *Was there a statistically significant mean difference between the college readiness of Latinx students enrolled in AP and/or IB courses and that of Latinx students not enrolled in advanced placement courses?* Descriptive statistics and a one-way ANOVA were performed to determine if there was a significant mean difference between the three categories. Table 4.7 shows the survey questions in this section.

Table 4.7

College Preparation Survey Question

College Preparation	**Likert Scale***				
In high school, I was aware of the importance of taking courses such as AP courses and dual credit courses.	1	2	3	4	5
In high school, I was encouraged to take high level classes that could prepare me for college.	1	2	3	4	5
In high school, I was aware of the courses I needed to prepare for college.	1	2	3	4	5
Teachers helped me plan or select the right high school courses needed for college.	1	2	3	4	5
In high school, Pre AP and AP courses were available to everyone.	1	2	3	4	5

Note 1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Nuetral, 4-Agree, 5- Strongly Agree*

Students in group three had the smallest mean ($\bar{X} = 10.16$) and the highest mean was associated with students in group one ($\bar{X} = 12.56$). Students in group two had a mean of $\bar{X} = 11.89$.

To test the hypothesis that there was a significant difference between the college preparedness of those enrolled in AP or IB courses and those that were not, a one-way ANOVA was performed. Before performing the ANOVA, the assumption of normality was tested and found to be satisfied with the skewness and kurtosis being between -2.0 and 2.0 for each category (Green & Salkind, 2014). Results of the one-way ANOVA indicated that enrollment in AP and/or IB courses does not influence students' attitudes towards college readiness, $F(2,142) = 2.050$, $p>.05$. The strength of the relationship

between enrollment in AP or IB courses and attitude toward college readiness was measured by eta squared, η^2=.028 indicating a small effect. The data also suggested that neither group had positive attitudes towards college preparedness since the means were below 50% of the maximum mean of 25.

Research Question 5

Research Question 5: *Was there a statistically significant mean difference between students' attitudes towards school wide programs of Latinx students enrolled in AP and /or IB courses and that of Latinx students not enrolled in AP and/or IB courses?* Descriptive statistics and a one-way ANOVA were performed to determine if there was a significant mean difference between the three categories. Table 4.8 shows the survey questions in this section.

Table 4.8

School Wide Programs Survey Questions

Questions	**Likert Scale***				
My high school provided me with a student planner to help me learn organization skills and time management.	1	2	3	4	5
In high school, I participated in programs such as Upward Bound or AVID.	1	2	3	4	5
I visited various college campuses while in high school.	1	2	3	4	5
I participated in summer college camps during high school.	1	2	3	4	5

Note 1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Nuetral, 4-Agree, 5- Strongly Agree*

The descriptive statistics associated with students' attitudes towards school wide programs across the three categories were as follows. The students in group three had the smallest mean ($\bar{x} = 12.09$) and the highest mean was associated with the students in group one ($\bar{x} = 12.94$). Students in group two had a mean of $\bar{x} = 12.1$.

To test the hypothesis that there was a significant difference between students' attitudes towards school programs of students enrolled in AP or IB courses and of students that were not, a one-way ANOVA was performed. Before performing the ANOVA, the assumption of normality was tested and found to be satisfied with the skewness and kurtosis being between -2.0 and 2.0 for each category (Green & Salkind, 2014). Results of the one-way ANOVA indicate that enrollment in AP and/or IB courses does not influence the school wide support of students. $F(2,142) = .665$, $p>.05$. The strength of the relationship between enrollment in AP or IB courses and attitude toward college was measured by eta squared, $\eta^2=.007$ indicating a small effect. The data also suggested that students had positive attitudes towards school wide programs since the means were above 60% of the maximum mean of 20.

Research Question 6

Research Question 6: *Was there a statistically significant mean difference between the attitudes towards guidance and counseling of Latinx students enrolled in AP and/or IB courses and that of Latinx students not enrolled in AP and/or IB courses?* Descriptive statistics and a one-way ANOVA were performed to determine if there was a significant mean difference between the three categories. Table 4.9 shows the survey questions in this section.

Table 4.9

Guidance and Counseling Survey Questions

Questions	**Likert Scale***				
In high school, I was aware of the importance of the SAT and ACT exams.	1	2	3	4	5
There were enough counselors to meet with all students.	1	2	3	4	5
My high school counselors helped me to plan which high school courses to take to prepare for college.	1	2	3	4	5
Counselors helped me with information I needed to apply to college, such as college applications, SAT exams, financial aid, and scholarships.	1	2	3	4	5
Counselors helped me plan my goals for the future.	1	2	3	4	5
Counselors encouraged me to go to college.	1	2	3	4	5
I could approach my high school counselors anytime I needed.	1	2	3	4	5

Note 1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Nuetral, 4-Agree, 5- Strongly Agree*

The students in group three had the smallest mean ($\bar{x}$=15.16) and the highest mean was associated with the students in group one ($\bar{x}$=16.88). The students in group two had a mean of $\bar{x}$=15.75.

To test the hypothesis that there was a significant difference between the students' attitudes towards guidance counseling of students enrolled in AP or IB courses and of students that were not, a one-way ANOVA was performed. Before performing the ANOVA, the assumption of normality was tested and found to be satisfied with the skewness and kurtosis being between -2.0 and 2.0 for each category (Green & Salkind, 2014). Results of the one-way ANOVA indicated that enrollment in AP and/or IB courses does not influence the attitudes towards guidance and counseling. $F(2,142) = 0.632$, $p>.05$. The strength of the relationship between enrollment in AP or IB courses and attitude toward college was measured by eta squared, $\eta^2 = .009$ indicating a small effect. The data also suggest that neither group had positive attitudes towards guidance and counseling services since the means were below 50% of the maximum mean of 35.

Research Question 7

Research Question 7: *Was there a statistically significant mean difference between the attitudes towards school and parent influences of Latinx students enrolled in AP and/or IB courses and that of Latinx students not enrolled in AP and/or IB courses?* Descriptive statistics and a one-way ANOVA were performed to determine if there was a significant mean difference between the three categories. Table 4.10 shows the survey questions in this section.

Table 4.10

School and Parent Engagement Survey Questions

Questions	**Likert Scale***				
When I was in high school, my parents encouraged me to do well in school.	1	2	3	4	5
My parents were aware of ways to help me get better grades in school.	1	2	3	4	5
When I was in high school, my parents encouraged me to go to college.	1	2	3	4	5
When I was in high school, my parents were aware of ways to help me get to college.	1	2	3	4	5
My high school created a campus culture that going to college was important.	1	2	3	4	5
I felt welcomed and supported at my high school.	1	2	3	4	5
All students at the school had the same opportunities to prepare for college.	1	2	3	4	5
My high school helped me improve my ability to study through student workshops or advisory classes.	1	2	3	4	5

Note 1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Nuetral, 4-Agree, 5- Strongly Agree*

The descriptive statistics associated with students' attitudes towards school and parent influences across the three categories were reported as follows. The students in group three had the smallest mean ($\bar{x} = 15.72$) and the highest mean was associated

with students in group one ($\bar{x} = 16.78$). Student in group two had a mean of $\bar{x} = 16.30$.

To test the hypothesis that there was a significant difference between the attitude toward school and parent influences on students enrolled in AP or IB courses and of students that were not, a one-way ANOVA was performed. Before performing the ANOVA, the assumption of normality was tested and found to be satisfied with the skewness and kurtosis being between -2.0 and 2.0 for each category (Green & Salkind, 2014). Results of the one-way ANOVA indicated that enrollment in AP and/or IB courses does not influence the attitudes towards school and parent influences. $F(2,142) = .200$, $p>.05$. The strength of the relationship between enrollment in AP or IB courses and attitude toward college was measured by eta squared, $\eta^2 = .007$ indicating a small effect. The data also suggested that neither group had positive attitudes towards school and parent influences since the means were below 50% of the maximum mean of 40.

In summary, there was no significant difference in the survey mean scores between groups in students' attitude toward college, academic achievement, teacher expectations and interactions, college readiness, school-wide support, guidance and counseling, school and parent influences. The participants in this study on average had a positive attitude toward college and school wide programs. However, they had negative attitudes towards academic achievement, teacher expectations and interactions, college readiness, guidance and counseling and school and parent engagement. It can be inferred that social capital had no influence on students' attitude towards a post-secondary education.

Research Question 8

Research Question 8: *What were Latinx students' perceptions of their academic preparedness and college knowledge based on their participation in AP or IB courses?* This question was answered using the constant comparison method of analysis of participant responses to four open ended survey questions and responses from focus group participants.

Survey participants were asked:

1. Explain how your high school helped you to prepare for college.
2. Looking back on your high school years (9-12), what do you think your high school could have done better to prepare you?
3. Based on what you know about college, what would you think high schools should do to improve college preparation for all students?
4. Please share anything that would help us understand how to improve college preparation at the high school level.

Focus group participants were asked:

1. What are your plans after high school graduation?
2. Do you feel prepared for those plans?

   Why? or Why not?
3. What are areas you are concerned about or feel you would like to be more prepared in?
4. What has helped you be prepared?
5. Were you in any advanced classes in junior high? If so what classes?

   Did you feel that you had the chance to take them if you were not?

   Who encouraged you to take them? Counselors, teachers, parents

6. Did you take college prep courses in high school?

   If so, why?

   Was taking these courses important to prepare you for college?
7. How have counselors, teachers, peers, and parents helped prepare you for college?

   Did they discuss graduation plans with you?
8. Now that you are about to graduate what would you have done differently? Academically or overall.

A total of 121 students participated in the survey responses and the focus group. Responses were disaggregated into the three groups. Group one, comprised of students not enrolled in AP or IB courses, consisted of 43 students. Group two, comprised of students enrolled1 or 2 AP or IB courses, consisted of 51 students. Group three, comprised of students enrolled in 3 or more AP or IB courses, consisted of 27 students. The focus group contained one participant from each group and focus group data were compiled with survey responses.

There were no apparent differences between the male and female responses or between groups. Therefore, gender groups were not separated within themes and all participants' data were compared as one group. Themes that emerged from the responses were as follows: *course selection, guidance counseling, teacher expectations,* and *school wide support*. The themes are outlined in more detail below.

Course Selection

The theme *course selection* emerged as a response to all four survey questions. Students from each group responded that being in college like or college ready courses,

helped or could have helped to prepare them for college. Students also perceived that offering college level courses would have improved college preparedness for all students.

The participating high school offers both AP and IB courses that upon completion and passing exams, students can receive college credits for these courses. Students enter these programs in their third year after completing two years of pre-AP or pre-IB courses. Sixty-five percent of the participants in this study were enrolled in one or more AP/IB courses. This implies that most of the participants did experience the rigor and academic level of work required for these classes. The remaining 35% of the student participants were enrolled in regular classes when the survey was administered.

Over fifty percent of the study participants mentioned *course selection* as the response to the survey questions which relate to ways high schools could better prepare students for college. Students wanted the high school to offer college level courses and give more college level assignments to better prepare them for college and to help them understand college expectations. Students also felt that all students should be offered advanced classes even if these classes were offered through after school programs.

When asked how schools could improve to better prepare students for college, a student from group one answered, " All high schools should have college prep classes. Conducting a class like that would help them know what college expects from them and how different it is from high school." That was a fairly common view among students in group one possibly because they would have liked to have taken these classes themselves. Another student from group one commented that the high school should "give more college level classes" to better prepare students for college. Enrollment in advanced classes appeared desirable to students who did not enroll in them. These students may have seen enrollment in these courses as a missed opportunity to be better prepared for college.

The other student groups, enrolled in one or more AP or IB courses, mentioned *course selection* as the way high school helped to prepare them for college. Their participation in these advanced courses was academically challenging yet it better prepared them for the rigor of college. One student replied, "They [high school just threw me into AP classes and Pre-AP classes. At first I hated it until I realized that these classes when passed boosted my GPA and even made you eligible for college credit."

Another student replied,

> I took many AP classes throughout all my years of high school and I personally believe that although I had many downs and hard moments to pass my classes, it helped me prepare for college and the amount of difficulty I might go through as a college student. My struggles made me stronger.

This implies that students persisted through moments of stress and pressure, keeping in mind the reward of college credit upon completion of the course.

Some students believed that early enrollment in AP or IB courses would be even more beneficial. One student responded,

> I think they should let everyone have dual level classes from the beginning of high school like in 9th grade. I tried to get dual classes in the 9th grade but told me I had to wait until 11th grade and once I go to 11th grade, I wasn't interested anymore.

An early start in these advanced courses could give students a better foundation for the expected high rigor in later coursework. In fact, some students felt that, all high schools should have students take AP classes at one point.

Along with increased rigor, students mentioned a desire to have advanced courses more aligned with real life experiences and specific careers. One student mentioned that

high schools should "provide more future programs as a class" referencing student future experiences.

It was apparent from student responses that *course selection* plays an important role in college preparedness. The participants in this study perceived that being enrolled in college ready courses, AP/IB courses improved their academic preparedness for college in literacy, rigor and persistence. Students also believed that all students should enroll in AP/IB courses. offering these courses to all students would improve students' college preparedness.

Guidance Counseling

Guidance counseling emerged as a way in which students gained specific information about college enrollment. It was apparent from student responses that knowledge regarding college applications, financial aid, college entrance exams and direction as to what schools to apply, were acquired due to interactions with *guidance counselors*. Many participants felt that this assistance would have better served them if it had been given earlier in their high school years rather than the last year.

When asked how high school help to prepare them for college, a student from group one responded, "My high school helped me in many ways to prepare for college by gathering us seniors to explain what was required for certain colleges and universities." Many of the participants in this study would be first generation college students based on responses to the demographic questions in the survey. One student commented,

> *Guidance counselors* encourage me to look for help in financial [aid] or also [see] us immediately to see how we need to prepare because to be honest I do not know [much] about college … Students look to *guidance counselors* for direction because many of their families have no experience with the college enrollment process.

In addition to basic knowledge of the college enrollment process, some participants felt being exposed to guidance counseling as early as 9th grade would be advantageous. One student commented, "They could have helped us with this since 9th grade. Now that I am in 12th grade I feel like I don't have enough time." However, even with interaction in the 12th grade, students responded positively about guidance counseling. Another student commented, "… it is my senior year, its [it's] preparing me well such as learning how to sign up for colleges, sign up for fasfa" [Free Application for Federal Student Aid].

Some participants perceived *guidance counselors* were not readily available to them. These students appear to want more attention from counselors, specifically in personal meetings, to assist them with college admissions and other college requirements. One student commented, "[Guidance counselors should have] 1 on 1 conversations with students, scheduling interviews with [for] college." Another student commented,

> I feel like I haven't had the one on one counselor. I also feel that a counselor that would prepare us shouldn't be one that we just receive in senior year. I think we should prepare throughout our years of being in high school.

It was important to document that no students in group three, enrolled in three or more AP/IB courses, mentioned *guidance counseling* as something that helped to prepare them for college. Nor did any of these students mention *guidance counseling* as a service to improve how students could prepare for college. This could imply that students in group three felt they were served well by *guidance counselors* or that the service was not the highest priority for college preparedness or knowledge about college.

Guidance counseling was identified as a service that helped some students gain knowledge about college. That knowledge includes, the application process, the requirements for college, and financial information about college. Although students felt

positive about the service, they also felt that being given the opportunity to interact with counselors earlier than their senior year would have improved their level of college preparedness.

Teacher Expectations

Teacher expectations was another theme that emerged from the open-ended questions of the survey and focus group responses. *Teacher expectations* were perceived by students to be; requiring high quality work, providing words of encouragement, and preparing students by treating them as young adults and not enabling them. Students also expected teachers to teach life lessons to make them better people.

There were both positive and negative implications regarding how teachers influenced college readiness. Some students felt that teachers encouraged them to do their best and helped them to understand the importance of academic preparedness and achievement, while other students felt that teachers could have done more to help them prepare for college. The latter group of students felt that too much attention was being given to classroom management while student learning suffered.

One student replied, “Teachers helped me to work hard and told me how college wasn’t easy and harder than high school.” Students felt that being challenged academically was valuable and important for college preparation. Perhaps these positive attitudes towards teachers resulted from the positive relationships between teachers and students. One student commented,

> They [teachers] did everything they could to encourage us. I really like that they did it every chance they could. It helped a lot because it showed me that although they don’t know us they wanted us to do great in life.

Most comments regarding teacher expectations were centered around encouragement and high expectations. Students in group three felt teachers encouraged them and motivated them to excel academically. However, some still felt that teachers treated them as young children and not young adults. One student responded,

> The teachers were a big help. All my AP teachers continued to push and encourage me. Every time I felt like getting out the class they would push me to keep striving and give me advice, tutor me and always found a way to help me understand what they were teaching.

As this advice and motivation was positive, the same group of students felt that they were not treated as mature students. One student commented, "treat students as young adults instead of small elementary kids." All students prefer to be respected in the classroom. Being given freedom to choose and respect helps students to have meaningful learning experiences.

Negative comments were equally shared amongst participants. When asked how high school could improve college preparedness, another student responded:

> I believe that the school could have helped in probably making sure that teachers are on track with students or sometimes things such as teachers not liking certain students in a class period can affect how they push the other students… but my teacher didn't like my class so I got really affected by not ... I didn't really learn how I wish I would have.

This was common amongst participants in group one. Many felt that teachers spent too much time on classroom management while allowing student learning to take second place.

Perhaps this time spent on classroom management also inhibited engagement. Active engagement is an important part of meaningful learning. One student replied,

"They [teachers] could have made classes a bit more interesting and fun and that way people would actually learn more." Students also felt that lack of classroom management inhibited choice. Another student replied, "Have [allow] students to have more freedom to do things they are interested in [because] most things I do in class I am not interested in." Limited engagement and learning could also impact student perceptions regarding how teachers cared for their students. One student responded, "My school could have had teachers who actually took care of their students by showing some caring towards us."

Teachers were a significant part of the social capital that students experience while in school (Martinez & Deil-Amen, 2015). Many participants in this study looked to teachers for encouragement, motivation and guidance. Many participants expected teachers to enforce rigor and quality work that is engaging to help prepare them for post-secondary course work. Students enrolled in advanced courses appeared to have more positive interactions with teachers, while those who were not enrolled in advance classes did not experience the same.

School Wide Support

The final theme that emerged from the survey questions and focus group data was *school wide support*. Students from each group perceived *school wide support* as providing information about college, providing trips to college, having colleges and universities visit the campus and having support from peers. The student responses listed below were not unique to any group. One student commented, "High schools should have more college days and bring more of them to present here at school." More school wide support appeared to be the common theme amongst participants. Students wanted to attend more college events and have more interaction with college and universities including field trips.

Several students visited local schools on school supported field trips and were unable to visit other college campuses although they desired to visit others. One student commented, " I got to visit U of H and Texas Southern University on a school field trip here and HUC. Other than that, no. I don't have my own car. I would like someone to go with me. I would not go by myself. " This implies that without school supported college visits students were limited by finance and family support.

Peer support was a sub theme that emerged in this category. Students perceived that examples and encouragement from other students helped them to have a more positive attitude about college. One student said, "A lot of my other friends were going to college or at least were planning on it. That's part of the motivation like, "Hey, I don't want to be the only one that's not in college." Some students reported that they had given up on the idea of college due to negative environmental factors and no family support. However, after being inspired by other students, students began to pursue college utilizing the school support programs and systems to overcome negative factors.

Another student said:

> I had people that would be on the negative. For example, not really a peer but my brother, he doesn't agree with me going to college. I'm also the first child that would go to college. I don't know if it's jealousy or what… I have to take the positive against this one negative that's as powerful as all these positives just because it's family.

Overall students had positive attitudes regarding the programs and services that the school provide. However, students would have welcomed more interaction with colleges and universities. Family interaction had limited influence on students' attitudes towards college. However, student peers were a significant part of the positive social capital for students' attitudes towards college enrollment.

Summary of Findings

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between Latinx students' attitude toward college, academic achievement, teacher expectations and interactions, college readiness, school-wide programs, guidance and counseling, school and parent engagement and the students' course selection. The High School Follow Up Survey was completed by 143 Latinx high school senior students. Student participants were enrolled in none, one or two, or three or more AP/IB courses. Research questions one through seven were answered using descriptive statistics and a one-way ANOVA to determine if there was a statistical mean difference between groups in the areas of students' attitudes towards college, academic achievement, teacher expectation and interactions, college readiness, school-wide programs, guidance and counseling, school and parent engagement.

Students had a positive attitude towards college enrollment and school-wide programs. The data showed that most students perceived that attending college was important and that school wide programs such as AVID provided positive social capital regarding students' attitudes towards attending college or university. However, there was no significant mean difference between groups. Enrollment in AP/IB courses did not improve student attitude.

In terms of academic achievement, teacher expectations and interactions, college readiness, guidance and counseling, and school and parent engagement the data also suggested that all groups had negative attitudes towards each. This implies that the social capital in these areas had no influence on students' attitudes towards attending college or university.

Research question eight was answered using qualitative analysis. Four open ended questions added to the High School Follow-Up Survey and focus group data were

analyzed. The qualitative data showed that enrollment in college ready courses had significant impact on student attitudes regarding college preparedness. Those who were enrolled in AP or IB courses felt the rigor of these courses helped to prepare them for college academics. Those who were not enrolled in AP or IB courses felt they would have been better prepared college academics had they been enrolled. Students overall felt AP and IB courses should be available for all students.

The students acknowledged that help from guidance counselors assisted with college enrollment requirements. Students received help with admissions and financial aid after visiting with counselors. However, most felt that the assistance came too late in their high school careers. Being offered this assistance as early as ninth grade would have relieved some of the pressure and confusion regarding college enrollment. Students also felt they would have benefitted from individual meetings with counselors rather than group meetings. Individual meetings would give students the opportunity to discuss more personal issues and receive specific assistance.

Teacher expectations were reported by students as demanding high-quality work, encouraging students, and preparing students for life. There was some disparity in how each group perceived teacher expectations. Higher level students felt teachers did a great job expecting quality work. Whereas regular students (in Group one) felt teachers spent too much time on classroom management rather than teaching. Students preferred teachers to give them responsibilities rather than enable them and offer more choice in academic content so that the material would be more interesting.

School wide support was perceived by students as afterschool programs, college field trips and colleges visiting the campus. This theme also included student relationships with peers. Peer encouragement had a positive impact of students' decisions

to attend college. Students also felt that college visits were targeted for advanced students and regular students felt more college visits and trips would be of benefit to them.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study examined social capital and its impact on Latinx students' attitudes towards post-secondary education. The student perspectives towards attitudes towards college, academic preparedness, teacher expectations and interactions, college readiness, and guidance and counseling, school wide support and parent engagement did not vary with enrollment in AP/IB courses based on the data. Students had positive attitudes towards college and school-wide support. Data collected from open ended survey questions and the focus group show that there were no differences between groups regarding the social capital themes that emerged from the data. Each group felt advances courses, guidance counseling, teacher expectation and school wide support were important for college preparation. However, advanced students experienced positive impact from teacher interactions while other students felt limited in their interactions.

Due to these findings, earlier interventions of social capital should be considered for high school students. Consider the need to encourage students to enrolled in AP/IB courses as the students perceive these courses positively impact their college readiness and attitudes towards college. Finally continue to offer school-wide support including after school programs and opportunities to visit colleges and universities. These opportunities help to remove the fear of college expectations and requirements. Chapter V discusses the alignment of these findings with the literature, the limitations and implications of these findings and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER V:

SUMMARY, LIMITATIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND FUTURE RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS

Latinxs have been one of the fastest growing U. S. populations with highest poverty rates (Vélez & Sáenz, 2001). The United States of America predicts that by the year 2060 the Latinx population will increase more than 93 percent (Vespa, Armstrong, & Medina, 2018). Minority populations have continued to increase but have been and have continued to be underrepresented in professional fields (Vespa et al., 2018). Minorities have not acquired the requisite professional skills. A person's educational level has corresponded to their socio-economic success (Velez & Saenz, 2001). More Latinx students have entered college now than 50 years ago yet they have remained underrepresented in college 5:1, Caucasian to Latinx (Musu-Gillette et al., 2016). With evidence that there have been benefits of college attendance and with improvements to educational reform in college attendance a gap has remained for Latinx students. Equipping Latinx students for college has been essential for their college success. Since many low socio-economic students have been first generation college students, knowledge regarding college entrance requirements, fiscal requirements and college routines has not been readily available to them. Social capital has become necessary to successfully navigate through this process, since family experience has not been available (Altshuler &Schmautz, 2006).

This chapter presents the summary and implications of this study and recommendations for future research regarding social capital and its impact on students' attitude towards college. Survey data were collected in November 2017 as quantitative data for this study. The 143 participants were divided into three categories, Group1 participants were not enrolled in AP/IB courses (50 students), Group two participants

were in rolled in one or two AP/IB courses (61 students), and Group three participants were enrolled in three or more AP/IB courses (32 students). Male participants comprised 42.6% (n = 61) and females comprised 57.4% (n = 82). The participants who completed the survey also completed four open-ended questions which provided part of the qualitative data for this study. In addition to the open-ended questions, an eight question focus group of three students who had completed the survey completed the qualitative data for this study. Led by the researcher, the focus group lasted approximately 36 minutes and took place in a private area of the school.

Summary

The first seven research questions measured students' attitudes towards college, academic preparedness, teacher expectations and interactions, college readiness, guidance and counseling, school-wide programs and school and parent influences. The quantitative results showed that there were no significant mean differences between how students perceived the seven areas of social capital. The descriptive statistics show that overall students have a positive attitude towards college and school wide support programs. However, students did not have positive attitudes in the other areas of social capital. Research question eight measured students' perceptions of their academic preparedness and college knowledge based on their participation in AP or IB courses using open-end survey questions and the focus group. Course selection, guidance counseling, teacher expectations and school wide support were perceived as the social capital that is required to positively impact academic preparedness and college knowledge.

Research question one addressed students' attitudes towards college. The quantitative analysis showed all students had a positive attitude towards college and there was no significant difference between the groups. These results align with the Obama administration ideology of college for all. This ideology gave every student the right to

attend college, but just as important, it created a culture that every student must strive for college (Domina, Conley, & Farkas, 2011). It was expected based on the literature that students enrolled in college preparatory courses would have a positive attitude towards college (Engber & Wolniak, 2010). In fact, participation in college preparatory courses has been reported having the greatest impact on college enrollment (Engber & Wolniak, 2010). However, all student in this study have expectations to go to college and believe that everyone could go to college.

Research question two assessed students' attitudes towards academic preparedness. The results of the study showed that there was no statistical mean difference between the groups on student perceptions of their academic preparedness. Student participants did not feel like they did their best nor did they feel their high school courses prepared them for college level courses. Teacher practices can impact minority student learning (Kumi-Yeboah, et al., 2017) The results were supported by Kumi-Yeboah, et al. (2017) research regarding the need to improve teacher practices of minority students by understanding minority students' needs. Teachers of minority students should be trained to understand the cultural backgrounds of their students and to use that knowledge to improve teaching practices (Kumi-Yeboah, et al., 2017).

Research question three addressed students' attitudes towards teacher expectations and interactions. The results of the study showed that there was no significant difference between groups regarding teacher expectations and interactions. The descriptive statistics showed no group had positive attitudes about teacher expectations and interactions. Students in each group perceived the same levels of teacher expectations and interactions. Students in this study did not feel like teachers cared, motivated or inspired them. Nor did students feel that teachers did as much as possible to help them learn. According to the literature, teacher expectations and student teacher

relationships can impact student outcomes (Martinez & Deil-Amen, 2015). The Martinez & Deil-Amen, (2015) research showed that teachers who encouraged their students to attend college led to higher academic achievement and self-concept. Students with limited influences regarding college enrollment did not have higher academic achievement and self-concept (McKown & Weinstein, 2008).

Urban schools with high populations of minorities have struggled with identity threat (Kumansi, 2011) . Minority students were often exposed to white cultural norms which were viewed as superior to student cultural norms (Kumansi, 2011). By infusing race and cultural in the classroom experience, students may have more positive attitudes towards both their academic preparedness and teacher expectations.

Research question 4 addressed students' perceptions of college readiness. This question addressed students' knowledge of AP/IB courses and how these courses could impact them for college. There was no significant difference in students' attitudes towards college readiness. The descriptive statistics showed all students did not believe that AP/IB courses were available to all students. Nor did students feel they were encouraged to take high level classes to prepare for college even those who were enrolled in AP/IB courses felt that they were encouraged to take these classes.

College preparatory courses such as AP/IB courses have positive influences on students' attitudes towards college (Engber & Wolniak, 2010). Early introduction to higher educational attainment can influence students to both graduate high school and attend college (Ball et al., 2016). However, without knowledge of the importance of these courses positive implications will not be realized as was shown in the results of this study.

Research question 5 measured students' attitudes toward school wide support. School wide support is defined as after school programs and visits to college campuses.

Overall students had positive attitudes regarding school wide support. There was no statistical difference in student groups regarding school wide support.

The student participants in this study were all from low SES backgrounds. Economically disadvantaged students have limited to access to information regarding college, causing students' attitudes towards college to be uncertain (Bozick et al., 2010). With resources and experiences such as after school programs and visits to college campuses, the barrier of poverty can be lessened. The student participants in this study felt opportunities provided by the school had a positively impacted them.

Research question 6 assessed student attitudes toward guidance counseling. There was no significant difference between students' groups and their perceptions of guidance counseling. Overall students had a negative attitude towards guidance counseling. These results were supported by Belasco's 2013 research which describes the importance of guidance counselors to marginalized student. Guidance counselors supply most of the knowledge about college enrollment to low SES students since most have limited access to role models outside of the school environment (Martinez &Deil-Amen, 2015).

Many high school students have limited access to counselors due to the small numbers of counselors available to students. The NCES (2016) reports that in the United States there is one counselor for every 482 high school students. This is due to guidance counselors serving in other roles outside of student needs for college (Belasco, 2013). Students who need assistance were not receiving it due the complicated roles of counselors.

Research question 7 measured student attitudes, school culture, and parent engagement. There was no significant difference between student groups regarding school culture and parent engagement. Student participants did not have positive attitudes towards school culture which involved feeling welcomed, supported academically

through workshops and given the same opportunities to prepare for college. Student participants did not feel that their parents encourage them to excel academically or go to college. Students also did not feel their parents were aware of ways to help them academically or with college enrollment. These results align with Mickiewicz et al., (2011) research found that family involvement in community along with other elements have also promoted educational attainment. The community includes the school and school culture. Parental involvement in their children's education influences school culture. With minimum parental, involvement school culture is also negatively impacted. Mortimer et al, (2017) research adds that sufficient family support has been found to support student college and career goals. The converse is also true. Insufficient family support has a negative impact on student college and career goals (Mortimer et al., 2017).

Research question 8 assessed student perceptions of their academic preparedness and college knowledge based on their participation in AP/IB courses. Through qualitative data collected from open ended questions and focus group, students identified course selection, guidance counseling, teacher expectations and school wide support as the emergent themes regarding their perceptions of their academic preparedness and knowledge about college. The students overwhelmingly felt that AP/IB courses would have or did help them to be better prepared for college. Students who were enrolled in college level courses such as AP/IB were more likely to enroll in college (Engber & Wolniak, 2010). The role of guidance counselor is important to the Latinx students in this study, since knowledge regarding college enrollment, academic assistance, and financial aid will come through this service (Belasco, 2013). The students in this study felt that the guidance counselors were helpful in the college enrollment process. However, there was limited access to these individuals and students would have preferred an earlier introduction to these services. Waiting until their senior year made the process

overwhelming. The relationships between students and teachers were important for student self-concept and school engagement (Raufelder et al., 2015). The students in this study attributed positive relationships to higher academic achievement. However, the converse was also true that negative student teacher relationships resulted in reduced learning. In fact, some students felt that teachers spent more time on classroom management than teaching content. School wide support includes school programs and peer support. The students in this study felt visits to college campuses and colleges coming to their school helped them to better understand the differences between high school and college. Students even preferred more college visits than were offered. Students also felt their peers helped to promote positive attitudes about college. Peers helped to create a more positive school culture regarding college enrollment.

Limitations

The researcher believes that a mixed methods study was appropriate for this research. Collecting the quantitative data via survey coupled with the qualitative data via open ended questions and the focus group strengthens the research as multiple data collection methods support each other. However, there were limitations in the study's design regarding instrument administration, internal validity and external validity. One limitation was the inaccuracy of self-reported information. The data were only as accurate as were the participants. Lack of time and participation were identified as limitations that would inhibit study results. However, the number of participants required to complete the study was met and participants could complete the survey with the time constraints. Therefore, coverage error due to non-response did not limit the study. Internal validity threats were inherent due to differential selection of multiple groups (Johnson & Christensen, 2017). Differences in the three groups used for this study could have existed before the survey was administered. However, other student experiences or

conditions were not used to explain results. Since nothing other than survey responses were analyzed, internal validity threats do not exist.

To mitigate the limitation effect of response rate, the survey was administered online, in a required course, and teachers offered students incentives for participation such as extra credit. The study results should not be generalized to other groups because it cannot be known if the sample from this study can represent other populations.

There were also focus group limitations to be considered. Participant availability and participant interaction were the two of concern. To mitigate the limitation of participant availability, only one focus group was held, and student backups were chosen matching any student that was not available from the original list. The researcher encouraged positive participant interaction and kept the focus group flowing by how the questions were being asked.

Implications

The findings of this study have important implications for schools, administrators and teachers. Schools must be aware of the importance of social capital when serving underrepresented students and improving their attitudes about college. The larger number of influences, the more positive the effect on student attitudes towards college (Engber & Wolniak, 2010).

Latinx students require early introductions to school programs to increase attitudes towards higher academic achievement. Low SES students often do not have role models that have completed college and school is the only place in which these examples exist. Planting goals and attitudes about higher academic achievement beginning in the elementary years, attitudes about completed college can be changed for the positive.

Vertical planning must be in place to continue motivating students for higher achievement and to mitigate gaps. Feeder schools should work together to continue

programs from elementary school to middle school and then high schools. In this scenario, high school students can be better prepared for the challenge and the rigor of high school.

Participating in college preparatory courses has been a positive influence on student attitudes towards college (Engber & Wolniak, 2010). However, traditionally the percentage of minority students enrolled in these courses were low. Schools should implement strategies to improve enrollment in college preparatory courses. With vertical planning in place, schools can identify students for college preparatory courses before high school. Students and their families should be introduced to the benefits of college preparatory courses. Involving families in the process helps to increase family social capital of which most underrepresented families traditionally have not been exposed. Informing families of the benefits of college preparatory courses adds a level of influence which increases the chance of student participation in these courses.

To prepare for academic gaps and gaps in self-concept, schools and staff need training to gain the skills necessary to meet the needs of students. Teachers need training to differentiate content yet maintain rigor and high academic standards. Staff must be trained to meet the social and emotional needs of students being placed in the courses that traditionally have been demanding.

Teachers also require training to understand the cultural backgrounds of their students and to use that knowledge to improve teaching practices (Kumi-Yeboah, et al., 2017). Teachers of students of color may perceive limitations based on stereotypes. Teachers should be trained to include student cultural norms for students to relate to the content and feel valid.

Schools can implement programs which provide support for students in the areas of time management, study skills, and organization skills. One such program that exists is

Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID). AVID provides these supports for underrepresented students as an elective during the school day. AVID teachers trained to assist students with reading and writing deficiencies as reading and writing are critical in high rigor courses.

To meet the social and emotional needs of the students, school support systems are required. Students who participate in high rigor courses sometimes feel the stress of high achievement. By creating a positive and supportive environment, students feel valued. Students develop positive relationships which enhances the overall school culture.

Guidance counseling is necessary to assist underrepresented students with the transition from high school to college (Belasco, 2013). The duties of the guidance counselor include assisting with college enrollment, financial aid and college planning. The guidance counseling service is an important component of the school's social capital. Schools should increase the presence of guidance counselors by improving the ratio of counselors to students. Students should be introduced to guidance counselors earlier than the senior year. The earlier students began to utilize these services the better prepared they will be.

Funding is required for all strategies to be implemented to support student and increase college readiness. Many schools are limited on federal, state and or district levels for funding. Schools must use results from research to support proposals for funding. Funding should be directed towards professional development and staffing to support underrepresented students in their journeys to higher education.

Recommendations for Future Research

Several recommendations are suggested for future research. The first recommendation is a study to examine teacher perceptions of students' college preparedness. The study should focus on how teachers perceive students' college readiness and what they could do to positively impact student college enrollment rates. This study could help to inform the district on the needs of the teachers and other programs needed to assist students. The results could be used together with the results of this research to aid in funding teacher professional development and student programs.

Second, a study should be performed to examine college completion rates of students in this population. Since all students had a positive perception regarding college attendance, it would be interesting to understand how social capital impacts college completion rates. Focus groups could be conducted with student participants from this study to discuss any changes in perspective regarding college preparedness during their college years. Data should be collected from students who did complete college and students who did not complete college.

Social economic status was held constant in this study. A third suggestion for future research would be to replicate this study using Latinx students from a high and middle socio-economic background to understand how socio-economic status impacts student perceptions of how social capital impacts college preparedness.

This study provided an understanding of students' attitudes towards social capital and its impact on college readiness. Social capital, provided by school programs and services coupled with family and environmental social capital can positively influence students' attitude towards college regardless of college ready course enrollment. College ready courses are desirable and felt to be important when considering attending college.

Therefore, schools and districts should look to increase enrollment in these courses by informing students of their importance early in the journey of K-12.

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APPENDIX A:

HIGH SCHOOL FOLLOW-UP SURVEY

High School Follow-up Survey

The aim of this survey is to learn more about how your high school helped you prepare for college. Your responses will help us understand the type of support needed to help more students prepare for college.

Directions Section I: the following questions will let us know some basic information about you and help us understand your answers. Please circle your answers or fill in the blank as appropriate. All information will remain confidential.

I - Background Information	
Name	
ID	
Do you plan on attending college?	• Yes • No
Are you bilingual?	• Yes • No
Which language did you learn to speak first?	• English • Spanish • Other
Which language do you believe you are more proficient in?	• English • Spanish • Other
Which language do you mostly speak at home?	• English • Spanish • Other
Besides you, how many people live in your home?	
What is the highest level of education your mother competed?	• Less than 6th grade • More than 6th grade but did not finish high school • High school graduate

	• Some college – no degree • Associate Degree • Bachelor Degree • Master's Degree • Professional Degree (doctor, lawyer, etc.)
What is the highest level of education your father competed?	• Less than 6th grade • More than 6th grade but did not finish high school • High school graduate • Some college – no degree • Associate Degree • Bachelor Degree • Master's Degree • Professional Degree (doctor, lawyer, etc.)
How many brothers or sisters do you have?	
How many brothers or sisters are older than you?	
How many of your older brothers or sisters attended college?	
How many of your older brothers or sisters graduated from college?	

Directions Sections II – VIII: Please take a few minutes to answer the following questions about your high school experiences.

Select the number that best reflects your response using the following rating scale:

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

II - Attitude Toward College		
1	I believe college is important to get a good job.	1 2 3 4 5
2	I have expectations to go to college.	1 2 3 4 5
3	I think everyone has the opportunity to go to college if they want to.	1 2 3 4 5
4	Most of my friends in high school plan to go to college.	1 2 3 4 5
5	Most of my friends in high school think it is important to go to college.	1 2 3 4 5
6	I think continuing my education after high school is important.	1 2 3 4 5
III - Academic Achievement		
7	In high school, I worked hard to learn as much as I could in class.	1 2 3 4 5

8	In high school, I did my best to complete assignments and homework.	1 2 3 4 5 
9	In high school, I was aware of tutoring and other ways to get help to improve my grades.	1 2 3 4 5 
10	In high school, it was important to me to get good grades.	1 2 3 4 5 
11	In high school, I had the skills and ability to complete my assignments.	1 2 3 4 5 
12	In high school, I was aware of various graduation plans.	1 2 3 4 5 
13	My high school courses prepared me for college level work.	1 2 3 4 5 

IV – Teacher Expectations and Interaction		
14	In high school, my teachers cared about me.	1 2 3 4 5 
15	In high school, my teachers inspired me and motivated me to do my best.	1 2 3 4 5 
16	My high school teachers had high expectations of me.	1 2 3 4 5 
17	My high school teachers did as much as they could to help me learn.	1 2 3 4 5 
18	My high school teachers did as much as they could to prepare me for college level work.	1 2 3 4 5 
V – College Preparation		
19	In high school, I was aware of the importance of taking courses such as AP courses and dual credit courses.	1 2 3 4 5 
20	In high school, I was encouraged to take high level classes that could prepare me for college.	1 2 3 4 5 
21	In high school, I was aware of the courses I needed to prepare for college.	1 2 3 4 5 
22	Teachers helped me plan or select the right high school courses needed for college.	1 2 3 4 5 
23	In high school, Pre AP and AP courses were available to everyone.	1 2 3 4 5 
VI – School Wide Support		
24	My high school created a campus culture that going to college was important.	1 2 3 4 5 

25	I felt welcomed and supported at my high school.	1 2 3 4 5 
26	All students at the school had the same opportunities to prepare for college.	1 2 3 4 5 
27	My high school helped me improve my ability to study through student workshops or advisory classes.	1 2 3 4 5 
28	My high school provided me with a student planner to help me learn organization skills and time management.	1 2 3 4 5 
29	In high school, I often felt ignored.	1 2 3 4 5 
30	In high school, I participated in programs such as Upward Bound or AVID.	1 2 3 4 5 
31	I visited various college campuses while in high school.	1 2 3 4 5 
32	I participated in summer college camps during high school.	1 2 3 4 5 

VII – Guidance and Counseling		
33	In high school, I was aware of the importance of the SAT and ACT exams.	1 2 3 4 5
34	There were enough counselors to meet with all students.	1 2 3 4 5
35	Counselors mostly helped the students that were in pre AP and AP classes.	1 2 3 4 5
36	My high school counselors helped me to plan which high school courses to take to prepare for college.	1 2 3 4 5
37	Counselors helped me with information I needed to apply to college, such as college applications, SAT exams, financial aid, and scholarships.	1 2 3 4 5
38	Counselors helped me plan my goals for the future.	1 2 3 4 5
39	I would have been better prepared for college if I had more information in high school.	1 2 3 4 5
40	Counselors encouraged me to go to college.	1 2 3 4 5
41	I could approach my high school counselors anytime I needed.	1 2 3 4 5
VII – Parent Engagement		
42	When I was in high school, my parents encouraged me to do well in school.	1 2 3 4 5
43	My parents were aware of ways to help me get better grades in school.	1 2 3 4 5

44	When I was in high school, my parents encouraged me to go to college.	1 2 3 4 5 
45	When I was in high school, my parents were aware of ways to help me get to college.	1 2 3 4 5 
46	Teachers and counselors at my high school communicated often with my parents.	1 2 3 4 5 
IX – Open Ended Response Questions		
47	Explain how your high school helped you to prepare for college. Please be specific.	
48	Looking back on your highs school years (9^{th} – 12^{th} grades), what do you think your school could have done better to prepare you for college?	
49	Based on what you know now about college, what would you think high schools should do to improve college preparation for all students?	
50	Please share anything that you think would help us understand how to improve college preparation at the high school level.	

APPENDIX B:

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

1. What are your plans after high school graduation?
2. Do you feel prepared for those plans?

   Why? or Why not?
3. What are areas you are concerned about or feel you would like to be more prepared in?
4. What has helped you be prepared?
5. Were you in any advanced classes in junior high? If so what classes?

   Did you feel that you had the chance to take them if you were not?

   Who encouraged you to take them? Counselors, teachers, parents
6. Did you take college prep courses in high school?

   If so, why?

   Was taking these courses important to prepare you for college?
7. How have counselors, teachers, peers, and parents helped prepare you for college?

   Did they discuss graduation plans with you?
8. Now that you are about to graduate what would you have done differently? Academically or overall.