LATINA TRANSFER STUDENTS' ACADEMIC AND SOCIO-CULTURAL

RESOURCE USE AND PERSISTENCE

by

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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Title: Latina Transfer Students' Academic and Socio-cultural Resource Use and
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Latina college students who begin their pathway at 2-year institutions represent the
vast majority of Latinx college students who enter higher education (Fry, 2009; NCES,
2018) and more than half of all Latinx students initially enroll in community colleges.
Latina transfer college students are also the most likely to drop out of college after
transferring to 4-year institutions (Woodlief & Chavez, 2002). The focus of the extant
research has been with Latinx individuals who begin their academic careers at 4-year
university settings, rather than those who transfer from a community college. It remains
unclear which academic and socio-cultural resources Latina transfer students' access, with
what frequency, and the helpfulness of these resources in promoting academic persistence
(Andrade, 2017). Additional research is needed to understand Latina transfer student's
socio-academic integration into campus environments.

This dissertation examined 1) which academic and socio-cultural resources Latina
transfer students knew existed on their campuses, 2) how frequently students accessed

specific types of academic and socio-cultural resources, 3) how helpful students experienced each type of academic and socio-cultural resource 4) and the relationship between frequency of academic and socio-cultural resource use and dimensions of academic persistence (academic integration, social integration, degree persistence, academic persistence) while controlling for relevant covariates (age, time in the US). Findings indicate that 1) more students reported knowing about more academic resources than socio-cultural resources on their respective college campuses regardless of class standing, 2) students reported engaging in socio-cultural resources more frequently, especially fourth and fifth year transfer students 3) participants overall reported socio-cultural resources as more helpful to their academic persistence, especially third and fourth years, whereas first/second/and fifth years all found academic resources more helpful 4) frequency of engagement in academic resources negatively related to levels of academic integration 5) frequency of engagement in academic resources was positively related to levels of social integration but not related to student's levels of commitment and finally, 6) frequency of engagement in socio-cultural resources was positively and significantly related to academic integration, social integration, degree commitment, and institutional commitment.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER I

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Current population surveys indicate a mass influx of Latina students entering higher education through community college pathways (Fry, 2004; Nora et al.,1999; US Department of Education, 2014; Villenas, 2012) with the intent of ultimately attaining an undergraduate degree from a 4-year institution (Hoachlander et al., 2004; McWhirter, et al., 2013). Latina college students who begin their pathway at 2-year institutions represent the vast majority of Latinx college students who enter higher education (American Association of Community Colleges, 2016; Arbona & Nora, 2007; Fry, 2009; NCES, 2018). Unfortunately, the increased enrollment of Latinx college students at 2-year colleges is not paralleled by increased overall undergraduate degree completion for Latinx students (Fry, 2011; Fry & Lopez, 2012). Although more than half of all Latinx students begin their college experiences at community colleges, only 16 percent of these students attain a degree at a 4-year institution (Jensen & Fink, 2016; U.S. Department of Education, 2014).

Researchers over the last 45 years have examined what factors affect the retention of Latinx students at 4-year institutions of higher education (Baily & Weininger, 2002; Fry, 2004; Hernandez & Lopez, 2004; Swail et al., 2005; Wilds & Wilson, 1998). Prominent theories of academic persistence highlight the importance of pre-college variables, institutional experiences and characteristics, and academic and social integration as crucial to student academic retention (Bean, 1970; Deil-Amen, 2011; Tinto, 1993). Amongst Latinx college students, financial resources, racial climate on campus,

work and living commitments, access to mentors, cultural engagement, Latinx representation on campus, and *familismo* predict academic retention at 4-year institutions (e.g., Franklin, 2014; Horn, et al., 2002; Moore & Upcraft, 1990; Nora, 2001; Nora & Crisp, 2010;). The focus of this extant research, to date, has been with Latinx individuals who begin their academic careers at 4-year university settings, rather than those who transfer from a community college. This scholarly focus has neglected to identify the academic and socio-cultural resources that Latinx transfer students' access, to what extent, and the helpfulness of these resources in promoting Latinx transfer students' degree completion (Andrade, 2017; Jeynes, 2015).

Latinas make up more than 55% of Latinx students on college campuses nationwide (Cook & Cordova, 2007; Cuyjet et al., 2011; Perez & Ceja, 2010). Latina transfer students encounter a unique combination of challenges that impact academic persistence (Casselman, 2014; Tinto, 2005); those challenges experienced by students of color at Primarily White Institutions (e.g., racial discrimination, microaggressions, racial battle fatigue) as well as those challenges experienced by transfer students (Franklin et al., 2016; Nadal et al., 2014). In addition to racialized experiences, Latina transfer students often begin their college careers later in life, have more external commitments, are less likely to easily relocate to access educational opportunities, and report feeling unable to connect to their peers after transfer (Bohon et al., 2005; Casselman, 2014).

The unique combination of challenges for transfer students perhaps explain, in part, why academic persistence to degree completion decreases significantly for Latina transfer students within the first year after transfer from a community college to a large university (Alfonso, 2006; Cerna et al., 2009). Additional research is needed to

understand Latinx transfer students' academic and socio-cultural integration into campus environments (Andrade, 2017; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Townsend & Wilson, 2006) and what factors lead to their academic persistence to graduation. The purpose of this dissertation, therefore, was to describe the academic and socio-cultural resource use of Latina transfer students after transferring to a 4-year institution. This dissertation examined 1) which academic and socio-cultural resources Latina transfer students knew existed on their campuses, 2) how frequently students accessed specific types of academic and socio-cultural resources, 3) how helpful students experienced each type of academic and socio-cultural resource, and 4) the relationship between frequency of academic and socio-cultural resource use and dimensions of academic persistence (academic integration, social integration, degree persistence, academic persistence) while controlling for relevant covariates (age, time in the US).

This literature review chapter is organized as follows. First, I describe the diversity of the Latinx student population and Latinx students' current experiences along the U.S. education pipeline. Second, I examine the theoretical and empirical scholarship about college student academic persistence in general, highlighting specific theoretical frameworks used throughout history (e.g. Tinto). Third, I review multicultural theoretical frameworks that frame academic and social integration as it relates to Latinx and transfer students in higher education. (e.g., Deil-Amen). Finally, I examine how g academic and socio-cultural resource use may provide insight for future measurement of academic persistence variables for Latina transfer students in the United States.

The Diverse Latinx College Student Population

3

Latinx individuals are part of a heterogenous group, represented by different national and ethnic origins often living in different regions of the U.S. (Chilman, 1993). Students may hail from one of more than 25 Spanish-speaking and Portuguese-speaking countries. Many Latinx students in the United States were born in the U.S. or migrated while very young. In terms of ethnic identity, most Latinx students generally identify themselves with their family's country of origin (e.g., Mexico, El Salvador, Puerto Rico, etc.) up to the third generation (Jones-Correa & Leal, 1996). Racially, Latinx individuals can be Black, Asian, Indigenous, White, biracial, or multiracial and are not limited to one racial identity. Some Latinx students prefer to be identified by their family's country of origin (e.g. Mexican, Puerto Rican); some prefer a pan-ethnic identity term such as "Hispanic" or the gendered "Latino/a"; and others prefer the gender-neutral pan-ethnic term "Latinx" in English or "Latine" in Spanish (Cantu & Franquiz, 2010; Falconer, & Lopez, 2011; Scharrón del Rio, & Aja, 2020). For the purposes of this study, I use the term *Latinx* to describe the heterogenous group of students with Latinx origins in the United states. I use the term Latina to describe Latinx individuals who identify as women. Although the term Latinx receives reasonable critique from many communities for being colonized (Vidal-Oritz & Martinez, 2018), it is used in academic literature as a means of disrupting traditional notions of inclusivity and advocate for individuals "living in the borderlands of gender" (Salinas & Lozano, 2017).

The Latinx population continues to grow at considerably faster rates than any other population in the United States (U.S.). According to 2018 U.S. Bureau Census estimates, the number of Latinx individuals residing in the United States surpassed more than 58 million people, or 18.1% of the U.S. population (Census Bureau, 2018). The

Latinx student population also has grown exponentially and Latinx students have made important gains in K-12 education and post-secondary education (Fry & Lopez, 2012; NCES, 2018; Urbina & Wright, 2015). For example, more English language learners are receiving an education in U.S. public schools than ever before and high school dropout rates for Latinx students continue to decline (McWhirter, et al., 2013; NCES, 2018). The college enrollment rate for Latinx students also has risen. In 2016, almost half (47%) of Hispanic high school graduates ages 18 to 24 were enrolled in college, marking a 32% increase in college enrollment rates since the 1990's. In 2011, for the first time, Latinx students became the largest racial and ethnic minority group to attend both four- and two-year colleges. However, these enrollment rates do not tell the entire picture of Latinx students' K-12 educational experiences and outcomes, specifically the leaks in the higher education pipeline for Latinx college students (Gándara, 2007).

Although not homogenous, there are some commonalities in Latinx individuals' higher education experiences. Many Latinx students may come from lower income households, with Spanish as the primary language spoken in the home, and often experience racism throughout K-12 education (Joseph et al., 2016). Many Latinx students may be the first in their families to come to college and often report feelings of isolation throughout their academic journey (Justiz & Rendón, 1989). Many students report facing the emotional experiences and challenges that students of color, first generation students, transfer students, and nontraditionally aged students encounter as underrepresented groups within their institutions of higher education (Deil-Amen, 2011; Nora & Crisp, 2009). For example, the experience of racial battle fatigue, or the psychological, physiological, and behavioral stress that occurs as a direct result of racial

microaggressions, is common for Latinx college students, especially at primarily white, 4-year institutions (Deil-Amen, 2011; Franklin et al., 2014; Hope et al., 2018).

Financial struggles also remain a major barrier for many Latinx students (Nora, 1990; Rendón et al., 2014). Latinx students are the least likely demographic group to take out student loan debt (PEW Research Center, 2016) and are more likely than non-Latinx students to work, work longer hours, and to drop out of school for financial reasons (Sedlaceck et al., 2004). Financial access becomes critical for Latinx students, especially given increased student tuition and debt nationally and decreasing financial aid and federal Pell grant programs (College Board, 2012; Hernandez & Lopez, 2004). The decreased access to financial aid often results in Latinx students working additional hours, attending college part-time in order to mitigate cost, or deferring college past traditional college-age years (Horn et al., 2002), all of which are factors that place students at risk of drop-out.

In addition to these shared post-secondary experiences, there are also distinct cultural, linguistic, geographic, and gender variances among Latinx college students' educational experiences and outcomes (Hernandez & Lopez, 2004). For example, notably more Latinas are entering higher education and transferring to 4-year institutions than Latinos (National Student Clearinghouse, 2017; NCES, 2018). For every year since 2000, college enrollment rates have been higher for young adult females than young adult males. For Hispanic young adults, specifically, there is a 9-percentage point difference in enrollment between Spanish speaking males compared to females, such that male-identified Latinos are less likely to enroll in college (NCES, 2018). It is this ever-increasing Latina student population on which this dissertation study focused.

A Focus on Latina Transfer Students

Latina college students who begin their pathway at 2-year institutions represent the vast majority of Latinx college students who enter higher education (Fry, 2009; NCES, 2018) and more than half of all Latinx students initially enroll in community colleges (Arbona & Nora, 2007; NCES, 2018). Despite the open-access mission of community colleges, students transferring from community colleges to four-year institutions are less likely to graduate with a four-year degree than students who started at a 4-year institution (Ishitani & McKitrick, 2010). Although more than half of all Latinx students begin their college experiences at community colleges, only 16 percent complete a degree at a 4-year institution (Community College Research Center, 2017; U.S. Department of Education, 2014). Townsend and Wilson (2006) found that the greatest barriers to their academic persistence for transfer students are the transfer process itself and a lack of academic and social resources once transfer students arrive on campus.

Examples of barriers described by Latina transfer students include a lack of information about transferring credits, unfamiliarity with university and department policies, and difficulty finding academic and social resources (Vargas et al., 2018). Socially, Latina transfer students reported feeling "out of place" (p. 448) next to their often traditionally aged college students and white peers. Institutional supports that students identify as helpful during the transfer process include, "week of welcome" events and formal orientation meetings. The transfer process is not the focus of this dissertation study, but warrants continued scholarly attention. Rather, this dissertation study focused on highlighting what campus resources Latina transfer students use and endorse as promoting their academic persistence.

Theories of Academic Persistence

Over the past 40 years, scholars have developed and tested numerous theories of college student retention and academic persistence, generally, and Latinx student retention and academic persistence, more specifically. In this section, I provide a brief review of the more prominent student retention theories of academic persistence that serve as the theoretical foundation for this dissertations study, Tinto's Theory of Academic Persistence (1995) and Deil-Amen's Socio-Academic Integrative Moments Theory (2011).

Every year, a substantial number of students who matriculate at US colleges fail to graduate (Education Commission of the States, 2004). Academic persistence and college dropout are two of the most widely studied areas by higher education scholars (Lazarowicz, 2015), dating back to the 1950's. Durkheim (1953) developed and explained various reasons why individuals may depart from institutional structures and emphasized the importance of community membership and social integration in institutional environments. The application of Durkheim's work to higher education led scholars to study the structures and processes that facilitate students' successful integration within university contexts (Astin, 1970; Bean, 1980; Spady, 1970; Tinto, 1983). Over time, the nature of students' successful connection to and participation in academic and social spaces became known as *academic and social integration* (Deil-Amen, 2011). Two of the most prominent and influential theories of academic persistence and social integration are Tinto's Theory of Academic Persistence (1995) and Deil-Amen's Socio-Academic Integrative Moments Theory (2011).

Tinto's Theory of Academic Persistence

Vincent Tinto's model of student retention and attrition is held in high regard and provides a useful framework for understanding student retention and academic persistence (Tinto, 1975; 1982; 1987;1993). Amidst the vast myriad of academic persistence theories, Tinto's seminal work (1975) spearheaded gained early traction in explaining that academic persistence decisions were influenced by academic and social integration and a student's level of commitment to earning a college degree. Tinto sought to understand students' academic persistence through the lens of academic and social integration, and believe that the more a student can integrate academically and socially within a campus environment, the greater their commitment to earning a degree and likelihood of persisting academically.

Tinto's theory also incorporates the influence of background characteristics (such as financial income, GPA, and precious schooling experiences), integration variables (e.g. academic and social integration) into the campus environment, and overall levels of commitment (e.g. degree commitment and institutional commitment) on students' academic persistence (Davidson et al.,2009; Lotkowsi et al., 2004; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Figure 1 provides Tinto's complete model of academic persistence.

Figure 1. Tinto's Model of Academic Persistence
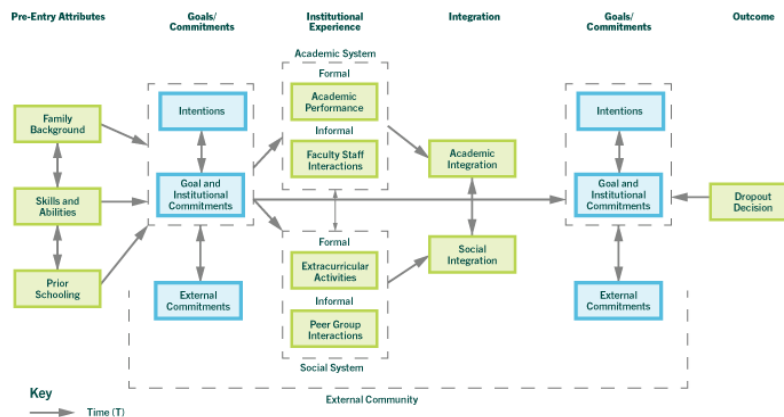
Deil-Amen's Socio-Academic Integration Moments Theory

To capture more of the unique experiences of academic and social integration for students of color, Deil-Amen (2011) added to academic persistence theories by establishing a theory about community college (CC) students' academic and social integration. Deil-Amen (2011) posits that CC students academically and socially integrate into college environments differently than students who begin their trajectories at 4-year institutions. Specifically, Deil-Amen (2011) addressed the importance of academic learning and integration that occurs within social spaces for transfer students. Deil-Amen calls these moments where academic and social integration occur within social and cultural spaces as "integration moments", or moments "in which the academic influence is coupled with elements of social integration" (Deil-Amen, 2011, p. 73). According to this theory, successful academic persistence amongst Latina transfer students occurs when student's academic integration is nurtured within culturally congruent, social spaces; that is, when Latinx students find spaces and have "moments" that facilitate their identities as cultural beings while navigating their multiple worlds (Yosso, 2005; 2009).

Together, I used Tinto's Theory of Academic Persistence and Social Integration and Deil-Amen's Theory of Socio-Academic Moments to explore if Latina college students' levels of integration (academic and social) as well as commitments (degree and institutional) occur uniquely in socio-cultural contexts such as student organizations, politically active spaces, and identity-based academic resources compared to traditional academic resources. I summarize the empirical research on the validity of Tinto's and Deil-Amen's theories as applied to Latina transfer students, most specifically.

Knowledge, Engagement, and Helpfulness of Academic and Socio-Cultural

Spaces for Latina Transfer Students' Academic Persistence

As universities begin thinking about providing resources to foster the academic and social integration amidst of an increasingly diverse student body, a rise in racial conflict and tension has occurred on college campuses across the nation (Hurtado, et al., 2015). This tension is particularly present at Primarily White Institutions (Franklin et al., 2014) with many students of color reporting that they feel greater marginalization at their institutions (Harwood et al., 2012; Marguia et al.,1991; McCabe, 2009). According to Tinto's theory academic persistence (Tinto, 1993) and Deil-Amen's Socio-Academic Integrative Moments Theory (2011) feelings of isolation and marginalization can decrease an individual's level of academic and social integration and commitment to the institution, and ultimately to pursuing college degree (Hernandez & Lopez, 2004; Moore & Upcraft, 1990). There are several institutional factors that decrease students' isolation and marginalization including, presence of a faculty and students with whom Latinas identify, faculty-student interactions, involvement in student groups on campus, and the integration of Latinx cultural strengths in the classroom, and on campus more broadly.

For Latina transfer students, it can be especially challenging to settle into a supportive campus community and find students and faculty/staff with whom they identify (Hernandez, 2000). Tinto purported that "the persistence of students of color often hinges upon there being a sufficiently large number of similar types of students on campus with them to form a viable community" (Tinto, 1993, pp. 60). Empirical research supports that meeting other Latinx students from similar backgrounds increases motivations to succeed (Hernandez, 2000), and the presence of a Latinx ethnic

11

community on campus is positively associated with Latinx students' academic persistence at primarily white institutions (Hernandez & Lopez, 2004; Hurtado et al., 2015).

Faculty-student interactions are also very influential for Latinx students and transfer students. Latinx students' perceptions of whether faculty and staff are student-centered, for example, are positively associated with students' academic adjustment (Hurtado et al., 1996). Faculty members' assistance with navigating university programs and policies have also been identified as important interactions for students. In addition to support within the classroom, support outside of the classroom is also crucial. Students who have ongoing contact with faculty outside of class are more likely to perform better academically, graduate, and report higher levels of satisfaction with their college experiences (Crisp et al., 2015; Hernandez, 2000; Hernandez & Lopez, 2004; Hurtado et al., 1996). This appears to be the case regardless of whether the faculty and staff with whom students are interacting identify as Latinx; cross-ethnic mentorship can be helpful for Latinx students (Lucero et al., 2017; Mayo et al., 1995; Padilla & Pavel, 1994; Schuh & Kuh, 1984). Flexibility with office hour times and locations is especially relevant for Latinx students who are more likely to have family and work obligations beyond those of typical undergraduate students (Urbina & Wright, 2015). Students' perceptions of their interactions with faculty and staff are critical to their level of institutional commitment and academic retention.

Participation in campus activities, membership in student clubs, engagement in career-related organizations, and involvement in leadership development can enhance social integration amongst college students (Christie & Dinham, 1991) and increase

students' academic persistence via degree and institutional commitment (Lucero et al., 2017; Nora, 2003; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Tinto, 1993). Researchers have documented the importance of institutions fostering participation in student organizations, especially for underrepresented students (Arbona & Nora, 2007; Hurtado & Kammimura, 2003). For example, Mayo, and colleagues (1995) found that formal social integration through student-led groups had a positive effect on GPA for students of color. It is also clear, that for many Latinx college students, social integration is often culturally laden, and many Latinx college students benefit from student groups and shared spaces with ethnically similar peers (Andrade, 2017).

Ethnicity-focused student organizations such as the Latino Student Alliance and Muxeres provide avenues for Latinx college students to find shared community and integrate into student life (Lucero et al., 2017). Students who engage in such groups report higher levels of comfort at their university (Fuertes & Sedlacek, 1993; Hernandez, 2000; Hernandez, 2002; Padilla et al., 1997; Rooney, 2002). Involvement in political student organizations can also enhance students' persistence in completing their college education. Historically, political advocacy has been a central factor in Latinx equality movements in the United States (Martinez, 2005). The Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlan (MEChA) is one example of a political movement that has contributed to Latinx students joining political communities to address systemic disparities. Few studies have investigated relationships between political activism amongst Latinx students and academic outcomes; however, political involvement is positively related to college students' self-efficacy (Hamilton & Fauri, 2001) and could be relevant to impacting the overall college student experience (Lucero et al., 2017). Using qualitative methods,

researchers have identified numerous student benefits from such organizations and university programming (Salas et al., 2014).

Something lacking in quantitative models of academic persistence for students of color, and Latina transfer students specifically, is the integration of the many domains of strength and resilience that Latinas bring with them to 4-year institutions. According to Yosso's Community Cultural Wealth framework, the following forms of knowledge and abilities are utilized by communities of color to survive oppressive circumstances: aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational, and resistant capital (See Table 1 for definitions). Researchers have applied and validated this framework amongst Latinx college students (Rendón et al., 2017). For example, as one of the fastest growing student populations in higher education, Latina students, and their families, often possess immense aspirational capital, or the ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future and in education (Gándara, 2005). Similarly, many Latina transfer students are multilingual, and possess a wealth of linguistic skills (Orellana, 2003; Rendón, et al., 2017), which are correlated with higher rates of academic persistence amongst Latinx college students (Kouyoumdjian et al., 2017; Peralta et al., 2013). Latina transfer students also possess navigational capital that allows them to persist and navigate multiple, complex systems related to their education (e.g. community college and 4-year institutions) and multiple, distinct worlds (e.g. *barrio*, peers, native country, family origins, family, spirituality, college).

Table 1

Yosso's (2009) Sources of Cultural Resilience for Latina Transfer Students

Source of Resilience	Definition	Empirical Evidence
Aspirational Capital	The ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future, even in the face of real and perceived barriers.	Gándara, 2005 Hagedorn et al., 2006 Luedke, 2017
Linguistic Capital	The social skills attained through communication experience in more than on language/or style.	Konyoumdian et al., 2017 Olivos & Valladolid, 2005 Rendón et al., 2017 Peralta, et al., 2013
Familial Capital	Knowledge and support nurtured amidst family and kin (including immediate family alive or passed on, aunts, uncles, grandparents, and friends).	Castellanos & Gloria, 2007 Fulgini & Telzer, 2013 Rendón et al., 2017
Social Capital	Networks of people and community resources and supportive social networks.	Concha Delgado-Gaitan, 2001 Hallet, 2013 Moreno & Sánchez Banuelos, 2013
Navigational Capital	Skills of maneuvering through social institutions, particularly those institutions not created with communities of color in mind.	Allen & Solorzano, 2000 Auerbach, 2001 Kangala et al., 2016 Stanton-Salazar & Spina, 2000
Resistant Capital	Skills fostered through oppositional behavior that challenges inequality.	Freire, 1970, 1974 McLaren, 1994 Watts et al., 2011

Of the many sources of cultural wealth that Latina transfer students possess, perhaps most worthy of note is that of familial capital. Familial capital refers to knowledges and epistemologies nurtured amidst family and kin, in the most extended sense of the term (e.g. includes immediate family alive or passed on, aunts, uncles, grandparents, and friends). Latinx retention literature is often categorized by a

discussion of *familismo*, defined as the behavioral manifestation of Latinx families that reflect a strong emotional and value commitment to family life (Rendón & Taylor, 1990; Valdés, 1996; Vega, 1995). Family can be a source of emotional support for Latinx students (Hernandez, 2002) and can include single households, combinations of households, and/or all extended relatives (Wilkonson, 1993). Best practices in higher education emphasize the importance of infusing relevant Latinx values that transcend any one ethnic identity into higher education research and practice (Castellanos & Gloria, 2007).

Family can be a source of support and encouragement while also being a source of pressure for many Latinx students (Fuligini & Telzer, 2013; Hernandez, 2000). Family pressures may reinforce academic motivation and commitment and positively influence a student's academic self-concept while also posing challenges to prioritizing academic achievement while in college (Fuligini, 2001; Vasquez-Salgado et al., 2015). Hernandez (2002) found that many Latinx students at 4-year institutions felt like dropping out was not an option because they felt immense responsibility to their families, and like they "owed a debt" to their families. This was particularly the case for first-generation college students, often citing "contribution to the family" as a primary motivation to earn a college degree (Fulgini & Telzer, 2013; Vasquez-Salgado et al., 2015). Given the complex relationship between family values and academic achievement for Latinx students, researchers recommend that institutions of education use *familismo*, and other common Latinx values, to foster linkages between Latinx families and institutional involvement to improve Latinx student persistence (Olivos et al., 2010; Olivos & Mendoza, 2010).

Study Aims

The focus of extant higher education research with Latinx individuals has been on students who begin their academic careers at 4-year university settings, rather than those who transfer from a community college (Lucero et al., 2017; Nora & Crisp, 2012). Very little scholarly attention has been devoted to identifying factors that improve the academic retention and achievement of Latina students who vertically transfer from a community college to a 4-year institution; the majority of Latinx students on college campuses. Current calls to action highlight the importance of understanding factors of academic retention that are within an institution's purview and that can be provided by institutional agents, moving away from "personal failure" and "personal grit" approaches to student drop out and academic persistence (Hodge et al., 2018). Despite an increase in Latinx student retention research in higher education, it remains unclear how to best support Latina transfer students' academic and social integration when coming from a 2-year institution, specifically, and which resources Latina transfer students access, to what extent, and the helpfulness of these resources with supporting their retention and persistence to degree completion (Jeynes, 2015).

The overarching purpose of this dissertation study, therefore, was to examine what resources Latina transfer students know about, use, and the helpfulness of those resources. Specific study aims were to: (1) explore which academic and socio-cultural resources Latina transfer students know exist on their campuses (knowledge x resource type), (2) explore which academic and socio-cultural resources Latina transfer students access and how frequently (frequency of use x resource type), (3) explore the helpfulness of resources Latina transfer students report accessing (helpfulness x resource type), and

(4) examine whether there is a relationship between resource use frequency by type (academic/socio-cultural), and academic persistence variables (academic integration, social integration, degree commitment, institutional commitment) when controlling for relevant covariates of age and time spent in the U.S. It is important, now more than ever, to identify which resources Latina transfer students are utilizing and find effective so that institutions can focus on retaining and improving such supports.

     To address study aims, 152 Latina transfer students enrolled at a 4-year university were recruited nationwide to complete the study. Participants completed a self-report online questionnaire that assessed the frequency of their engagement in academic and socio-cultural resources (predictor variables) and their academic integration, social integration, degree commitment, and institutional commitment (outcome variables). I used a multivariate multiple regression model to examine the relationships between predictor and outcome variables while controlling for the covariates of age and time spent in the United States. It was hoped that dissertation study findings would add to the existing Latina student retention literature by illuminating what resources are helpful for Latina transfer students' academic and social integration and how to increase their utilization of beneficial resources so that universities are more effective at promoting Latina transfer students' 4-year degree completion.

CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

I used a cross-sectional, non-experimental, quantitative descriptive within-subjects research design to examine the relationship between Latina transfer students' support resource use (academic and socio-cultural) and academic persistence attitudes and behaviors (academic integration, social integration, degree commitment, institutional commitment). Quantitative descriptive research is characterized by its non-experimental and correlational design qualities (Shadish et al, 2003) and is used to collect data regarding degree, frequency, and strength of relationship between two or more variables (Heppner et al., 2008). Predictor variables included 1) frequency of engagement in academic resources and 2) frequency of engagement in socio-cultural resources. Outcome variables include academic integration, social integration, degree commitment, and institutional commitment scales of the College Persistence Questionnaire (Davidson et al., 2009). Demographic covariates were age and years lived in the United States.

Procedures

All recruitment methods were approved by the University of Oregon IRB. I recruited participants via three methods, email advertisements, postings on the internet social networking websites Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat, and snowball sampling techniques. The e-mail advertisement for this dissertation study included: (1) a brief study description, (2) eligibility criteria, (3) the approximate time commitment required, (4) information about the raffle drawing and odds of winning , and (5) an internet link to a web-based survey in URL and QR code format. Qualtrics was used be used to ensure

confidentiality. For the e-mail advertisements, I targeted university-, regionally-, and nationally-based organizations and social network groups that are focused on multicultural populations (e.g. ethnic minority groups) and/or Latinx student related issues (e.g. MEChA, Muxeres) and nontraditional student populations (e.g. non-traditional student group, family-based groups, transfer student groups, etc.). I selected these groups based on their focus on Latinx and transfer student concerns using keywords in search engines such as Latinx or Transfer student organizations. I sent an email advertisement to the organization leaders asking if they would distribute the study email to their student members via organizational listservs. I also emailed community leaders and advocates who work with Latinx college students through my existing social network and asked them if they would disseminate study recruitment materials to potential participants or people who may work with potential participants.

  I also advertised my dissertation study on Facebook, Instagram, and my own Snapchat handle to reach a diverse range of Latinx students as well as tap into my personal social networks. The study description, invitation to participate, and anonymous survey link were posted on Facebook and Instagram accounts of family members, friends, colleagues, and interest groups as well as shared to personal "stories". Participants could access the survey with a standard point-and-click URL link or scan a QR code that is connected to the same URL address. Both methods were approved by UO IRB. The final method of recruitment involved snowball sampling (Gall et al., 2003), which refers to using study participants to identify other potential participants. I requested that current participants and community stakeholders forward the study recruitment email materials to peers, friends, and colleagues who were eligible to participate. In addition, upon

20

completion of the survey, all participants were prompted to pass the survey link along to other individuals, list serves, organizations, etc.

Data were collected online using Qualtrics, which is a secure web-based service used to collect survey data available through my institution. To encourage individuals to participate, I provided an opportunity to win one of ten $100 VISA gift cards to be used at a venue of the participant's choosing. One raffle prize was drawn for every 20 participants, and 8 VISA gift cards were distributed online for randomly selected winners. After completion of the survey, participants were asked to opt into the raffle drawing and informed that the information they provided will be confidential and separate from their survey responses. If the participant chose to participate, they were directed to a new window to provide their name and emailing address.

Participants

To be eligible to participate, individuals had to be (1) at least 18 years of age (2) self-identified as Latina (3) currently enrolled at a 4-year institution and (4) have transferred from a 2-year institution. Individuals were able to participate in the study regardless of first language, age, being enrolled full- or part-time, or academic standing. Participants filled in their ethnic identification, age, and income.

A total of 152 participants consented to participate in the web survey. The only participants excluded from the study was because they did not self-identify as Latina. Table 2 provides participants ethnicity, class standing, and major. Most participants self-identified as Mexican or Mexican-American ($n = 76$; 50%), while others identified with more pan-ethnic terms such as Latinx ($n = 32$; 21.1%) or Hispanic ($n = 28$; 18.4%). Participants were evenly distributed between first year transfer students (13.2%), second

year transfer students (7.9%), third year transfer students (13.2%), fourth year transfer students (15.8%) and fifth year and beyond (15.8%). A significant number of participants majored in Psychology (20.4%), although a diverse range of majors were represented in the sample. The vast majority (82%) of participants were born in the United States. The average participant age was 24.66 years ($SD = 4.70$) and the average university GPA was 3.3 on a 4.0 scale ($SD = 0.35$).

Measures

All participants completed the same survey content in a random counterbalanced order in an online format using a Qualtrics web link. The survey included measures designed to assess for the factors believed to contribute to the academic persistence of Latinx transfer students and resources. All measures are in the Appendices.

Demographic Questionnaire

An original demographic questionnaire comprised of 21 items assessed pre-entry participant characteristics such as age, race/ethnicity, GPA, relationship status, class standing, living arrangements (on or off campus), family income, and generational status. Demographic questions eliciting information regarding cultural identities race and ethnicity were open-ended to allow for participants to describe their own intersecting identities. This decision was made because of previous work that has noted that forcing people to select from a menu of options may be marginalizing (Johnston & Nadal, 2010). Additional items address transfer status, degree programs in which students are enrolled, highest degree expected to be earned, financial aid considerations, continuity of enrollment, and family education.

Table 2

Ethnicity, Class Standing, and Major Demographic Information

Characteristic	N	%
Ethnicity		
Mexican	76	50%
Latinx	32	21.1%
Hispanic	28	18.4%
Biracial	8	5.3%
Puerto Rican	4	2.6%
Class Standing		
First Year	20	13.2%
Second Year	12	7.9%
Third Year	20	13.2%
Fourth Year	24	15.8%
Fifth Year and Beyond	24	15.8%
Major		
Anthropology	4	2.6%
Biology	12	7.9%
Business	4	2.6%
Criminal Justice	7	4.6%
Ethnic Studies	2	1.3%
Family Human Services	4	2.6%
International Studies	8	5.3%
Latino Studies	5	3.3%
Nutrition Science	4	2.6%
Psychology	31	20.4%
Public Health	3	2%
Speech Language Pathology	3	2%
Sociology	4	2.6%
Spanish	7	4.6%

College Persistence Questionnaire

   The College Persistence Questionnaire (CPQ V1; Davidson et al., 2009) was used to measure dimensions of participants' academic persistence The CPQ V1 consists of 35 items and 6 subscales that measure various dimensions of college student persistence and academic retention. The CPQ V1 consists of 8 academic integration items, 8 social integration items, 6 support services satisfaction items, 5 degree-commitment items, 4 institutional-commitment items, and 3 academic-conscientiousness items. Questions were answered on a 5-point Likert-type scale, which varied by subscale A sixth "not applicable" option was included for students who felt like an item wasn't relevant to them (for example, issues of on campus housing). An example academic integration subscale item is, "How satisfied are you with the extent of your intellectual growth and interest in ideas since coming here?" with response items ranging from 1 – very dissatisfied to 5 – very satisfied. An example social integration item is, "When you think about your overall social life here like friendships, college organizations, extracurricular activities, and so on, how satisfied are you with yours?" with response items ranging from 1 – very dissatisfied to 5 – very satisfied. An example support services satisfaction item is, "How easy is it to get answers to your questions about things related to your education here?" with response items ranging from 1 – very difficult to 5 – very easy. An example degree-commitment item is, "At this moment in time, how certain are you that you will earn a college degree?" with response items ranging from 1 – very uncertain to 5 – very certain. An example institutional commitment item is "How likely is it that you will earn a degree from here?" with response items ranging from 1 – very unlikely to 5 – very likely. Finally, an example of an academic conscientiousness item is, "How often do you turn in

assignments past the due date" with response items ranging from 1 – very rarely to 5 –

very often.

Subscale scores were calculated such that high scores indicated higher levels

integration and/or commitment. Items from each question of each subscale were scored

on a scale of 1-5, and then each item in each subscale was summed to acquire a subscale

composite score. Academic integration scale scores ranged from 8-35, social integration

scale scores ranged from 8-35, degree commitment scale scores ranged from 5-25, and

institutional commitment scale scores ranged from 4-20. To compare scores between

scales, all subscale scores were converted to z scores. See Table 2 for participants' mean

scores on each academic persistence subscale.

Strong internal consistency alphas for all items on the CPQ have been calculated

with samples of over two thousand undergraduate students of U.S. undergraduates from

4-year institutions, commuter, and residential colleges, with 18% of respondents

identifying as Hispanic (Davidson et al., 2009). With this large sample, Cronbachs for the

CPQ subscales were calculated: subscale $\alpha = .81$ for academic integration , $\alpha = .82$ for

social integration, $\alpha = .74$, for support services satisfaction, $\alpha = .70$ for degree

commitment, $\alpha = .78$ for institutional commitment, and $\alpha = .63$ for academic

conscientiousness. All subscales fall within the acceptable to good range. Test-retest

reliability data calculated with this sample were stable across time with moderate to large

correlations ($r = .67-.79$) across subscales. With the present dissertation study sample of

Latina transfer students, the following internal consistency reliability estimates were

calculated: $\alpha = .69$ for the CPQ total scale score, $\alpha = .66$ for academic integration, , $\alpha =$

.79 for social integration, $\alpha = .66$ for degree commitment, $\alpha = .79$ for institutional

commitment. Davidson and colleagues (2009) tested the validity of the College Persistence Questionnaire using component analysis of the responses of more than 2000 students at four universities. Results yielded six reliable factors: institutional commitment, degree commitment, academic integration, social integration, support services satisfaction, and academic conscientiousness. Of these factors, it has been the commitment factors (e.g. institutional commitment and degree commitment) and integration factors (e.g. degree commitment and institutional commitment) that are the most theoretically agreed upon, and thus have been further developed by scholars over the years (Davidson et al., 2009; Metz, 2004; Tinto, 1975, 1993).

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics for Sample of Latina Transfer Students

Variable	n	M	SD
Age	152	24.66	4.70
CC.GPA	100	3.43	0.42
U.GPA	92	3.38	0.35
Persistence Variables			
Academic Integration	92	28.82	4.30
Socially Integration	88	21.90	5.63
Degree Commitment	88	19.50	2.96
Institutional Commitment	64	17.40	2.96

Note. CC.GPA = community college GPA on a 4.0 scale. U.GPA = university GPA on a 4.0 scale. Possible Academic Persistence score range 0-35. Social Integration scores range from 0 – 35. Degree Commitment scores range from 0 – 25. Institutional Commitment scores range from 0 – 20.

Resource Use Questionnaire

An original measure was created to assess participants' knowledge, frequency of engagement, and perceived helpfulness of academic and socio-cultural resources often found on college campuses. This measure was created by me and the dissertation chair and reviewed by a group of eight doctoral student colleagues, 2 faculty members from the Counseling Psychology and Human Services department at the University of Oregon, and by the dissertation committee during the proposal process. Feedback from these groups was used to improve the measure. The measure comprised a list of 5 academic resources and 4 socio-cultural resources typically found on college campuses. At the end of the list, participants could also write-in additional academic resources or socio-cultural resources not listed on the measure checklist.

Academic Resources. To assess participant knowledge of academic resources, participants selected "yes" or "no" to each of the 5 academic resources listed as well as the write-in option. Participants received 1 point for each "yes" marked and 0 points for each "no" marked on each of the six items. Scores on academic resource knowledge ranged from 0 (zero resources endorsed) to 6 (all 5 resources endorsed as "yes" and an additional write-in).

To assess the frequency of academic resource use, participants rated their use for each resource listed using the following scale: 1 – I've used this resource 0 times, 2, I've used this resource 1 time, 3 – I've used this resource 2-5 times, 4 – I've used this resource 6-10 times, 5 – I have used this resource more than 10 times. Frequency scores were calculated by summing each item's Likert score (1-5) to yield a total academic frequency score (0-30).

To assess the helpfulness of academic resource use, participants selected "yes, this resource was helpful to my academic persistence" or "no, this resource was not helpful" to each of the 5 academic resources listed, as well as the write-in option. Participants received 1 point for each "yes" marked and 0 points for each "no" marked on each of the six items. Scores on academic resource helpfulness ranged from 0 (all resources marked as unhelpful) to 6 (all 5 resources endorsed as helpful and an additional write-in). See Table 3 for a list of additional helpful resources that participants reported using and finding helpful.

Table 4

Additional Helpful Resources Reported by Participants

1. Cezar Chavez Community Action Center
2. Financial Aid Office
3. University Counseling Center
4. Africana Studies Lounge
5. Pride Center
6. Study rooms and study sports on campus
7. Chicanx Studies Department lounge
8. Funding from the Dean's office for out of state conferences
9. Writing Tutoring Services
10. Academic Advising
11. TRIO programs on campus for students of color and first-generation college students
12. Career Center
13. Women's Resource Center
14. First generation student programming

Note. Responses were optional, and fill-in-the-blank.

Socio-cultural Resources. To assess participant knowledge of socio-cultural resources, participants selected "yes" or "no" to each of the 4 socio-cultural resources listed as well as the additional write-in option. Participants received 1 point for each "yes" marked and 0 points for each "no" marked on each of the items. Scores on socio-

cultural resource knowledge ranged from 0 (zero resources endorsed) to 5 (all 4 resources endorsed as "yes" and an additional write-in).

To assess the frequency of socio-cultural resource use, participants rated their use for each resource listed using the following scale: 1 – I've used this resource 0 times, 2, I've used this resource 1 time, 3 – I've used this resource 2-5 times, 4 – I've used this resource 6-10 times, 5 – I have used this resource more than 10 times. Frequency scores were calculated by summing each item's Likert score (1-5) to yield a total socio-cultural frequency score (0-25).

To assess the helpfulness of socio-cultural resource use, participants selected "yes, this resource was helpful to my academic persistence" or "no, this resource was not helpful" to each of the 4 socio-cultural resources listed, as well as the write-in option. Participants received 1 point for each "yes" marked and 0 points for each "no" marked on each of the five items. Scores on socio-cultural resource helpfulness ranged from 0 (all resources marked as unhelpful) to 5 (all 4 resources endorsed as helpful and an additional write-in).

Categorical Preference Scores. A knowledge preference categorical variable was calculated for everyone based on how many academic and socio-cultural resources were endorsed by each participant. For each resource endorsed, students received one point towards their academic and socio-cultural knowledge preference scores depending on which item they endorsed. Preference scores were calculated by comparing the ratio of endorsed academic resources to endorsed socio-cultural resources. If participants endorsed a higher ratio of academic compared to socio-cultural resources, they were categorized as having a "academic resource" knowledge preference. Similarly, if a

participant endorsed a higher ratio of socio-cultural resources compared to academic resources, they were categorized as having a "socio-cultural" knowledge preference. A frequency preference categorical variable was calculated by comparing the ratio of use frequency for academic resources to socio-cultural resources. That is, if participants endorsed a higher frequency ratio of academic compared to socio-cultural resources, they were categorized as having an "academic resource" frequency preference. Similarly, if a participant endorsed a higher ratio of socio-cultural resources compared to academic resources, they were categorized as having a "socio-cultural" frequency use preference. Knowledge and frequency Preference scores were used to provide descriptive richness to help interpret the data and to conduct categorical chi square analyses.

Resource frequency use scores were calculated by recoding participants' item responses as following: 0 points if the participant did not use the resource and 1 point for each resource they endorsed using 1 time; 2 points for each academic and/or socio-cultural resource they endorsed using 2-5 times; 3 points for each academic and/or socio-cultural resource they endorsed using 6-10 times; and 4 points for each academic and/or sociocultural resource they used 10+ times. Total resource frequency use scores were calculated by summing the points or each resource item. frequency scale scores were used as continuous predictor variables within the multivariate multiple regression mode

CHAPTER III

RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of all preliminary and main study analyses results, which were conducted using IBM SPSS Software 25.0 (SPSS Inc., 2020).

Data Screening and Missing Data

Data were first screened, and missing data were examined using the Missing Values analysis in IBM SPSS Software (SPSS Inc., 2020). The greatest amounts of missing data were associated with the academic persistence variables social integration, degree commitment, and institutional commitment (22.1%). Results of Little's missing completely at random test (MCAR) yielded a non-significant chi-square statistic, $c^2(1) =$ .753, $p = .385$, indicating that data were missing completely at random (Pepinsky, 2018). Per Pepinsky's recommendations, data was deleted listwise in SPSS, which is appropriate when patterns of missingness are completely at random (MCAR). This procedure is recommended for large amounts of missing data that yield an insignificant chi square result (Pepinsky, 2018).

Descriptive Statistics and Statistical Assumptions

Multivariate normality and linearity are the primary statistical assumptions that underlie GLM procedures and are important for making accurate statistical inferences when using maximum likelihood estimation (Kline, 2005). Skewness and kurtosis were examined using the following cutoffs: +/-3.0 (skew) and +/-.10 (kurtosis) (Kline, 2005). Examination of skew and kurtosis, as well as visual inspection of histograms, indicated that data distributions were normal and within expected range and skewedness and kurtosis values were within Kline's (2005) suggested cutoff value. Skew statistic values

for all variables fell within +/- 3 (skew) and kurtosis values for all variables fell within +/-10.

Bivariate Correlations

Bivariate correlations among study variables (see Table 5) revealed significant relationships between many study variables, in the expected directions, but not all. As expected, frequency of engagement in academic resources was positively and significantly correlated with engagement in socio-cultural resources, social integration, and institutional commitment. frequency of engagement in academic resources was significantly and *negatively* correlated, however, with levels of degree commitment, which is the opposite of what was expected. As expected, frequency of engagement in socio-cultural resources was positively correlated with engagement in academic resources, academic integration, social integration, and institutional commitment. Levels of academic integration positively correlated with all study variables. Levels of social integration positively correlated with engagement in academic and socio-cultural resources. Surprisingly, degree commitment was negatively correlated with the predictor variable of frequency of engagement in academic resources, but positively and significantly correlated with institutional commitment scores. Finally, institutional commitment was positively correlated with higher levels of engagement in socio-cultural resources and degree commitment.

Primary Analyses

To address study aims 1, 2, and 3 (exploration of students' resource knowledge, frequency of use, and ratings of helpfulness), I examined frequency distributions and other descriptive data for the following interactions of categorical study variables: 1)

Resource Knowledge x Type (academic/sociocultural), 2) Resource Use Frequency x

Type (academic/sociocultural) and 3) Resource Helpfulness x Type

(academic/sociocultural). Finally, I conducted 3 separate chi-square analyses to compare

whether Resource Knowledge Preference, Resource Frequency Preference, and

Helpfulness Preferences varied by class standing (i.e., 1st year student, 2nd year student,

etc.). Results are presented by Study Aim.

Table 5

Bivariate Correlation Matrix Between Primary Study Variables (n = 152)

Variable	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	*M*	SD	Range
1. Academic Resource Use	1	.637**	.170	.738**	-.308**	.193	.220*	2.02	1.40	5
2. Socio-Cultural Resource Use	.637**	1	.276**	.720**	.038	.270*	.201	2.75	0.90	3
3. Academic Integration	.170	.276**	1	.179	.166	.208	-.188	28.82	4.30	18
4. Social Integration	.738**	.720**	.179	1	.017	.187	-.035	21.90	5.62	18
5. Degree Commitment	.038	.038	.166	.017	1	.452**	-.051	19.50	2.96	12
6. Institutional Commitment	.270*	.270*	.208	.187	.452**	1	-.099	17.40	2.96	12
7. Current GPA	.220*	.201	-.188	-.035	-.051	-.099	1	3.38	0.35	1.4

Note. $*p < .01$; $**p < .001$

Study Aim 1: Resource Knowledge

A breakdown of knowledge by type of resource can be found in Table 6. Many participants (44.7%) endorsed knowing about more academic resources than socio-cultural resources (13.2%). Study results suggest that more participants in the sample report knowing about more academic resources than socio-cultural resources on their respective college campuses regardless of class standing, χ^2 (8) = .235, p > .05.

Table 6

Resource Knowledge by Type

Resource Type	N	$\%$
Academic Resources		
Library	76	50%
Faculty	68	44.7%
Students	64	42.1%
Formal Mentorship	56	36.8%
Tutoring	76	50%
Other Academic Resource	124	81.6%
Socio-cultural Resources		
Ethnic Student Orgs	72	47.45
Transfer Student Orgs	36	23.7%
Multicultural Centers	68	44.7%
Other Student Orgs	60	39.5%

Table 7

Knowledge Ratios by Years Post Transfer

	First Year	Second Year	Third Year	Fourth Year	Fifth Year +	Total
Preference						
Academic	13	9	16	22	22	80
Socio-cultural	7	3	4	4	2	20
Total	20	12	20	24	24	100

Note. Cells include *n* counts for each type of ratio.

Study Aim 2: Resource Use

A breakdown of resource use by type of resource can be found in Table 7. Although respondents utilized a higher number of academic resources than socio-cultural resources, students reported utilizing socio-cultural resources more frequently. See Table 8 for a breakdown of resource use frequency by Type.

A chi-square test of independence was conducted to examine whether frequency preferences varied by class standing, as measured by years enrolled post-transfer. Results indicated a significant association between class standing and frequency of use tendencies for academic or socio-cultural resources, χ^2 (8) = 28.16, $p < .05$. First years had a significant preference for utilizing academic resources more frequently (70%) whereas 100% of second years and 60% of fourth years had a significant preference for utilizing socio-cultural resources more frequently.

Table 8

Resource Use by Resource Type

Resource Type	*N*	*%*
Academic Resources		
Library	52	34.2%
Faculty	56	36.8%
Students	60	39.5%
Formal Mentorship	44	28.9%
Tutoring	32	21.1%
Other Academic Resource	14	9.2%
Socio-cultural Resources		
Ethnic Student Orgs	52	34.2%
Transfer Student Orgs	28	18.4%
Multicultural Centers	67	44.7%
Other Student Org	32	21.1%

Note. These percentages include the percentage of participants who endorsed using a

resource at least 1 time.

Table 9

Frequency Ratios by Years Post Transfer

	First Year	Second Year	Third Year	Fourth Year	Fifth Year+	Total
Preference						
Academic	14	0	12	8	12	46
Socio-cultural	6	12	8	16	12	54
Total	20	12	20	24	24	100

Note. Cells include *n* counts for each type of ratio.

Table 10

Frequency of Resource Use by Type

Resource Type

Academic Resources	0 times	1x	2-5x	6-10x	10+x	Total %
Library	5.3%	5.3%	18.4%	2.6%	2.6%	28.9%
Faculty	10.5%	0%	5.3%	5.3%	15.8%	26.4%
Students	5.3%	0%	13.2%	5.3%	15.8%	34.3%
Mentorship	0%	0%	15.8%	2.6%	10.5%	34.3%
Tutoring	2.6%	2.6%	10.5%	0%	5.3%	18.4%
Other	5.3%	0%	2.6%	10.5%	2.6%	15.7%

Cultural Resources	0 times	1x	2-5x	6-10x	10+x	Total %
Ethnic Student Orgs	0%	2.6%	15.8%	2.6%	34.2%	55.2%
Transfer Student Orgs	5.3%	0%	5.3%	0%	7.9%	13.2%
Other Student Orgs	2.6%	0%	5.3%	2.6%	10.5%	18.4%
Multicultural Center	2.6%	0%	13.2%	13.2%	15.8%	42.2%

Study Aim 3: Resource Helpfulness

More students (30.9%) reported finding socio-cultural resources more helpful than academic resources (27%). A chi-square test of independence was conducted to examine whether frequency preferences varied by class standing, as measured by class standing. Results indicated a significant association between class standing and helpfulness preference for academic or socio-cultural resources, $\chi^2(8) = 30.13$, $p < .05$. 75% of first years and second years reported finding socio-cultural resources as more helpful than academic resources. 60% of third years reported finding academic resources more helpful than socio-cultural resources. 62.5% of fourth years reported finding socio-cultural resources more helpful than academic resources. Finally, 66.7% of fifth years found academic resources as more helpful than socio-cultural resources. See Table 11 for a breakdown of resource helpfulness by type.

Table 11

Resource Helpfulness by Type

Resource Type		
Academic Resources	Helpful	Unhelpful
Library	50%	8.6%
Faculty	60%	19.7%
Students	39.5%	11.9%
Mentorship	47.7%	10.8%
Tutoring	36.8%	21%
Cultural Resources		
Ethnic Student Orgs	50%	8.6%
Transfer Student Orgs	23.7%	34.2%
Other Student Orgs	34.2%	23.6%
Multicultural Center	42.1%	15.8%

Table 12

Helpfulness Ratios by Years Post Transfer

	First Year	Second Year	Third Year	Fourth Year	Fifth Year+	Total
Preference						
Academic	5	3	16	5	20	49
Socio-cultural	15	9	4	19	4	51
Total	20	12	20	24	24	100

Note. Cells include *n* counts for each type of ratio.

Study Aim 4: Patterns of Resource Use and Academic Persistence

In order to examine the relationship between frequency of resource use by type (Academic/Socio-cultural) and academic persistence variables (Academic Integration, Social Integration, Degree Commitment, Institutional Commitment), I conducted a multivariate multiple regression analysis, utilizing the Generalized Linear Model function (GLM) in SPSS, while controlling for the covariates of age and time spent in the U.S. Independent variables included frequency of engagement in academic resources and frequency of engagement in socio-cultural resources. Omnibus test results indicate that the regression model is statistically significant for both frequency of engagement in academic resources and socio-cultural resources while controlling for age, and time spent in the U.S. See Table 8 for main effects and parameter estimates.

The effect of engagement in academic resources was significantly and positively related to levels of social integration and degree commitment with large effect sizes. Engagement in academic resources was not significantly related to academic integration or institutional commitment. Meanwhile, engagement in socio-cultural resources was

40

positively and statistically significant for all four dependent variables with effect size estimates ranging from small to large.

Table 13

Main Effects & Parameter Estimates of Academic and Socio-cultural Resource Use on Dependent Variables

	Main Effects				Parameter Estimates	
Variable	*F*	*df*	*p*	Partial η^2	β	*t*
Socio-cultural Resource Use						
Academic Integration	13.01	1, 9	.001***	.143	0.91	3.36
Social Integration	14.49	1, 9	.001***	.157	.048	3.80
Degree Commitment	8.85	1, 9	.005**	.102	.079	2.97
Inst. Commitment	4.16	1, 9	.05*	.001	.057	2.04
Academic Resource Use						
Academic Integration	1.64	1, 9	.204	.051	-.039	-1.28
Social Integration	96.21	1, 9	.001***	.552	.148	9.80
Degree Commitment	23.35	1, 9	.001***	.230	.155	4.88
Inst. Commitment	1.70	1, 9	.196	.021	.045	1.30

Note. *** indicates statistical significance at .001 level **indicates statistical significance at the .01 *indicates statistical significance at .05 level.

Additional Descriptive Information: Qualitative Responses

Please see Table 14 for student qualitative responses about their experiences seeking support at their institutions and Table 15 for student qualitative responses about what they believe university administrators, faculty, staff, and researchers need to know. On average, most participants endorsed feeling like it was "fairly acceptable" for them to ask for help from university organizations as well as from faculty and staff.

Table 14

Latina Transfer Students' Experiences Seeking Support

1. Pleasant experience, everyone has always been helpful.
2. It was somewhat helpful with some professors while others did have their favorite students and if they did not connect with you; they would not help you as they would another student they had a better connection with.
3. I have gotten support but sometimes I feel like it's not for me.
4. Pretty good. Feel supported and wasn't too afraid to ask for help after the first time.
5. Mostly positive outcomes.
6. Most of my experiences have been positive. However, there have been sometimes that I sought help and felt that there was no one who could really help me in matters of my education. I decided to work harder and gradually the doors began to open for more academic and professional opportunities.
7. It was hard at first. I was not one to ask for help at my community college but I do now and everyone is so helpful.
8. It has most often been a positive experience except for my first year of academic advising. The advisor had little knowledge of the classes I needed and didn't answer my questions about degree options well. I ended up switching my major and advisor and it's all better now.
9. I am a single mother in school, and I feel completely isolated with zero resources specifically for women in my position.
10. I have had to look for support and ask around for it.
11. I have found most of my support in things that relate to myself than my actual college. Science department at my school mostly caters to people who aren't of color. I have found my support from things such as polytransfer and the dream center.
12. Great with the Multicultural Center and Center for Multicultural Academic Excellence.

Note. Responses were optional, and fill-in-the-blank. These are all quotes.

Table 15

What Students Want Administrators, Faculty, Staff, and Researchers to Know

1. Encourage students let them know of the resources that are offered because a lot of the time students don't know about the resources that are being offered.
2. Offer more help through the school email so we are more aware instead of posting flyers.
3. Bring more awareness and inclusivity to programs for Latinx transfer students.
4. Better communication of resources in more meaningful avenues that people can actually find.
5. More outreach opportunities.
6. It boils down to two things for me, first more cultural sensitivity training, Latinas (as well as other minorities) come to the university level with a disadvantaged background in education and family circumstances & secondly understanding of the privilege they hold due to their position of power, economic class and often times race.
7. Create more financial opportunities and provide more scholarships for DACA and undocumented students.
8. Encourage more financial support for textbooks.
9. Give them resources to advisors and student groups right away when starting.
10. That some students don't always receive the support they need outside of campus.
11. TRIO and CMAE are great resources.
12. Sometimes Faculty, mostly of Caucasian decent do not understand that some of us have more on our plate than others and expectations at home are different for everyone.

Note. Responses were optional, and fill-in-the-blank.

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

The specific aims of this dissertation study were to : 1) explore which academic and socio-cultural resources Latina transfer students know exist on their campuses, 2) identify how frequently students accessed specific academic and socio-cultural resources, 3) measure how helpful students perceived the academic and socio-cultural resources to be and 4) and examine the relationship between frequency of academic and socio-cultural resource use and academic persistence dimensions, (academic integration, social integration, degree persistence, academic persistence) while controlling for relevant covariates (age, time in the US).

Study results revealed that 1) more students reported knowing about more academic resources than socio-cultural resources on their respective college campuses regardless of class standing, 2) students reported engaging in socio-cultural resources more frequently, especially fourth and fifth year transfer students, 3) participants reported socio-cultural resources as more helpful to their academic persistence, especially third and fourth years, whereas first/second/and fifth years found academic resources more helpful, 4) frequency of engagement in academic resources was positively related to levels of social integration, but not to student's levels of academic integration and institutional commitment, and 5) frequency of engagement in socio-cultural resources was positively and significantly related to academic integration, social integration, degree commitment, and institutional commitment.

Present study findings of a positive relationship between socio-cultural support and academic persistence is in line with extant research identifying social support and

44

socio-cultural spaces (Deil-Amen, 2011; Yosso, 2005) as protective factors for Latinx college students and transfer students (Bordes & Arredondo, 2005; Castellanos et al., 2006; Ginorio & Huston, 2001; McWhirter et al., 2007; Santos & Reigadas, 2002). Engagement in socio-cultural resources, for example, is associated with higher career aspirations (Flores & O'Brien, 2002), school engagement (Kenny et al., 2003), and school achievement for Latinx college and high school students in the United States (Bullington & Arbona, 2001). In fact, intervention programs designed for Latinx college students at 4-year institutions highlight the importance of engaging in culturally congruent identity-based organizations (see Cerezo et al., 2013 for an intervention example).

Worthy of note is the finding that many students reported using socio-cultural resources such as ethnicity-based student organizations, but far fewer participants reported using transfer student organizations and did not report them as helpful. These findings are incongruent with some extant empirical findings showing that many Latinx community college transfer students combat isolation and other challenges through engagement in student organizations, including transfer student organizations (Bahr et al., 2013; Solis & Durán, 2020). Although I categorized transfer student organizations as socio-cultural organizations due to the unique identity and experience of transfer students on 4-year campuses, it is quite possible that transfer student organizations focus more exclusively on institutional processes, such as how to register for classes and where to find general academic advising rather than on social and cultural components of student life. It is also possible that many transfer student organizations, serving students with an

array of intersecting identities, may not be a great cultural fit for Latina transfer students with more salient ethnic identities.

Study findings also suggest that Latina transfer students knew more about academic resources than socio-cultural resources but used these academic resources less frequently. This finding is congruent with extant research showing that Latinx college students, and transfer students, use academic resources less often than white students and students who begin college at a 4-year institution (Alberta et al., 2005). For those academic resources that participants used, the frequency of their engagement was positively associated with their social integration, but not with their levels of academic integration or institutional commitment. Overall, researchers have found that engagement in academic resources predicts many different academic success outcomes for students (Long, 2011; Townsend & Wilson, 2009). Tinto argues that academic integration occurs through positive experiences and participation in academic spaces, and that social integration operates similarly but separately, occurring primarily in social spaces. The increased use of socio-cultural resources by this sample, in spite of knowing about more academic resources, supports Deil-Amen's (2011) theory of integrative moments. According to Deil-Amen, Latina transfer students' academic and social integration occurs in socio-academic spaces, not strictly one or the other. It is possible that engagement in academic resources positively related to social integration because Latina transfer students sought academic support from peers in student organizations (Laanan et al., 2010; Solis et al., 2020), and consequently impacting their overall levels of social integration but not their academic integration. Further, the sample reported having a high

GPA (3.38), participants in this study may simply not be struggling academically and thus accessed fewer academic resources than socio-cultural resources.

Similarly, it is possible that institutions, campus offices, faculty, and staff more formally and consistently advertise academic resources than they do socio-cultural resources. Students often learn about sociocultural resources via word-of-mouth and university units such as Student Life rather than academic offices (e.g. financial aid, office of deans, etc.). Additionally, it is possible that because of the intersection of *personalismo, familismo*, and gender-based preferences for interpersonally oriented communication (Yosso, 2009) participants may have felt more engaged with socio-cultural resources and that these resources were a better cultural fit.

Intersections among transfer students' status, race, and gender also must be considered. Latina transfer students often report feeling fearful that if they seek academic support they will reinforce racial and immigrant stereotypes that they do not belong in the institution or that they are less intelligent than their male, non-Latina peers, burden faculty and systems, and appear lazy and incapable (Solorzano et al., 2005). Current study participants' qualitative responses support this hypothesis (see Tables 11 and 12). Participants indicated that some faculty and staff did not understand the unique challenges they face. As a result, Latina transfer students may not turn as often to academic resources until there is dire need, and as a last resort.

Study results also highlight that Latina transfer students are a distinct population with unique student experiences and intersecting identities. For many transfer students, academic and social integration into campus communities goes beyond academic spaces and occurs in the context of family and community (Rendón et al., 2014; Yosso, 2005).

This is especially true for students of color and for Latina transfer students who may begin college later in life while caring for dependents (Bahr et al., 2013). Considering gender role and cultural socialization, it is also possible that Latina transfer students have significant difficulty accessing, and benefiting from, formal academic resources such as academic advising and professor office hours because of external responsibilities like family and caring for dependents (Reyes, 2011). The inclusion of an accessible childcare center on campus, family-friendly office hours, and flexible timing of departmental events are examples of how institutions may foster the integration of Latina transfer students who have dependents (Vargas, Chronister, & Teixeira-Marques, 2018).

It is also possible that Latina transfer students utilize academic resources less frequently than socio-cultural resources due to socio-cultural resources having better cultural fit. The importance of cultural fit on college campuses is well documented. Researchers have found that cultural fit is crucial in fostering increased persistence to graduation (Gloria et al., 2005; 2009). The lack of a significant relationship between academic resource use and academic integration may indicate the importance of warmth and relational based interactions between academic personnel and Latinx students, congruent with cultural values of *personalismo* or a sort of "formal friendliness" valued by many Latinx communities (Davis et al., 2019). It is quite possible that socio-cultural resources, such as ethnicity-based student organizations, may better enact core cultural values like *personalismo* which may explain why dissertation study participants reported using these resources more often and rated them as more helpful.

The complex findings associated with engagement in academic resources suggests that, for Latina transfer students, the type of resource that they use matters when trying to

foster academic persistence; the same is not true for white students. Existing research suggests that it does not matter what type of resources white students use, but simply that they use academic resources (Huon et al., 2007) strengthens their academic persistence. Latina transfer student participants in this study, however, identified socio-cultural resources as more helpful than academic resources, and which resources they used most frequently and rated most helpful varied by year of study. This is an important finding that, while difficult to interpret, provides information to suggest that different types of campus resources may be useful at different times for Latina transfer students during their tenure at a 4-year institution.

Engagement in socio-cultural resources also was significantly and positively related to all academic persistence outcomes (academic integration, social integration, degree commitment, institutional commitment). This key finding also supports the importance of social integration for Latina transfer students at 4-year institutions as well as the importance of nurturing Latina transfer students' inherent social capital (Yosso, 2005) and capacity to build and benefit from extended social networks. Unfortunately, campuses often under-fund socio-cultural spaces and resources or devote less systemic attention to these resources. Yet, study findings indicate that these resources may be even as critical, or more critical, to facilitating academic and social integration for Latina transfer students in their efforts to persist.

Strengths and Implications for Practice

The current study has several strengths and implications for practice. First, researchers have devoted significantly less attention to the academic experiences and persistence needs of Latina transfer students despite that fact that they make up almost

half of all Latinx college students in the United states and the transfer process represents a major point of student loss along the 'Leaky Pipeline.' Second, original data were collected using community and social media networks to expand recruitment. This recruitment strategy allowed for recruitment of Latinx students from across the country, expanding the scope demographics in this dissertation study. Third, this study examined institutional-level contextual factors, as rated by Latina transfer students, and moved beyond examining only individual-level variables that may contribute to academic persistence in isolation. This allows for researchers to focus on Latina transfer students' inherent strengths and immense aspirational capital, while holding institutions responsible for nurturing students' high levels of commitment to earning a degree not only for themselves, but their communities. Finally, the study contributes to the body of literature on Latinx college students by exploring campus resources by type as they relate to distinct dimensions of academic persistence. The patterns of resource knowledge, use, and helpfulness by type, academic and socio-cultural, may help shed light on how universities can invest in and structure campus resources that facilitate Latina transfer students' persistence and achievements

Study findings provide several implications for education policy and practice development, outreach, and clinical intervention on college campuses. This study highlights the importance of culturally relevant, socio-political, identity-based resources for Latina transfer students. Resources students reported as helpful to their academic persistence often included federal TRIO programs, ethnicity-based student organizations, and cultural centers on campus that are identity specific (e.g. Centro Cultural César Chávez at Oregon State University is one such example) or that are pan-ethnic (e.g. the

Center for Multicultural and Academic Excellence at the University of Oregon). The Centro Cultural César Chávez at Oregon State University is a campus community where Latinx and Chicanx students can share their cultures and heritage with each other, with the broader campus community, and discuss issues that are central to Latinx people. Similarly, the Center for Multicultural and Academic Excellence is a multicultural center designed to promote student retention and persistence for historically underrepresented communities on campus and provides advising, funding opportunities, and mentorship opportunities. Researchers and practitioners should continue to advocate for policy that protects and adequately funds these programs.

Although I created a dichotomy between academic resources and socio-cultural resources for the sake of exploring differences by resource type in reported levels of integration and commitment variables, study findings highlight the importance of blending resource types in lived practice by integrating critically conscious, socio-cultural elements into all resources utilized by students. It is important, then, that resources with an academic focus affirm students' ethnic identities. In this way, academic resources could benefit from critically conscious delivery of services. The provision of increased access and funding to programs such as Ethnic Studies programs, and other pedagogy that reflects the history and lived experiences of many Latinx students, may improve student achievement and narrow achievement gaps. Ethnic studies, Chicanx studies, and other identity-based study programs are rooted in intellectual scholarship that is often culture-specific for members for marginalized groups. Access, and institutional support, to such curricula may help provide educational opportunities that are meaning, that is identity-affirming, and allow students to grow in their own socio-political

51

development and find meaning in working towards human liberation (Hu-DeHart, 2004; Rangel 2007). Increased academic engagement, academic achievement, sense of community, and personal empowerment are all associated with participation in ethnic studies curricula (Altschul, et al. 2006; Carter, 2008; Chavous et al., 2003; Copenhaver, 2001). Although critical consciousness development was not measured in the present study, it is possible that engagement in critically conscious coursework and campus activities may feel more helpful and relevant to Latina transfer students, and assist them in navigating racially hostile environments, increase a strong sense of ethnic identity, and facility academic motivation to engage in resources that may be helpful to them, and in turn increase Latina transfer students intentions to persist in academia, and improve academic and social integration. Creating systemic opportunities for Latina transfer students to engage in socio-political development is warranted.

On an individual level, one method instructors and university staff outside of identity-based disciplines like ethnic studies can make academic resources more culturally relevant for Latina transfer students is by "decolonizing" their syllabi. In short, to decolonize one's syllabus is rooted in the idea of decolonizing pedagogy in the classroom, and higher education in general. In short, to decolonize education requires a commitment to anti-racism by including counter-voices to the typical heteronormative, white male narrative (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2012). Recent social movements in education have focused on decolonizing syllabi to include authors of color, to engage in collaborative rule-making in the classroom, and "flip the script" so that every piece of literature centers marginalized voices (DeChavez, 2019). While the idea of decolonizing syllabi on an individual level seems straightforward, it is often implemented laboriously

by faculty and staff of color and in ways that place them *entre la espada y la pared,* or between a rock and a hard place (Olivos & Valladolid, 2005) because critical pedagogy is not integrated by the majority of faculty and staff on a systemic level.

Increasing multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills of faculty and staff (e.g. professors, administrative workers, clinicians) becomes essential. In other words, university faculty and staff should also be equipped with resources to become critically conscious. This can be accomplished through knowing oneself cognitively and emotionally, as well as understanding one's own lived identities and the privilege, oppressive, and sociopolitical forces that affect individuals and groups differentially (Arredondo & Arciniega, 2001; Gallardo et al, 2012; Goodman et al., 2004; Sue, 2011; Sue et al., 1992; Vera & Speight, 2003). Although individual factors of individual faculty and staff members at a given institution such as readiness and cultural identity will influence the effects of multicultural trainings on multicultural competence (Sue & Sue, 1999), trainings can be instrumental to develop greater cultural awareness of self and others, raise critical consciousness, and improve cultural/intercultural communication skills (Goodman et al., 2004; Sue, 2010; Sue & Sue, 2003). Current faculty and staff would benefit from engaging on an ongoing and active reflection to identify and change unintentional biases. Creating campus cultures of such ongoing reflection would allow faculty and staff to enhance their knowledge, awareness, and understanding of the unique challenges faced by Latina transfer students, and the amazing strengths and resiliencies they bring with them to 4-year institutions. An increase in faculty and staff levels of critical consciousness may increase academic institutional agents (e.g. faculty and staff)

53

to better validate and advocate for Latina transfer students as they work towards their degrees both in and out of the classroom setting (Gallardo, et al., 2012; Sue, 2010).

Educators, liberation theologians, and liberation psychologists argue that multicultural competence cannot be achievement without a commitment to social justice (Tate et al., 2013; Vera & Speight, 2003). An increasing number of scholars in psychology and in higher education have demonstrated a growing interest in the relevance of social justice to academic outcomes – emphasizing the importance of engaging in systemic social justice work (Blustein et al., 2001; McWhirter, 1998; Sue, 2001; Vera & Speight, 2000). Much of this work explores ways in which research, teaching, training, practice, and professional identities can be transformed through the lens of social justice (Blustein et al., 2001; Goodman et al., 2004; Speight & Vera, 2004). Faculty and staff at institutions in the United states should consider the usefulness of an ongoing social justice orientation. Working from multicultural frameworks when mentoring Latina college students would facilitate opportunities for students to directly address oppressive experiences in college. Attention to context, for example, is a cornerstone of many multicultural approaches (Claus et al 2019), and can assist Latina transfer students identify internalized racism, sexism, and other unique challenges they face and develop critical consciousness – a protective factor not measured directly in this study, but insinuated by participants throughout. In addition, collaborating with students to understand their academic concerns may provide opportunities for empowerment (McWhirter, 1998), which may further fuel Latina transfer students high levels of aspirational capital, and increase persistence in higher education,

54

Increasing diversity of faculty and staff across programs/departments is also important because it is associated with improved campus climate and a more culturally inclusive university environment that facilitate academic persistence (Castellanos & Gloria, 2007; Henderson & White, 2008). Critical to such efforts is the recruitment and retention of multiculturally competent and critically conscious faculty and staff, particularly of color (who can serve as positive role models for Latina transfer students). Latina college students with strong mentoring relationships are more likely to report positive perceptions of university environment (Bordes & Arredondo, 2005) and adjust and persist in academia (Alberta & Kurpius, 2001; Santos & Reigadas, 2002; Solberg et al., 1994). Mentees of color paired with mentors of color tend to report more satisfaction and interpersonal comfort than those who do not have mentors who share their race or ethnicity (Ortiz-Walters & Gilson, 2005). Strategically placing multiculturally competent faculty of color in positions of power may help to shift existing oppressive power structures and practices that reinforce the status quo, and harm marginalized communities (Martin-Baro, 1994; Prilleltensky & Nelson, 2002; Speight & Vera, 2004).

Recommendations for Future Research

Results of this study suggest that Latina transfer students may academically and socially integrate in unique ways and suggest that the helpfulness of academic and socio-cultural resources may vary by class standing and years-post-transfer. Future research should explore the relationship between resource use by type with a larger sample, and focus on understanding the experiences with different types resources for different groups of Latinas (e.g. Cuban, Puerto Rican, Guatemalan, etc.) given the vast heterogeneity of values and practices amongst subgroups of Latinx individuals in the United States.

55

Additionally, future studies should measure and analyze how year of study relates to patterns of resource use and helpfulness. The focus of this study emphasized the nature of these relationships for Latina-identified transfer students because they are the fastest growing group of students attending college (Fry, 2011). Latino males, however, are under-studied and significantly underrepresented in higher education (Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009). Future research should examine the resource use patterns and relevance of resource types for Latino male transfer students as well.

Longitudinal examinations of these relationships and using mixed methods paradigms could provide deeper insight into the kinds of interventions and resources that might be most successful in supporting Latina transfer students. Qualitative interviews with Latina transfer students could shed light on the experiences of Latina transfer students that were not measured in the present study – for example, a qualitative study examining Latina transfer students experiences within transfer student organizations could expiate whether transfer student organizations were not cultural fits or some other reason they were unhelpful. Rich, qualitative interviews, ethnographies, or focus groups could help explain different terms the preference for socio-cultural resource use compared to academic resource use in this study. More research is needed to shed light on what aspects of transfer student orgs/resources Latina transfer students find most helpful. Similarly, more research could shed light on the mechanism by which other socio-cultural resources were helpful.

Study findings suggest that further work needs to be done on validating culturally congruent and relevant measurement of integration variables such as academic integrations and social integration. The College Persistence Questionnaire (Davidson et

al., 2009) used in this study, for example, asks questions such as "How much of a connection do you see between what you are learning here and your future career possibilities?" and only asks one question related to how relevant classes feel. Future iterations of the measure could include direct questions about how culturally relevant the coursework is to Latina transfer students and having representation of faculty/staff of color as role models in and outside of the classroom. Similarly, current measures of social integration ask questions such as "how often do you wear your college emblem". More questions could ask about identity-based student engagement, and whether students have opportunities to connect with peers who are like them regarding transfer student status, ethnic identity, and age. It would be fruitful for researchers to create psychometric instruments to measure academic and social integration with Latina transfer students specifically in mind, as opposed to utilizing measures that were created for the mainstream general college student population at large.

Another way to improve upon the measurement of academic and social integration is to highlight, and measure, Latina transfer students' cultural wealth. For example, *personalismo* is a nuanced Latinx cultural construct that refers to a value for interacting with persons with whom one has a warm and trusting relationship (Cuéllar et al, 1995; Mogro-Wilson et al., 2016). Contingent on trust, *personalismo* may be more easily established between individuals who perceive themselves as the same social in-group, such as with peers and family members, but *personalismo* can be developed in professional contexts by engaging in small talk, sharing personal information, visiting a person's home, or attending family meals or parties (Barker et al., 2010; Gallardo, 2013; Torres et al., 2017). Although it has been historically challenging to measure

57

personalismo as a cultural construct for Latinos in general (Davis et al., 2019), let alone the utilization of *personalismo* amongst university faculty and staff and programs, developing culturally relevant measures of whether or not a student feels nurtured in cultural values such as *personalismo* within campus environments. Similarly, future measurement should include cultural sources of resilience, such as aspirational capital (e.g. students' hopefulness in achieving a college degree, social capital (e.g. to what degree students have access to an expanded social network within and outside of the institution), and linguistic capital (Yosso, 2009).

Extant literature on academic persistence outcomes for Latinx college students highlights that race-related stress and a racially hostile campus environment is associated with psychological distress in college students of color (Fisher et al., 2000; Sue, 2010), leading to lower academic performance for students of color. In light of this literature, future studies should measure perceptions of campus environment, as well as psychological variables such as depression and anxiety. This would provide a more holistic understanding of the effects of resource use on academic persistence outcomes and would allow for the development of specific counseling interventions designed to increase academic persistence. Similarly, the inclusion of other aspects of social support from family (e.g. *familismo),* would add potentially valuable insights into the relationship of resources provided on college campuses and within a student's personal communities and social capital networks (Yosso, 2009).

Study Limitations

There are several limitations to the present study that warrant consideration when interpreting results. First, the study employed a cross-sectional descriptive design, which

does not allow for causal inferences and determining how outcomes change over time. Additionally, the models presented in the data do not rule out the possibility that confounding variables might better explain variance in academic persistence outcomes, such as type of university institution (Primarily White Institution, Hispanic Serving Institution, Private Institution, etc.). Psychometrically, the use of quantitative, Likert-scale type questions and the use of an original measure that has not been tested with diverse Latinx samples limits the generalizability of study findings. Further, chosen methods of data collection (e.g. survey, Likert-scale type questions in English) limited study participation to Latina transfer students to report about their experiences in English and via an on-line survey, although the majority of the sample reported being bilingual. Answering survey questions in English only may not fully capture their experiences. Similarly, although most Latinx college students readily speak English, individuals willing to complete a relatively long survey may differ from those who chose not to participate or who did not complete the survey. For example, participation in the study may be related to increased cyberactivism (McCaughey & Ayers, 2003), being more politicized, having more "free" time, and/or greater social capital (Yosso, 2009). The participants reported generally high-grade point averages (3.38 at their current university), and so findings with this sample may be less applicable to students who may be struggling more academically.

The validity of study findings is also reduced because, although MCAR analyses indicated data were missing at random, a significant number (approximately 20%) of participants completed demographic information but did not complete additional survey items. There are many potential reasons why students did not complete the entire survey,

59

including fatigue, boredom, lack of privacy at some point during their participation, interruption, and/or the content of the survey itself. Self-report measures pose additional limitations to data interpretations and application of study findings. Although measuring Latinx college student experiences through self-report and survey sampling methods is consistent with existing practice and literature, it is recommended that future studies improve measurement by including information provided by multiple sources, such as by trained research interviewers, and use multi-method forms of data collection (e.g. mixed methods approaches).

It is also important to acknowledge the heterogeneity of Latinx communities and that in this study, Latina students were treated as a homogenous group. Participants included members from various origin groups (e.g. Mexican, Salvadorian, Puerto Rican), and although most of the sample reported being of Mexican origin, sample sizes for other groups were too small to allow for between-group analyses by national origin identification. It is possible that results would have differed if participants were more ethnically diverse and more inclusive of communities in Central America, South America, or of Caribbean origins.

Conclusion

The present study is one of the first quantitative examinations of resource use by type among Latina transfer students and the relationships between resource use and academic persistence variables such as integration and commitment. Findings revealed that more Latina transfer students reported knowing about academic resources than socio-cultural resources but that students reported engaging in socio-cultural resources more frequently and found socio-cultural resources as more helpful to their academic

persistence. Additionally, frequency of engagement in academic resources negatively related to levels of academic integration but positively with social integration. Finally, the frequency of engagement in socio-cultural resources was positively and significantly related to all outcome variables. These findings highlight the importance of identity-based socio-cultural resources that may buffer against challenges associated with academic persistence for Latina transfers students. In addition, these findings suggest that Latina transfer students have a complex relationship to academic resources, and further investigation is necessary to explore how and why Latina transfer students experience engagement in academic resources in unique ways. Further, institutions can examine ways to make academic resources more culturally relevant and helpful.

Findings suggest directions for future research aimed at identifying ways to enhance Latina transfer student's academic persistence in higher education. By testing resource use engagement by types of resource in additional samples, and incorporating additional variables, we may continue to identify points of prevention and intervention in university contexts for Latina transfer students. While understanding the effect of resource use on Latina transfer student academic persistence is incredibly important in addressing the "Leaky Pipeline" for Latinx college students that extends into higher education, it will remain a journey. Many of the efforts to reduce the outcome disparities for Latina transfer students rely on the assumption that if institutions know how to do better, racism and other systemic inequities will cease to operate. The unique contributions offered by the current study require more than just the critical consciousness development of students, faculty, staff, and researchers on an individual level – it requires perpetual systemic reflection and engagement in social justice action

(Tate, 2013). It will require moving away from a deficit-based conceptualization of students facing educational inequity and movement towards the resilience of Latinx individuals in this country, the *echale ganas* mentality that Latina women bring with them to college spaces. It will require institutional commitment to social justice because Latina transfer students can, and do, succeed. *Si se puede.*

APPENDIX A

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

Gender: _____   Age: _____   Ethnicity: _____

Cumulative GPA (at current institution): _____ Are you a transfer student? YES /

NO

Previous GPA (at past institution): _____

How old were you when you begin living in the U.S.?
- ☐ I was born in the U.S.
- ☐ Six years of age or younger
- ☐ Between age 7 and 17
- ☐ After the age of 18

**If participants endorse not being born in the US)
Country of origin (where were you born?): _____

What language(s) were primarily spoken in your home growing up?:
_____

What is your current language of preference?: _____

What language(s) do you currently speak in your home now?:
_____

Years at current institution:

- ☐ First year (less than one academic year/3 quarters/2 semesters)
- ☐ Second year
- ☐ Third Year
- ☐ Fourth Year
- ☐ Fifth year and beyond

Where do you live?

- ☐ on-campus housing
- ☐ off-campus housing with friends
- ☐ off-campus housing with family
- ☐ other_____

Are you currently a caregiver (e.g. caring for an aging parent, a child, a sibling, etc.)? YES / NO

Are you currently raising your own children or responsible on a daily basis for another's child (not as paid employment)? YES / NO

What is your major? _____

Have you been continuously enrolled since you began the degree you are currently working towards? YES / NO

If no, how many terms did you stop out of school? _____

Which of the following attended college? (select all that apply)

- ☐ Both parents/guardians attended college
- ☐ Mother/female guardian attended college
- ☐ Father/male guardian attended college
- ☐ Other Guardian attended college
- ☐ None of the above
  Other_____

How many of your siblings attended college? _____

How do you finance your education? (select all that apply)

- ☐ Work part-time
- ☐ Work full-time
- ☐ Family
- ☐ Student Loans
- ☐ Scholarships
- ☐ Personal savings

How many hours per week do you work as a paid employee?:
_____

Approximately how much income do these resources provide you <u>in addition to the cost of tuition</u> (e.g. how much money do you have access to each year)?

_____

Which of the following were born in the U.S.? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Self
- ☐ Mother
- ☐ Father
- ☐ Maternal grandparents
- ☐ Paternal grandparents
- ☐ Maternal great-grandparents
- ☐ Paternal great-grandparents
- ☐ None of the above were born in the U.S.

COLLEGE PERSISTENCE QUESTIONNAIRE

Academic Integration

How well do you understand the thinking of your instructors when they lecture or ask students to answer questions in class?

> 1 – I do not understand very well
> 2 – I do not understand
> 3 – I sometimes understand and sometimes do not understand well
> 4 – I understand well
> 5 – I understand very well

How satisfied are you with the extent of your intellectual growth and interest in ideas since coming here?

> 1 – Very dissatisfied
> 2 – Dissatisfied
> 3 – Neutral
> 4 – Satisfied
> 5 – Very satisfied

In general, how satisfied are you with the quality of instruction you are receiving here?

> 1 – Very dissatisfied
> 2 – Dissatisfied
> 3 – Neutral
> 4 – Satisfied
> 5 – Very satisfied

How concerned about your intellectual growth are the faculty here?

> 1 – Very unconcerned
> 2 – Unconcerned
> 3 – Neutral
> 4 – Concerned
> 5 – Very concerned

On average across all your courses, how interested are you in the things that are being said in class discussions?

> 1 – Very uninterested
> 2 – Uninterested
> 3 – Neutral
> 4 – Interested
> 5 – Very interested

How much of a connection do you see between what you are learning here and your future career possibilities?

> 1 – Very little connection
> 2 – Little
> 3 – Neutral
> 4 – Some connection
> 5 – A lot of connection

I believe that many instructors deliberately impose unreasonable requirements on students and enjoy their distress.

> 1 – Completely disagree
> 2 – Disagree
> 3 – Neutral
> 4 – Agree
> 5 – Completely agree

Students differ widely in how much interaction they want to have with faculty. How disappointed are you in the amount of interaction you have?

> 1 – Very disappointed
> 2 – Somewhat Disappointed
> 3 – Neutral
> 4 – Not disappointed
> 5 – Not disappointed at all

Social Integration

How much have your interpersonal relationships with other students had an impact on your personal growth, attitude, and values?

> 1 – Very little impact
> 2 – A little impact
> 3 – No impact
> 4 – Some impact
> 5 – A lot of impact

How much have your interpersonal relationships with other students had an impact on your intellectual growth and interest in ideas?

> 1 – Very little impact
> 2 – A little impact
> 3 – No impact
> 4 – Some impact
> 5 – A lot of impact

How strong is your sense of connectedness with other faculty, students, and staff on this campus?

1 – Not connected at all
2 – Disconnected
3 – Neutral
4 – Somewhat Connected
5 – Very connected

How much do you think you have in common with other students here?

1 – Very little in common
2 – A little in common
3 – Neutral
4 – Some in common
5 – A lot in common

When you think about your overall social life here like friendships, college organizations, extracurricular activities, and so on, how satisfied are you with yours?

1 – Very dissatisfied
2 – Dissatisfied
3 – Neutral
4 – Satisfied
5 – Very satisfied

How many of your closest friends are here in college with you rather than elsewhere such as other colleges, work, or hometown?

1 – Very few friends
2 – A few friends
3 – Neutral
4 – Some friends
5 – A lot of friends

What is your overall impression of the other students here?

1 – Very negative
2 – Negative
3 – Neutral
4 – Positive
5 – Very positive

How often do you wear clothing with this college's emblems?

1 – Very rarely
2 – Rarely
3 – Neutral
4 – Often
5 – Very often

Support Services Satisfaction

How satisfied are you with the academic advisement you receive here?

> 1 – Very dissatisfied
> 2 – Dissatisfied
> 3 – Neutral
> 4 – Satisfied
> 5 – Very satisfied

How well does this institution communicate important information to students such as academic rules, degree requirements, individual course requirements, campus news and events, extracurricular activities, tuition costs, and financial aid and scholarship opportunities?

> 1 – Not communicated well at all
> 2 – Not communicated well
> 3 – Neutral
> 4 – Communicated well
> 5 – Very well

How easy is it to get answers to your questions about things related to your education here?

> 1 – Very difficult to get answers
> 2 – Difficult to get answers
> 3 – Neutral
> 4 – Easy to get answers
> 5 – Very easy to get answers

How much input do you think you can have on matters such as course offerings, rules and regulations, and registration procedures?

> 1 – No input at all
> 2 – Little input
> 3 – Neutral
> 4 – Some input
> 5 – A lot of input

If you have needs that are different from the majority of students here, how well does the university meet these needs?

> 1 – The university does not meet these needs well at all
> 2 – The university does not meet these needs well
> 3 – Neutral
> 4 – The university meets my needs well
> 5 – The university meets my needs very well

How fairly do you think students are handled here?

1 – Very unfairly
2 – Unfairly
3 – Neutral
4 – Fairly
5 – Very fairly

Degree Commitment

When you think of the people who mean the most to you (friends and family), how disappointed do you think they would be if you quit school?

1 – Not disappointed at all
2 – Not disappointed
3 – Neutral
4 – Somewhat disappointed
5 – Very disappointed

At this moment in time, how certain are you that you will earn a college degree?

1 – Very uncertain
2 – Uncertain
3 – Neutral
4 – Certain
5 – Very certain

At this moment in time, how strong would you say your commitment is to earn a degree, here or elsewhere?

1 – Not strong at all
2 – Not strong
3 – Neutral
4 – Strong
5 – Very strong

How strong is your intention to persist in your pursuit of the degree, here or elsewhere?

1 – Not strong at all
2 – Not strong
3 – Neutral
4 – Strong
5 – Very strong

How supportive is your family of your pursuit of a college degree, in terms of their encouragement and expectations?

1 – Very unsupportive
2 – Unsupportive
3 – Neutral
4 – Supportive
5 – Very supportive

Institutional Commitment

How likely is it that you will earn a degree from here?

> 1 – Very unlikely
> 2 – Unlikely
> 3 – Neutral
> 4 – Likely
> 5 – Very likely

How confident are you that this is the right university for you?

> 1 – Not confident at all
> 2 – Not confident
> 3 – Neutral
> 4 – Confident
> 5 – Very confident

How likely is it that you will reenroll here next semester?

> 1 – Very unlikely
> 2 – Unlikely
> 3 – Neutral
> 4 – Likely
> 5 – Very likely

How much thought have you given to stopping your education here perhaps transferring to another college, going to work, or leaving for other reasons?

> 1 – Very little thought
> 2 – Little thought
> 3 – Neutral
> 4 – Some thought
> 5 – A significant amount of thought

Academic Conscientiousness

How often do you miss class for reasons other than illness or participation in school-sponsored activities?

> 1 – Very rarely
> 2 – Rarely
> 3 – Neutral
> 4 – Often
> 5 – Very often

How often do you turn in assignments past the due date?

> 1 – Very rarely
> 2 – Rarely
> 3 – Neutral
> 4 – Often

5 – Very often

I am disinterested in academic work and do as little as possible.

1 – Very rarely
2 – Rarely
3 – Neutral
4 – Often
5 – Very often

Resource Use Questionnaire

Below you will find a list of institutional resources that some students use and find helps them stay in school and earn their college degree. Institutional resources are <u>provided by the university</u> to support students' academic success.

Which of the following resources are available at your current university that you know of?

- □ Working on schoolwork at the library with the help of library staff (e.g. resources to write research papers, etc.)
  - o Yes
  - o No
- □ Working with faculty on schoolwork outside of class (e.g. office hours, e-mail correspondence, etc.)
  - o Yes
  - o No
- □ Working with other students on schoolwork outside of class (e.g. self-initiated or structured study groups, etc.)
  - o Yes
  - o No
- □ Mentorship or apprenticeship opportunities with faculty (e.g. research lab, TA-ing for a professor, supervised teaching experiences, McNair faculty mentor)
  - o Yes
  - o No
- □ Academic support with schoolwork from paid staff on campus (e.g., faculty tutoring, advising tutoring, library staff, peer tutoring provided by a department, etc.)
  - o Yes
  - o No
- □ Other resource provided by my university: _____

- □ Ethnic student organizations on campus (e.g. Mecha, Muxeres, Black Student Union, etc.)
- □ Transfer student organizations on campus (e.g. transfer student union, nontraditional student group, etc.)
- □ Multicultural center on campus
- □ Mentorship program based on shared identities (e.g. a peer-to-peer mentoring program for Latinx students/students of color/non-traditional students/transfer students such as McNair Scholars program, TRIO, Bridges program, etc.)

Please check which institutional resources you have used at your current university:

- ☐ Working on schoolwork at the library with the help of library staff (e.g. resources to write research papers, etc.)
- ☐ Working with faculty on schoolwork outside of class (e.g. office hours, e-mail correspondence, etc.)
- ☐ Working with students on schoolwork outside of class (e.g. self-initated or structured study groups, etc.)
- ☐ Mentorship opportunities with Faculty (e.g. research lab, TA-ing for a professor, academic advising relationship)
- ☐ Tutoring services on campus (e.g. at the library, departmental tutoring, etc.)
- ☐ Other resource provided by my university: _____

- ☐ Ethnic student organizations on campus (e.g. Mecha, Muxeres, Black Student Union, etc.)
- ☐ Transfer student organizations on campus (e.g. transfer student union, nontraditional student group, etc.)
- ☐ Other groups on campus (e.g. Greek Life, Intramural Sports, other club or organization)
- ☐ Multicultural center on campus
- ☐ Mentorship program based on shared identities (e.g. a peer-to-peer mentoring program for Latinx students/students of color/non-traditional students/transfer students such as McNair Scholars program, TRIO, Bridges program, etc.)

Please list what other university resources you have used while attending your current institution. Use as much space as you like.

_____
_____-
_____
_____

Below you will find a list of additional resources that some students use and find helps them earn their college degree. These additional resources provide support <u>outside of the university</u> to support students' academic success.
- ☐ Support from family or loved ones
- ☐ Support from a religious organization or institutions
- ☐ Support from a community organization
- ☐ Other support: _____

3.**for every item endorsed**

How FREQUENTLY have you accessed <u>NAME OF RESOURCE since attending current institution?</u>
- ☐ 1 time
- ☐ 2-5 times

☐ 6-10 times
☐ 10+ times

for every item endorsed

Did <u>SUPPORT ENDORSED</u> help you keep working successfully towards your college degree?

☐ Yes, it was helpful
☐ No, it was not helpful or relevant

For you personally, how acceptable is it for you to ask for help from faculty?

1 – Not acceptable at all

2 – Not very acceptable

3 – Neither acceptable or unacceptable

4 – Fairly acceptable

5 – Very acceptable

Other - _____

…Student peers?

1 – Not acceptable at all

2 – Not very acceptable

3 – Neither acceptable or unacceptable

4 – Fairly acceptable

5 – Very acceptable

Other - _____

…University support offices and organizations?

1 – Not acceptable at all

2 – Not very acceptable

3 – Neither acceptable or unacceptable

4 – Fairly acceptable

5 – Very acceptable
Other _____

Please share any thoughts or reactions you had while completing this survey. Feel free to elaborate on any response. We appreciate your feedback and thoughts!

_____

What should faculty and administrators know about or do better to help Latinx transfer students graduate from college?

_____

What is your experience like when seeking support at your university?

_____

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