Increasing School Counselors' Understanding of Factors that Influence Latina/o Adolescents' College-Going Beliefs

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Abstract

A quantitative, predictive design was used to explore how positive psychology, mental health, and cultural factors influenced Latina/o adolescents' college-going beliefs. By using multiple regression analysis, findings indicated that hope and life satisfaction were significant predictors of college-going beliefs. We provide a discussion regarding the importance of these findings as well as recommendations for school counselors.

Keywords: school counselors, Latina/o adolescents, positive psychology, college-going beliefs

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Although the Hispanic population is one of the fastest growing groups in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012), the achievement gap between Latina/o and non-Latina/o adolescents from early childhood to secondary school remains (American Council on Education, 2012; Garcia & Gonzales, 2006). Additionally, the achievement gap between Latina/o students and their non-Hispanic peers in high school completion rates is well documented at a national level (American Council on Education, 2012). As one example, 15% of Hispanics between ages 25 to 29 received a college degree compared with 40% of White adults (Pew Research Center, 2014). Latina/o adolescents also continue to be ranked lower on college-readiness standards compared with their non-Hispanic adolescents (Reardon & Galindo, 2007). Given these trends, increasing Latina/o adolescents' college preparation is important, particularly in areas where the majority of the population identifies as Latina/o.

College-going beliefs or college-self efficacy (Gibbons & Borders, 2010) are important factors related to college preparation and success due to the relationship with academic achievement, resilience to barriers (Gonzalez, Stein, & Huq, 2012), and hope (Vela, Lenz, Sparrow, & Gonzalez, 2017). Findings from the current study can help school counselors identify interventions, programs, and activities to improve those factors related to Latina/o adolescents' college beliefs.

Theoretical Framework

To improve understanding of Latina/o adolescents' college-going beliefs, we use a positive psychology, mental health, and cultural framework to understand relevant

predictors of attitudes toward postsecondary education. Kaplan, Tarvydas, and Gladding (2014) provided the following perspective: "counseling is a professional relationship that empowers diverse individuals, families, and groups to accomplish mental health, wellness, education, and career goals" (p. 368). Although hope and meaning in life are related to wellness and prevalent in positive psychology (Seligman, 2002; Snyder & Lopez, 2007), counseling researchers (e.g., Koehn & Cutcliffe, 2012; Young & Hutchinson, 2011) argued that the factors above are also part of counseling practices and wellness models. Vela, Lenz, Sparrow, and Gonzalez (2016) commented that these factors could be classified under humanistic counseling or positive psychology given the focus on subjective well-being. In addition to humanistic factors, complete mental health and culture are essential to understanding Latina/o adolescents' college-going beliefs. Complete mental health (Suldo & Shaffer, 2008), which refers to life satisfaction and clinical symptoms, has been linked with adolescents' hope and meaning in life (Park, Park, & Peterson, 2010; Trevisan, Bass, Powell, & Eckerd, 2017). Cultural factors, including acculturation and enculturation, have been related with Latina/o students' life satisfaction, academic goals, and college persistence (e.g., Ojeda, Flores, & Navarro, 2011).

Positive Psychology

Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) described positive psychology as scientific study of optimal human functioning and positive constructs such as hope and meaning in life. There has been much research into how some of these constructs influence adolescents. One such construct is hope, which refers to the belief one has in their ability to create "pathways" leading to agency to accomplish goals (Snyder, 2002).

Sariçam (2015) showed that sub-factors of hope, including trust, confidence, and positive future orientation, are positive predictors of subjective happiness. Other researchers corroborated that hope affects academic success, including research showing higher levels of hope as reliable predictors of grades (Snyder et al., 2002) and a higher likelihood of graduation among college students (Chang & Banks, 2007). These findings are supported by research indicating hope allows for the development of coping strategies and insight (Hansen, Trujillo, Boland, & MacKinnon, 2014). With hope's predictive value in psychological grit, as shown in research on Mexican American students (Vela, Lu, Lenz, & Hinojosa, 2015), hope is further supported to influence college students' success and adaptiveness in working through challenges in educational settings (Duckworth, Peterson, Matthews & Kelly, 2007).

Meaning in life refers to how a person feels connected to something greater than themselves (Peterson, Park, & Seligman, 2005) and involves two aspects: presence of meaning in life and search for meaning in life. Presence of meaning in life is positively correlated with other positive constructs such as happiness, life satisfaction, and positive affect while negatively correlated with depression (Park et al., 2010). Similarly, presence of meaning in life positively correlates to positive psychosocial functioning, such as adjustment (Trevisan et al., 2017). Search for meaning in life, however, has a negative correlation to positive constructs such as happiness, life satisfaction, positive affect, and adjustment (Park et al., 2010; Trevisan et al., 2017). When accompanied by curiosity, search for meaning can also become emotionally exhausting (Garrosa, Blanco-Donoso, Carmona-Cobo, & Moreno-Jiménez, 2017). This is not always the case, as search for meaning has also been found to be positively associated with

increased happiness, greater life satisfaction, and less depression when present with meaning in life (Park et al., 2010). These findings suggest that while search for meaning can have negative consequences on subjective well-being, the presence of an already established meaning in life can have positive effects on students' well-being (Vela et al., 2015).

Complete Mental Health

Suldo and Shaffer (2008) posited that using a dual-factor model of mental health with indicators of subjective well-being and psychopathology allows practitioners and researchers to understand and evaluate complete mental health. Subjective well-being refers to life satisfaction (Diener, 2000) while psychopathology refers to clinical symptoms (Suldo & Shaffer, 2008). Eklund, Dowdy, Jones, and Furlong (2011) commented that psychopathology and subjective well-being should be conceptualized as separate forms of mental health. Further, an examination of only psychopathology excludes essential parts of mental health such as life satisfaction (Suldo & Shaffer, 2008) and hope (Vela, Ikonomopoulos, Dell'Aquila, & Vela, 2016). Researchers (Vela, Sparrow, Ikonomopoulos, Gonzalez, & Rodriguez, 2017) have found that optimism, grit, and gratitude positively influence students' life satisfaction while other researchers (Park et al., 2010; Trevisan et al., 2017) found that search for meaning in life influenced students' depressive symptoms. However, to the best of our knowledge, no study has used life satisfaction and depressive symptoms as factors in a predictive model to understand influences of college-going beliefs.

Culture

Acculturation is the process of incorporating two layers of culture by a person identified as a member of an ethnic minority (Ryder, Alden, & Paulhus, 2000). One variation of acculturation is biculturalism, in which the individual incorporates mainstream culture while remaining attached to their heritage culture (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006). Although it may be beneficial to adopt such strategies, there is research showing higher levels of acculturation to the American culture are accompanied by increased perceived discrimination (Wang, Scalise, Barajas-Munoz, Julio, & Gomez, 2016). Evidence also supports successful acculturation is linked to academic success and achievement (López, Ehly, & García-Vázquez, 2002; Manaster, Chan, & Safady, 1992). Additionally, Mexican American migrant students who were considered academically successful were found to be more acculturated and had higher aspirations and expectations for future occupations than those who were academically unsuccessful (Manaster, Chan, & Safady, 1992). López, Ehly, and García-Vázquez (2002) showed similar results in which students identified as "highly integrated" were more likely to have higher academic achievement. Due to the strong relationship between acculturation and various aspects of academic success, it is essential to understand the impact on adolescents' college-going beliefs.

In summary, positive psychology, complete mental health, and cultural factors have been theoretically and empirically linked with college adolescents' academic and mental health outcomes. These important factors can also play an important role in Latina/o adolescents' college-going beliefs.

College-Going Beliefs

Bandura (1997) defined self-efficacy as an individual's belief in their ability to accomplish tasks and goals. Galla and Wood (2012) showed that anxiety was a strongly negative predictor of test performance in students with low levels of self-efficacy. With higher levels, however, self-efficacy worked as a moderator for anxiety-related impairments, which aligns with previous research (Wang & Liu, 2000). Self-efficacy has also been shown to reduce perceived stress (Nedeljkovic, Wepfer, Ausfeld-Hafter, Wirtz, & Streitberger, 2013) and persistence (Baier, Markman, & Pernice-Duca, 2016). This finding is supported by evidence that self-efficacy has a partial mediating role between problem-solving coping styles and management of inferiority (Shi & Zhao, 2014). When referencing factors within Latina/o students, there are strong positive correlations between college-going beliefs and public ethnic regard and resilience to barriers (Gonzalez et al., 2012). Finally, while self-efficacy is a valuable trait among students as it positively predicts intentions to persist among students, less attention has been given to factors that influence college-going beliefs among Latina/o adolescents. Gibbons and Borders (2010) defined college-going beliefs as adolescents' attitudes toward their ability to attend and persist in higher education.

Purpose of Study and Rationale

The relationship among positive psychology, mental health, and cultural factors with adolescents' life satisfaction, academic achievement, and hope is well documented. However, few studies have simultaneously addressed how factors influence Latina/o adolescents' college-going beliefs. The lack of literature in this area underscores the importance of exploring how specific positive psychology, mental

health, and cultural factors influence attitudes toward postsecondary education. Given that college self-efficacy is related to academic achievement, resilience to barriers (Gonzalez et al., 2012), and hope (Vela et al., 2017), examining how theoretically relevant factors impact Latina/o adolescents' college-going beliefs is important. Findings can help school counselors identify interventions and techniques to target those factors that relate to Latina/o adolescents' college-going beliefs. As a result, we explored the following research question: To what extent does meaning in life, search for meaning in life, hope, life satisfaction, depression, and enculturation influence Latina/o adolescents' college-going beliefs?

Method

Participants

In the current study, criterion sampling was used to collect data from Latina/o high school students in the southern region of the United States. Participants' ages ranged from 17 to 19 (*M* = 17.72; *SD* = .49). This sample included 46 men (45%) and 52 women (51%). Similar to other researchers (e.g., Cavazos et al., 2010), we use Latina/o to refer to individuals who are associated with one or more of the following: Cuban, Dominican, Mexican, Puerto Rican, Spanish, or communities from Central or South America (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008). Related to generation status, participants identified as follows: first-generation (12%), second generation (35%), third generation (9%), fourth generation (26%), and fifth generation (15%).

Measurements

All participants were given a survey packet that included a demographic form, Meaning in Life Questionnaire (MLQ; Steger, Frazier, Oishi, & Kaler, 2006), Hope Scale

(Snyder et al., 1997), Brief Acculturation Rating Scale for Mexican Americans-II (Bauman, 2005), Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985), Depression Scale (Radloff, 1977), and information regarding IRB approval. We selected the instruments above to measure relevant constructs given evidence of reliability and validity in previous studies. The demographic form focused on participants' age, ethnic background, gender, and generation status.

Meaning in Life. The Meaning in Life Questionnaire (MLQ; Steger et al., 2006) measures students' or adults' search for and presence of meaning in life. Participants responded to statements evaluated on a seven-point Likert-scale ranging from 7 (*absolutely true*) to 1 (*absolutely untrue*). Possible scores range from 5 to 35 on each subscale with higher levels indicative of higher levels of search or presence of meaning in life. A sample item for the presence subscale includes, "I understand my life's meaning" while a sample item on the search for meaning subscale includes, "I am searching for my meaning in life." Vela, Lerma, and Ikonomopoulos (2016) utilized a confirmatory factor analysis to confirm factor structure with Mexican American populations. Reliability coefficients range from .70 to .93 (Dunn & O'Brien, 2009; Park et al., 2010; Vela, Castro, Cavazos, Cavazos, & Gonzalez, 2015). For the current study, Cronbach's alpha was .90 for the presence subscale and .77 for the search for meaning subscale.

Hope. The Children's Hope Scale (Snyder et al., 1997) is a self-report inventory to measure participants' attitudes toward goals and objectives. Participants responded to 6-statements evaluated on a six-point Likert-scale ranging from 6 (*all of the time*) to 1 (*none of the time*). The mean score is used to determine the level of hope with higher

scores reflective of higher hope. Sample response items include, "can get things in life" and "doing just as well as other kids." Reliability coefficients for scores on the total scale range from .71 to .86 (Snyder et al., 1997; Taysi, Curun, & Orcan, 2015; Vela et al., 2017). For the current study, Cronbach's alpha was .78.

Enculturation. The Brief Acculturation Rating Scale for Mexican Americans-II (Bauman, 2005) measures participants' orientation to the Anglo culture and orientation to the Mexican culture. We used the orientation to the Mexican culture subscale in the current study. Participants responded to statements evaluated on a five-point Likert-scale ranging from 5 (*almost always*) to 0 (*not at all*) with six items measuring Mexican orientation. Higher scores on Mexican orientation represent high enculturation to the Mexican culture. Reliability estimates range from .75 to .91 on the Mexican orientation subscale (e.g., Bauman, 2005; Castillo, Lopez-Arenas, & Saldivar, 2010). For the current study, Cronbach's alpha was .93.

Life satisfaction. The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SLWS; Diener et al., 1985) measures students' perceptions of life satisfaction. Participants responded to a 7-point scale ranging from 7 (*strongly agree*) to 1 (*strongly disagree*). A sample item includes, "The conditions of my life are excellent." The mean score is used to determine the level of life satisfaction with higher scores reflective of higher life satisfaction. Reliability estimates range from .77 to .82 (e.g., Ojeda, Castillo, Rosales Meza, & Pina-Watson, 2014; Vela et al., 2017). For this study, Cronbach' alpha was .82.

Depression. The Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale (CES-D; Radloff, 1977) measures depression symptoms. Participants responded to 20 items on a 4-point scale ranging from 0 (*never or rarely*) to 3 (*most of the time*). Sample items

include, "I felt I was just as good as other people" and "I felt depressed." Reliability estimates range from .88 to .94 (Park et al., 2010; Woo & Brown, 2013). For this study, Cronbach' alpha was .92.

College-Going Beliefs. The College-Going Beliefs Scale (Gibbons & Borders, 2010) is a self-report inventory to measure an individual's confidence in pursuing college with high levels of competence. Participants responded to statements evaluated on a four-point Likert-scale ranging from1 (*not at all*) to 4 (*very sure*). Survey items relate to college access (e.g., "I can go to college after high school") and college persistence (e.g., "I could finish college and receive a college degree"). The summation of all items is used to create a college-going self-efficacy score with higher scores indicative of higher levels of confidence. Reliability coefficients range from .94 to .97 (Gibbons & Borders, 2010; Gonzalez et al., 2012; Vela et al., 2017). For the current study, Cronbach's alpha was .96.

Procedures

First, we obtained permission from the institutional review board at a Hispanic-serving institution in the Southern region of the United States as well as from a school district. Second, the lead author contacted a school principal to request participation. Data collection spanned over four days from four courses. Third, we informed participants that participation was voluntary and that participation would not affect their grade or affiliation with their high school. We also informed students that extra credit or any other incentive was not available for their participation. We then obtained consent from all participants in the current study as well as parental consent and student assent from those under 18 years. Questionnaires took approximately 10-16 minutes to

complete and were done during class instruction time. Finally, scores from all data were compiled and entered in statistical software, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS; Vela et al., 2015).

Data Analysis

Statistical power analysis. We identified the number of participants needed to establish statistical power for our research design at the .80 level based on α = .05 by conducting an *a priori* power analysis using the *G*Power 3* statistical power analysis program (Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner, 2007). A sample size of 55 was necessary to identify a medium effect between our predictor variables for estimating change among scores on college self-efficacy (Vela et al., 2016).

Primary Analysis. We modeled relationships between our predictor and criterion variables using regression models to evaluate our research question related to the degree that positive psychology, mental health, and cultural factors predicted college-going beliefs. We also evaluated regression coefficients estimating practical significance.

Results

Table 1 presents descriptive statistics, including Pearson R correlation coefficients. We used an alpha level of .05 for the current study. In addition to

Table 1

Evaluation of Bivariate Correlations among Predictor Variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	VIF
1. Life Satisfaction	--	-.14	54	.65	.45	.12	2.14
2. Search for Meaning		--	-.05	-.08	.22	-.07	1.06
3. Presence of Meaning	--	--	--	.49	-.17	.14	1.55
4. Hope	--	--	--	--	-.41	.06	1.94
5. Depressive symptoms	--	--	--	--	-.001	-.001	1.37
6. Mexican Orientation	--	--	--	--	--	--	1.03

examining correlation coefficients, we evaluated multicollinearity (Vela et al., 2016) among predictor variables by inspecting variance inflation factors (see Table 2). A multiple regression analysis was conducted on college self-efficacy based on the presence presence of meaning in life, hope, life satisfaction, depressive symptoms, and enculturation. Multiple regression is the appropriate statistical analysis when researchers predict a continuous variable based on other variables (Dimitrov, 2013).

Table 2

Summary of Variables Predicting College-Going Beliefs

Variable	B	SE B	β	t	sr^2	F	R^2
College-Going Beliefs						7.15**	.33
Life Satisfaction	.67	.29	.29	2.30*	.06		
Search for Meaning	.14	.21	.06	.65	.005		
Presence of Meaning	.24	.24	.11	.99	.01		
Hope	1.17	.45	.31	2.59*	.07		
Depressive Symptoms	.20	.15	.13	.19	.02		

*p < .05. **p < .01.

After analyzing scatterplots, no curvilinear relationships between the criterion variable and predictor variables or heteroscedasticity were evident. There was a statistically significant relationship between predictor variables and college-going beliefs, $F(5, 90) = 8.32$, $p < .001$, thus providing evidence that the variance in college self-efficacy accounted for by predictor variables does not equal zero for the population (Dimitrov, 2013). A medium size of $R^2 = .32$ was noted, indicating that 32% of variance accounted for in the model. After establishing the overall statistical significance of R^2 and the multiple regression equation, we examined the statistical significance of the regression coefficients for significant predictors (Dimitrov, 2013). We used squared semi-partial correlation coefficients to examine practical significance (Chandler, Balkin, &

Perepiczka, 2011). Hope and life satisfaction were the only significant predictors of college self-efficacy, uniquely accounting for 7% and 4% of the variance in attitudes toward post-secondary education.

Discussion

The current study contributes to our understanding of college-going beliefs in Latina/o adolescents by exploring the relationship among positive psychology, mental health, and cultural factors in a multidimensional manner. These findings have the potential to shape school counseling interventions and programs to improve Latina/o adolescents' hope and life satisfaction, which might have an impact on college self-efficacy.

In this study, we found that hope served as the strongest predictor of college-going beliefs among Latina/o adolescents. This finding suggests that as the amount of hope increases, the level of college-going self-efficacy among Latina/o adolescents also increases. Hope refers to individuals' beliefs to pursue desired objectives (Feldman & Dreher, 2012) as well as the confidence to achieve goals (Snyder et al., 1999). This finding suggests that when students have hope that they can create a positive future, their level of confidence to pursue and succeed in post-secondary education might increase. This finding builds on findings from other researchers who found hope was related to academic performance (Synder et al., 2002), goal attainment (Feldman, Rand, & Kahle-Wrobleski, 2009), future academic achievement, (Marques, Pais-Ribeiro, & Lopez, 2011), and grit (Vela et al., 2016). There also was a positive relationship between Latina/o adolescents' life satisfaction and college-going beliefs. This is one of the first studies with Latina/o adolescents to highlight such a relationship between

positive mental health and college-going beliefs. Life satisfaction refers to cognitive self-evaluations of satisfaction with life (Diener, 2000). When Latina/o adolescents have positive mental health, they might also have better and positive attitudes toward pursuing and succeeding in post-secondary education. Given the relationship among hope, life satisfaction, and college-going self-efficacy, we suggest that school counselors help Latina/o adolescents increase hope and positive mental health, which in turn may enhance beliefs toward post-secondary education.

Presence of meaning, search for meaning, depression, and enculturation was used as part of a conceptual framework to understand college-going beliefs. None of these factors contributed to the overall prediction of college-going beliefs among Latina/o adolescents. While researchers found that presence of meaning in life impacted Latina/o college students' happiness and goal-assessment hope (Vela et al., 2014), this is one of the first investigations to highlight a lack of a relationship between these positive psychological factors and an important outcome variable. There are several possibilities for these unexpected findings. First, it is highly possible that other factors (e.g., hope) are more important in determining adolescents' attitudes toward post-secondary education. Second, other cultural and family factors, including ethnic identity cultural values, and self-knowledge (Zamarripa, Lane, Lerma, & Holin, 2011), might influence adolescents' college-going beliefs. Researchers are encouraged to use structural equation modeling with a larger sample size to examine mediating and moderating relationships among positive psychology, mental health, and cultural factors on Latina/o students' college-going beliefs.

Implications for Practice

The results demonstrate several essential areas in which school counselors can help Latina/o adolescents increase hope and life satisfaction to increase their college-going beliefs. This appears important given that Latinas/os have lower levels of academic achievement or school readiness (American Council on Education, 2012; Garcia & Gonzales, 2006) and higher levels of perceived challenges to post-secondary education. Given that Latina/o students also experience discrimination, perceive racial micro-aggressions (Sue et al., 2007), perceive lack of support from school counselors and teachers (Vela-Gude et al., 2009), and have less access to college information (Kimura-Walsh, Yamamura, Griffin, & Allen, 2009), helping Latina/o students improve those factors that are related to confidence to attend and persist in post-secondary education is essential. Hope refers to individuals' beliefs to pursue desired objectives (Feldman & Dreher, 2012) as well as the confidence to make progress toward those goals (Snyder et al., 1999). When Latina/o adolescents have hope that they can create a positive future, their level of confidence to pursue and persist in post-secondary education may increase. Life satisfaction refers to a cognitive self-evaluation of satisfaction with life (Diner, 2000). When adolescents develop high levels of life satisfaction, they may also increase their attitudes toward post-secondary education.

School counselors can design and implement interventions to increase Latina/o adolescents' hope and life satisfaction that are aligned with American School Counselor Association's National Model (2012). The following recommendations align with the delivery component of the ASCA National Model, including individual student planning and responsive services (ASCA, 2012). First, school counselors can use Feldman et

al.'s (2009) hope and goal intervention that involves a 90-minute session where adolescents (a) select a goal, (b) listen to a psychoeducation presentation on hope, (c) participate in a goal mapping exercise, and (d) experience a hope visualization exercise. Participants in the hope intervention showed increases in hope compared with participants in control groups. Second, school counselors can use a positive psychology intervention (Savage, 2011; Suldo & Michalowski, 2007) that integrates the following into a group counseling experience: positive emotions about the past, positive emotions about the present, and positive emotions about the future. Part 1 focuses on gratitude to help students develop positive emotions about their past. Part 2 focuses on positive emotions with the present. Students perform acts of kindness and cultivate character strengths to develop positive emotions about the present. Finally, part 3 focuses on positive emotions about the future such as optimism and hope (Savage, 2011; Suldo & Michalowski, 2007). Vela, Smith, Rodriguez, and Hinojosa (in press) evaluated the impact of positive psychology and creative journal arts therapy with Latina/o adolescents. Compared with a control group, Latina/o adolescents in the positive psychology and creative journal arts group reported more significant increases in resilience and personal recovery as well as lower levels of depressive symptoms.

To increase Latina/o adolescents' hope, school counselors can also develop positive and supportive relationships, empower students through critical consciousness, and involve Latina/o alumni in college discussions (Padilla & Hipolito-Delgado, 2015). First, school counselors need to develop a positive and supportive relationship. School counselors can use Rogers' (1957) core conditions of genuineness, empathy, and unconditional positive regard to connect and validate Latina/o adolescents' life

experiences. In a study with high school counselors regarding the most effective techniques and approaches to work with Latina/o adolescents, Vela, Gonzalez, Ikonomopoulos, Nelson, and Dorado (2014) identified positive regard, empathy, and genuineness as essential techniques. Second, school counselors can help Latina/o adolescents develop critical consciousness through social action (Padilla & Hipolito-Delgado, 2015). School counselors can take Latina/o adolescents on field trips, introduce students to relevant literature on schooling experiences, and develop community engagement activities. These activities might help Latina/o adolescents gain awareness of social issues that influence their path toward postsecondary education. Finally, school counselors can invite Latina/o alumni to share their resilient experiences with Latina/o adolescents. When school counselors (a) develop personal and meaningful relationships with Latina/o students and (b) help Latina/o students develop critical consciousness and social action, the resultant impact could be an increase in life satisfaction and hope toward the future, which in turn could influence attitudes toward post-secondary education (Padilla & Hipolito-Delgado, 2015).

School counselors also can collaborate with administrators who are responsible to lead a highly academically successful school and meet students' diverse needs (Arriaran-Rodriguez, 2011). Although principals operate and manage schools, school counselors are beneath the assistant principal in chain of command but are considered an essential component of the school administrative leadership team. Many school principals are unfamiliar with the extent of counselors' academic preparation as well as competencies and roles, which means counselors are often assigned administrative tasks, lunch or after-school supervision, coordinating school-wide examinations, and

scheduling (ASCA, 2012; Brown, Dahlbeck, & Sparkman-Barnes, 2010; Furey, 2014).

As a result, school counselors need to educate school administrators about school

counselors' roles in designing and implementing interventions to increase Latina/o

adolescents' hope, life satisfaction, and college-going beliefs. For example, school

counselors could educate administrators and other staff that ASCA (2012) recommends

school counselors spend 80% of their time delivering direct student services. Regional

service centers or university preparation programs in teacher and counselor education

must also approach schools to provide professional development for school counselors

and administrators regarding appropriate roles of school counselors, adolescent mental

health issues, and strength-based counseling interventions (Furey, 2014). When school

counselors and other professionals help administrators understand the importance of

school counselors' roles and responsibilities, they will have time and support to develop

interventions to help Latina/o adolescents improve mental health and attitudes toward

postsecondary education.

Implications for Research

Based on this study's findings, there are implications for future research. First,

outcome-based studies that examine the impact of school counseling interventions to

increase hope, life satisfaction, and college-going beliefs are essential. School

counselors can use positive psychology, creative journal arts therapy, and solution-

focused counseling to evaluate changes in Latina/o adolescents' hope and life

satisfaction. Researchers can use a single-case research design (Lenz, 2015) to

measure the impact of school counseling interventions to increase hope and life

satisfaction among Latina/o adolescents. Second, researchers should include different

variables in a model to understand predictors of Latina/o students' college-going self-efficacy. Our model in the current study explained 32% of the variance in Latina/o students' attitudes toward college. As a result, researchers could examine other factors such as psychological grit, curiosity, gratitude, optimism, and growth mindset. Third, qualitative studies could expand and provide greater insight into the quantitative findings from this study. Personal interviews and focus groups with Latina/o students, school counselors, and parents could increase understanding into how hope and life satisfaction influence attitudes toward post-secondary education. Qualitative interviews could also explore how social, cultural, and systemic forces influence Latina/o adolescents' college-going beliefs. Finally, more research needs to investigate school principals' roles toward the relationship among mental health, academic success, and college-going beliefs. Researchers should explore how principals' attitudes influence school counselors' roles, responsibilities, and support to develop and implement interventions.

Limitations

Some limitations warrant discussion. First, we relied on self-report data to examine perceptions of positive psychology, mental health, and cultural factors. Second, we did not collect data on academic performance such as grade point average or test scores. Third, the homogeneity of the sample might affect generalizability as participants attended a predominantly Hispanic high school in an area where 90% identify as Hispanic. As a result, findings might only apply to Latina/o adolescents who attend similar high schools (Vela et al., 2017). Finally, some instruments measuring

positive psychology constructs in the current study have not been validated in Spanish with Latina/o adolescents.

Conclusion

The purpose of the current study was to explore how positive psychology, mental health, and cultural factors influence Latina/o adolescents' college-going beliefs. Findings highlighted how hope and life satisfaction positively influenced Latina/o adolescents' attitudes toward post-secondary education. School counselors can align interventions with the ASCA National Model (2012) to help Latina/o adolescents improve hope and life satisfaction, which in turn might influence college-going beliefs.

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