Latinx Students' Perceptions of School Counseling Activities: A Content Analysis

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Abstract

This article explores 210 Latinx high school student's perceptions of school counseling activities. Using content analysis, researchers analyzed students' written answers regarding their perceptions of school counseling activities. The researchers found that Latinx students believed academic and career interventions as most important, while those addressing personal and cultural values less valuable. Implications for school counselors to provide activities aligned with Latinx students' identified needs and limitations are discussed.

Keywords: school counseling, Latinx, high school, students, content analysis

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Individuals from Latin descent constitute the largest ethnic or racial minority group in the United States (US), representing 18.33% of the population (US Census Bureau, 2019). The number of Latinx students enrolled in US schools has increased 80% from 1999 to 2016 (Krogstad, 2016). Researchers continue to recognize that Latinx students may experience unique difficulties, including English language acquisition (Koelsch, 2006), discrimination (Espinoza, Gonzales, & Fuligni, 2013), and poverty (Sibley & Brabeck, 2017). School counselors are in a position to support Latinx students as they progress through elementary, middle, and high school. Within the school environment, school counselors work with students to increase graduation rates, prepare students for future careers, and ensure social as well as emotional development (American School Counseling Association; ASCA, 2019). According to Gramlich (2017), Latinx students have the highest high school dropout rates of any ethnic group, which may suggest disconnect between school counseling activities and the needs of Latinx students (Author, 2017).

In 2005, the American School Counseling Association (ASCA) developed the National Model to serve as a guide in school counselors' development of comprehensive guidance programs to meet the needs of all students. The National Model outlines school counseling activities which include student guidance, individual planning, responsive services, in addition to system support for the purposes of encouraging students' development within academic, career, and personal/social domains (ASCA, 2019). ASCA continues to emphasize the importance addressing the specific needs of an increasingly diverse student body and periodically amends the

model to address the evolving needs of a diverse student body. In 2009, ASCA included a call focus on cultural awareness and encouraged school counselors to respond to the unique needs of students from various cultural and ethnic backgrounds (ASCA, 2019).

Given the unique social and emotional support school counselors provide, they constitute a critical force in promoting high school completion for Latinx students. Recent Latinx graduation rates indicated a record high completion (Krosgstad, 2016), however, research indicates Latinx students still have the highest high school dropout rates of any ethnic group (Fry, 2003; Gramlich, 2017; Ruggles et al., 2010). While graduation rates continue to increase, there may a disconnect between school counseling activities and the specific needs of Latinx students (Author, 2017).

Latinx Student Development

It is also important to understand some of the factors that contribute to high school drop out. School dropout usually occurs after students struggle for an extended period of time or fail in course work needed to graduate (Bowman-Perrott et al., 2010). Negative school experiences may create or exacerbate achievement barriers and the impact of these negative experiences are not isolated to academic achievement. There are a multitude of challenges that can negatively influence Latinx students' academic success within the US school system. These challenges can interfere with student's desire or ability to effectively engage in schools that are based on White-centered and dominant cultural values.

For Latinx students, several experiences could be considered negative or difficult. Latinx students are more likely to experience language barriers (James, 1997; Koelsch, 2006; Pagan-Rivera, 2014) and acculturation stress (Bacallao & Smokowski,

2009; Gil & Vega, 1996; Pagan-Rivera, 2014). Additionally, Latinx students experience high rates of poverty (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019; Sibley & Brabeck, 2017), and many Latinx students reported experiencing perceived discrimination within their school systems (Smokowski & Bacallao, 2007; Roche & Kuperminc, 2012).

These experiences can influence students' academic, career, and social development in a circular manner (Author, 2017; Schenck, Anctil, & Smith, 2010). Latinx students' social development influences their academic and career development. Likewise, Latinx students' academic development affects career and social development (Author, 2017).

Academic and Career Development of Latinx Students

English Language acquisition continues to be a critical hindrance to academic achievement for Latinx students (Koelsch, 2006). According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES, 2019), Latinx students comprise the largest group of English Language Learners in US schools (ELLs). Schools often separate English Language Learners and monolinguistic students, creating a system of marginalizing Latinx students for their bilingualism (Adair et al., 2017; Garcia & Solzara, 2020). Additionally, ELLs are overrepresented in special education classes (Counts et al., 2018; Koelsch, 2006) and score significantly worse on national assessments of reading (Koelsch, 2006). English language development can also strain relationships between Latinx students and parents (Morales & Wang, 2018). Children who serve as language brokers, interpreting for their non-English speaking parents, often report feeling worried or scared (Kam & Lazarevic, 2014), embarrassed, frustrated, and anxious (Morales & Wang, 2018).

Researchers found students and their parents often experience discrimination from other students, teachers, or counselors which influence parental participation and ultimately students' academic performance (Bacallao & Smokowski, 2009). Latinx students in Chávez-Reyes (2010) and Malott (2010)'s study believed school counselors held low-expectations for academic performance due to their ethnic identity. Becerra (2012) found that students and parents believed white teachers' lack of understanding of Latinx culture contributed to their higher diagnostic rates of behavioral or learning problems and their performance gap. Students in multiple studies reported Latinx students did not receive college information or college advising from their school counselors (Chávez-Reyes, 2010; Malott, 2010). Whether intentional or not, Latinx students may perceive their school counselors as holding biases towards them because of their ethnic identity. According to Vela et al. (2014), Latinx student enrollment in Advanced Placement courses increased by 1.35 times the previous rate of enrollment when students perceived their school counselor as supportive. Results of this study suggest academic performance may increase when Latinx students feel encouraged by their school counselor.

Academic performance and career trajectory appear to be linked (National Center for Educational Statistics; NCES, 2019). When students experience academic difficulties, the likelihood of graduating high school, enrolling in post-secondary education, and obtaining a well-paying job decreases. Students with a high school education or below often struggle to find full time employment and are less likely than peers with college degrees to find consistent full-time employment over extended periods of time (NCES, 2019). According to Kroeger and Gould (2017), the

unemployment rate of Latinx high school graduates is 1.2 times higher than white high school graduates. Latinx students with similar knowledge and skills as non-Latinx students face additional challenges in the job market. Factors that can hinder Latinx students' academic development can also hinder their career development (Bacallo & Smokowski, 2009). Despite Latinx students' desire to succeed, limited perceived support from teachers and/or school counselors contributes to higher incidence of dropout rates for Latinx students which, in turn, creates challenges in career development (Bacallao & Smokowski, 2009).

Personal/Social Development of Latinx Students

A large component of personal/social development in adolescence is the development of identity (Erikson, 1968). Latinx adolescents navigate identity development similar to their non-Latinx peers, however, Latinx students also experience ethnic identity development. Ethnic identity development enables students to explore and feel secure in their sense of self and ethnicity (Constante, et al., 2019). Ethnic identity exploration, acculturation, and perceived discrimination impacts Latinx students' mental health (Romero & Roberts, 2003; Umaña-Taylor & Updegraff, 2007) and can contribute to increased involvement in risky behaviors (Bacallao & Smokowski, 2009; Unger, Ritt-Olson, Soto, & Baezconde-Garbanati, 2009), decreased academic performance (LeCroy & Krysic, 2008; Supple, Ghazarian, Frabutt, Plunkett, & Sands, 2006), strained parent-child relationships (Bacallao & Smokowski, 2009; Gil & Vega, 1996), and decreased self-esteem (Torres & Ong, 2010). Current research defines acculturation as an acquisition of a second culture (Rudmin, 2009) or adaptation to stressful changes (Caplan, 2007). The differences in acculturation and experiences of

discrimination between Latinx students and their parents can also increase stress on the student (Monzó, 2016).

On the other hand, development of a cultural identity is related to adolescent well-being (Rivas-Drake et al., 2014) and resultant positive academic performance (Vela et al., 2014). Talleyrand and Than-Giang Vojtech (2019) argued that building cultural identity and reducing stigma are parts of the school counselor's role. Cultural inclusion is critical to Latinx student development (Storlie & Toomey, 2016).

The National Model (ASCA, 2019) encourages school counselors to address acculturation by working directly with teachers and parents to educate the student's support network on potential concerns. ASCA (2019) advised school counselors to work directly with students through responsive services, guidance, and individual planning to facilitate students' personal development. Despite current efforts by school counselors, research suggests Latinx students continue to perform at lower rates than their peers. These experiences appear unique to Latinx students (Bercerra, 2012) and indicate an obligation for school counselors to address the unique academic, career, and personal/social needs of Latinx students (ASCA, 2009).

Purpose

Extant literature on Latinx student development focused on conceptualizations of school counseling programs and counseling activities developed to address the needs of Latinx students but did not ask Latinx students directly to determine if these activities were helpful or wanted by Latinx students. As Bercerra (2012) identified, supporting Latinx students requires an understanding of their perceptions of their education. The

purpose of this study was explore Latinx high school students' perceptions of their experiences with the importance of school counseling activities.

Method

Research Design

The researchers utilized survey design and content analysis of open-ended questions to gather data from a large sample of Latinx high school students. Fink (2003) suggested using open-ended questions during survey research to assist in capturing the experiences of the participants in their own words. This method also allowed for a large number of Latinx students to share their experiences and perspectives and give voice to the data.

Participants responded to four open-ended questions regarding Latinx students' experiences with school counselors in relation to the domains of academic, career, and personal/social development (ASCA, 2019). The researchers included an additional questions to explore how Latinx students perceived their school counselor's role in addressing culture. The four questions allowed respondents to discuss relevant school counseling activities and their level of satisfaction with those activities.

The researchers identified content analysis as an effective means to address the research questions. As noted by Krippendorff (2019), content analysis allows researchers to analyze communication from a given context systematically and is an effective means to explore cross-cultural issues (Ryan & Bernard, 2000). Using a written survey provided a larger sample compared to individual interviews, therefore, allowing a broader understanding of Latinx students' perceptions of school counseling activities.

Participants

   The target population for this study included Latinx high school students within the Southern United States. The primary researcher recruited participants from five high schools to constitute a representative sample. Three high schools were considered "main stream" public high schools and enrolled students in grades nine through twelve without a referral or application process. A fourth high school was designated as a non-traditional high school, where students complete an application and focus on one of six areas of study. The final high school was designated as an alternative school, with students referred for behavioral problems.

   School counselors at participating high schools identified students eligible for the study and distributed informed consent. Participants under 18 years of age gained parental consent before being included within the study. Latinx students (18 or over) who signed informed consent documents or presented parental informed consent filled out the survey. Participants completed the survey at home, in class, or after school. The research team provided the recruitment letter and parental consent in English and translated into Spanish to ensure that students, regardless of parental language, could participate as suggested by Flaherty and colleagues (1998). The research team presented the open-ended survey questions in English, and therefore the sample was limited to Latinx high school students who read and write in English.

Instruments

   Latinx students in the current study received a demographics questionnaire identifying several variables including gender, grade level, eligibility for free or reduced lunch, languages spoken, as well as intention to graduate high school and attend

college. The open ended survey questions included a) What do you think is important for your school counselor to talk with you about school and school work? b) What do you think is important for your counselor to talk with you about college and career? c) What do you think is important for your counselor to talk with you about your relationships and yourself? and d) What do you think is important for your school counselor to talk with you about your culture? The open-ended questions provided Latinx students an opportunity to share their perspective of school counseling activities in alignment with three domains outlined in the National Model (ASCA, 2019).

Data Analysis

Following procedures outlined by Fink (2003) for content analysis of open-ended survey questions, the primary researcher chose inductive or conventional analysis to search for dominant themes to describe the Latinx students' experiences of school counseling activities and their school counselors . Content analysis allows researcher to explore the overt and latent content within written material to identify and evaluate themes to provide greater understanding of a phenomenon (Kippendorff, 2013). By using inductive analysis, the researcher attempted to minimize the influence of preconceived notions on the data and allow for themes to emerge from the data without a priori definitions (Krippendorff, 2019). The coding team included the primary researcher and a Master's level graduate student. The primary researcher had previous experience and the graduate student received training and in qualitative coding procedures. Both members identified as White female counselors-in-training at the time of the study. Researchers worked in a school counseling setting and, were familiar with school counseling activities.

In alignment with Kippendorff's (2019) identified steps, the coding team first unitized the data, defining the study units into responses to each individual question as opposed participant responses to all four questions. The sample included the Latinx student participants' answers to the open-ended questions and data included participants' written answers (Kippendorff, 2019). The research team used inductive coding to allow themes to emerge from the data (Kippendorff, 2019). Each member of the team read students' responses to understand the overarching concepts within the data and immerse themselves in the data (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Morgan, 1993; Morse & Field, 1995). After becoming familiar with the data and identifying categories and open codes, the research team came together to organize and create new categories and themes from the open codes (Kippendorff, 2019). The research team then went back to the data to identify discrepancies in coding. The team proceeded to create broad and open categories and separated individual quotes into those categories for each identified question within the survey.

Once dominant themes were identified among answers for each question, the research team then recorded the number of times themes were expressed in participant statements as suggested by Krippendorff (2019). The research team used frequency counts and percentages to describe the data. Additionally, the research team reported numerically emergent themes from the data analysis. The first author assessed the reliability agreement across research team members, identifying a reliability agreement of 89.25%.The coding team reached consensus on coding discrepancies and the first author kept an audit trail to document the steps of data analysis and promote trustworthiness (Kippendorff, 2019). To complete the fifth principle of content analysis,

we attempted to extend the meaning from the data into larger social and cultural contexts and through this manuscript, offered the findings of the research for school counselors to deepen their awareness of Latinx high school students' experiences (Kippendorff, 2019).

Results

The sample included 210 Latinx high school students attending one of five high schools within three school districts in Southwest US. One hundred and fifteen participants identified as male (54.8%), 96 participants identified as female (44.8%), and one participant identified as other (.5%). The majority of participants indicated they were in the twelfth grade (n=169, 72.2%) with smaller percentages of participants from ninth (n=8, 3.8%), tenth (n=17, 8.1%), and eleventh (n=26, 12.4%) grades. Descriptive statistics for the sample are presented in Table 1.

In conducting content analysis, the qualitative research team reviewed responses for themes and identified common themes for each of the three ASCA domains: academic, career, and personal/social and the added a cultural domain. Two hundred participants (95.2 %) provided answers for at least one of the open-ended questions. Not all of the two hundred participants provided answers for each of the qualitative questions.

Academic Qualitative Analysis

For the academic question, "What do you think is important for school counselors to talk with you about school and schoolwork?", 198 Latinx students (94.29%) responded. After reviewing responses, the research team identified the following themes within the academic domain: college, schoolwork, relationship between

personal life and school, future, and negative experiences. The majority of Latinx students responded that they thought it was important for school counselors to speak with them about their schoolwork (n= 151, 54.7%), college activities (n=46, 16.7%) and activities related to the connection between academics and the future (n=42, 15.2%). Students indicated that school counselors should speak with students about "GPA and what scholarships you can get" and "how important it is to do well in order to open up more opportunities in the future". One student focused on the importance of school counselors providing support and encouragement noting what students "can do to succeed".

Activities examining the connection between personal and school were less important with only 25 Latinx students (9.1%) identifying this activity as important. One student identified that "it is important for counselors to help us eliminate attention [students] give to others…that affect your involvement in class" as well as "ways to manage our school/social life". Five Latinx students (1.8%) reported having a negative experience with their counselors. One student recognized the importance for school counselors to get to know students and not simply provide grade level support, stating "I think it is important they should know how the students feel towards certain things, NOT just make every grade do the same thing". One student's response identified a sense of despair or apathy, simply stating it "doesn't matter". Seven Latinx students (2.5%) wrote an answer that was either unclear or stated that the student did not know. One student wrote, "I have never met my counselor."

College and Career Qualitative Analysis

For the career question, "What do you think is important for your school counselor to talk with you about college and career?", 194 Latinx students (92.38%) responded. The research team identified the following themes upon review: money, preparation, choices, and negative experiences. Most students identified discussion of college choices (n= 115, 40%) and preparation (n= 114, 40.1%) as the most important activities for school counselors to focus their attention. Students wrote of their desire for school counselors to help them understand the opportunities that existed after high school. One student wrote "some of us don't even know what career we want in life or where to go to college", while another said "I think it is important for my counselors to talk to me about the different opportunities I have" and "options besides college, like the military". In addition to insight into different opportunities, students identified the importance of school counselors exploring alternative post- graduation opportunities such as technical or community college and the military as well as requirements for entry into those opportunities. One student discussed the importance of understanding the GPA requirements for college and another suggested school counselors "help us understand what college will be like".

Less than one-fourth of Latinx students ($n=47$, 16.5%) indicated they felt it was important for school counselors to discuss money. Student statements included "how to pay for college", "how to get financial aid", and "scholarship information." One percent of Latinx students stated they had negative experiences with their school counselors regarding career. Five students (1.7%) stated nothing was important for their school counselors to discuss with regarding career. Again, three students included negative

experiences with the school counselor, one student wrote in "I have never met my counselor."

Personal and Social Qualitative Analysis

Fewer students responded to the question regarding their personal and social experiences. In response to the question, "What do you think is important for your school counselor to talk with you about your relationships and yourself?", 184 Latinx students (87.62%) responded. The following themes emerged: identity (n= 81, 36.2%), relationships (n=56, 25%), and how personal life impacts school (n = 36, 16.1%). Responses included school counselors working with students on the importance of respecting self and others, as well as how to avoid trouble by learning to cope and control self and emotions.

Fifty-six students (25%) indicated the importance of school counselors speaking with them about relationships, both friendship and romantic. For example, one student wrote about school counselors discussing the ways in which relationships can be emotionally, physically, and mentally abusive, while another stated "I think she should tell me what are the signs of a bad relationship and how to know when it's a good one. To help you choose your friends and to identify who are your real friends." Conversely, some students expressed that relationships and personal issues were not for school counselors to discuss (n= 42, 18.7%). One student noted the complexities of having school counselors discuss personal topics with students stating "I feel like that's a parents or guardian job unless the student goes to the counselor themselves, or the parent/guardian doesn't help."

Thirty-six students (16.1%) noted how personal issues can impact students' school work. One stated "problems can always get in your way of school and if you have somebody trustworthy to tell your problems to, that's always good." Another student noted that "problems at home, many times problems at home can reflect how we students do in school," while another reiterated the importance for the school counselor "to know if there is anything in your personal life that could be affecting your grades or your work in school.

Cultural Qualitative Analysis

For the cultural question, "What do you think is important for your school counselor to talk with you about your culture?", 194 Latinx students (92.38%) responded. The following themes were identified: pride/knowledge/identity (n= 68, 32.1%), impact of culture on everyday life lives (n=52, 24.5%), and not important/not for school counselors to discuss culture (n= 55, 26%). Many students wrote unclear answers (n= 37, 17.5%), or stated they did not know what was important for school counselors to discuss about culture.

Students indicated they thought it was important for the school counselor to help them develop pride or knowledge about their culture. They also indicated it was important for the school counselor to create a culture of respect within the school and assist in the creation of a culturally respectful school. One student wrote that school counselors should address "why we should be proud of where we came from and how to deal with diverse cultures. How to stand up for our culture and be respectful about every culture". Another student wrote about the importance of "learn[ing] new cultures to be more open to other people".

Students also noted the complexity of school counselors who are of a different cultural background educating students on different cultures, stating "I mean if you know about your culture why should someone else from a different race tell you about your own culture". One Latinx student indicated that it was important that school counselors help students navigate between the two cultures. Students also indicated that they thought it was important for school counselors to recognize or discuss the impact culture on their everyday. One student wrote about the importance of school counselors encouraging students to persevere and not view culture as a barrier to success. The student wrote school counselors can help students "not let the judgement of others towards you affect you in any way, stopping you from doing what you want to do".

Another student recognized how culture and family background can impact academic and career domains, writing "I think they [school counselors] should comprehend that in the Hispanic culture it is sometimes different because most of the Hispanic parents did not attend college and they expect their children to and sometimes students have to manage a job as well to help the family at home". Additionally, a student wrote how the school counselor should be aware of differences in "cultural rules…and how parents react to certain things and what is different from my culture". A smaller percentage of Latinx students felt that school counselors should not discuss, stating culture is something that should be left to parents and family.

Discussion

The purpose of this research study was to explore Latinx high school students' perceptions of school counseling activities. Within this study, school counseling activities included the three domains identified by the National Model (ASCA, 2019) and

an additional cultural domain identified within professional literature. Students within this sample provided ample data to inform school counselors about how they can support Latinx students throughout high school. Within each of the questions, students recognized the impact on their academic and career success, in alignment with ASCA National Model (2019). Students noted the importance of school counselors in assisting students in their academic and career success. The student responses reiterated the interdependent nature of the ASCA domains as identified by Author (2017).

Results of the current study highlight how Latinx students want school counselors to discuss college and career readiness, provide information and requirements on post-graduation careers and higher education options, and to encourage them through their school experience. More than half of Latinx students in this sample indicated that school counselors should speak with them about school work. This high number of responses suggests school work is important to Latinx students and that they believe their school counselor can aid in academic success. These results are in alignment with research conducted with Latinx families. Previous researchers found that Latinx students and their parents believed education and career planning to be the greatest need for Latinx students within their community (de Anda, Franke, & Becerra, 2009; Marsico & Getch, 2009; Author, 2017). Results of the current study support previous research regarding Latinx students desire for their school counselor to provide postsecondary education information (Marsico & Getch, 2009) in addition to financial aid and scholarships information (Dulabaum, 2016). Students identified school counselors as people that could help them identify goals for their future, create plans to meet those goals, and encourage students as they work towards those goals.

Participants also noted the importance of school counselors assisting students with identity development and helping students balance culture, family, and personal issues to support academic success. Multiple students indicated they would welcome their school counselor speaking with them about the intersection of personal life and school work. Additionally, students recognized the importance of family providing the majority of personal help, unless the school counselor knows that the student's family is not supportive or if the student approaches the school counselor. This answer provides insight into how school counselors can create relationships with students that creates a sense of safety for students to seek out support. It also highlights the importance of systemic support, through which school counselors can provide parents helpful information on child development, academic needs, and career goals, and school counselors can reciprocally gain awareness of when parents are not able to provide that assistance to their students (ASCA, 2019). Olmedo (2003) noted how Latinx parents often experience discrimination when trying to involve themselves in their children's schooling, and are provided less power than other stakeholders. Monzó (2016) noted how schools often render Latinx parents powerless, potentially due to the de-valuing of diverse perspectives, cultures, and language, despite Latinx parents' desire to support their children and their educational experience. One parent noted that when calling the school they "put you on hold until they find someone who speaks Spanish…the other day they made me wait almost twenty minutes" (Pérez Carreón et al., 2005). This powerlessness, as noted by Monzó (2016), further exacerbated the divide between parent and child, as students perceived their parents as uninformed and unable to assist in their schooling. School counselors can include parents, reach out to community

groups, and attempt to broach the divide between Latinx parents and the American education system, and by doing so better support students academics, parents' self-esteem, and the parent-child relationship (Monzó, 2016).

Many Latinx students can identify with the acculturation stress of living as a minority in a racially and politically divided country. Rivas-Drake et al. (2014) suggested positive personal ethnic identities promote and protect adolescent well-being. Vela et al. (2014) identified the importance of support and inclusion on Latinx students, finding that perceived support increased academic performance. Most Latinx students in this sample indicated they thought it was important for their school counselor to help them develop pride or knowledge about their culture, to recognize or discuss the impact culture has on their everyday lives, as well as to understand the benefits of bi-culturalism. These responses align with Talleyrand and Thanh-Giang Vojtech (2019), as participants highlighted the importance of school counseling activities in addressing culture individually and systemically but also recognized school counselors' "ethical responsibility to reduce or remove the stigma" that many Latinx students experience because of their culture or immigration status (p. 5). Monzó (2016) recognized how Latinx families often internalized the discriminatory narratives and oppression they experienced, further supporting the need for schools to develop culturally inclusive curriculums and celebrate diversity in a meaningful way (Storlie & Toomey, 2016).

Students in this study also wrote about their desire to learn of other cultures and skills to be open to the cultures of their peers. Previous research indicated ethnic identity plays a supportive role among minority youth (Hoffman et al., 2019), and the results of the current study provide school counselors with culturally relevant topics to

explore. One student recognized the lack of representation within school administrations, noting the frustrations with school counselors in the dominant culture teaching students about diverse cultures. Representation is important, and something that school administrations must consider when attempting to create a culturally responsive school for all students (Atkins and Oglesby, 2019; Storlie & Toomey, 2016). School counselors can use cultural differences as an opportunity for personal learning and growth to help students thrive and "create a culture-safe environment where all students see themselves in the school" (Atkins and Oglesby, 2019, p.14).

Unfortunately, previous researchers have found that Latinx students are not satisfied with how their school counselor provided those activities (Chávez-Reyes, 2010; Malott, 2010; Author, 2017; Vela-Gude, Cavazos, Fielding, Cavazos, Campos, & Rodriguez, 2009), indicating a potential gap between services needed and services provided. Students in this study provided suggestions for how school counselors can support Latinx students in each of the domains. Students indicated a desire for school counselors to provide information on the importance of GPA, college and career opportunities, options available outside of college, such as the military, employment opportunities, and vocational college, as well as funding opportunities. Students identified a need for school counselors to assist students in learning how to minimize personal distractions to focus on school and navigate familial, cultural ,and school responsibilities. Perhaps most importantly, students indicated a desire for engagement and encouragement from their school counselors.

Limitations

This study includes several limitations. The sample utilized a readily available group of individuals who volunteered to participate in English. Further, there was a low response rate (Fink, 2003). Over six hundred surveys were distributed with only 210 completed surveys, indicating a 35.5% response rate. The low rates of completion might be a result of fear due to immigration status, or students in the current sample might have forgotten or misplaced the survey. The majority of Latinx students (n = 159, 75%) in the sample identified as seniors. Many seniors are over the age of 18, therefore, they could provide their own consent and complete the survey immediately. Younger Latinx students in the sample experienced difficulty returning the signed consent forms. With these factors in mind, generalizability of this research is limited. In addition, the majority of respondents indicated that they planned to attend college (n= 185, 88.1%), limiting the ability to generalize results to students who do not expect to attend college. A large proportion of respondents were born in the US. (n= 146, 69.5%) thus limiting the generalizability to first generation Latinx students.

While members of the research team reported experience working within school counseling settings with Latinx youth, an additional limitation includes the racial and ethnic identity of the primary researcher and coding team. Neither members of the coding team identified as Latinx. It is possible that because of their membership in the dominant culture, cultural meanings were potentially overlooked. Additionally, the research team did not use an outside auditor, which may further limit the interpretation of the data.

Implications for School Counselors and Future Research

The results of this study provide several implications for high school counselors. First, Latinx students recognized the influence of personal/social and cultural domains on their academic and career preparation. Students within this study share a desire for activities that merge their cultural and personal/social experiences with academic and career success. Students indicate school counselors can create an environment respect and understand cultural and familial differences. Additionally, school counselors can help students learn skills to enhance and encourage academic focus, while exploring the importance of establishing and maintaining positive relationships and self-image. While each question asked about a specific domain, students used their voice to share how each domain ultimately impacts their academic and career success. Their responses align with the ASCA (2019) model underscoring the role of school counselor in supporting students within the academic, personal/social, and career domains with the purpose of supporting student academic success.

The results of this study also leave several questions to consider in future research. First, in-depth interviewing of Latinx students may provide more context for the influence of their personal and social domains on their academic needs. A phenomenological study may provide more information about the academic meaning making of Latinx students during their high school careers. The results of this study can help form the interview questions. Further, researchers should consider including a Spanish-speaking researcher so that a larger breadth of data can be collected. While the students observed answered their surveys in English, it is possible that those who feel more comfortable discussing emotions and values in Spanish were unable to full

participate. Finally, future researchers may consider investigating the types of college, career, socio-emotional, and cultural learning that holds importance for these students. In doing this, researchers should consider pre and post surveys to understand student's views of school events and programs.

Conclusion

Exploring Latinx students' specific preferences regarding school counseling activities has been overlooked in the historical literature. This exploratory study represents one of the largest studies conducted on the perceptions of Latinx high school students. The insight gained from this study can allow school counselors to better address the unique needs of students, especially Latinx students. Understanding cultural norms, creating a culture of acceptance, and encouraging students to explore a myriad of educational and career opportunities can assist students in feeling heard, seen, and valued (Atkins & Oglesby, 2019). Through open dialogues, school counselors can demonstrate respect, encouragement, and the belief that all students can succeed (ASCA, 2019).

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Table 1

Demographic Characteristics

Variable		n	%	M	SD	Range
Gender	Male	94	44.8			
	Female	115	54.8			
	Other	1	.05			
Age				17.54	1.3	14-20
	14	3	1.4			
	15	13	6.2			
	16	13	6.2			
	17	41	19.5			
	18	130	61.9			
	19	9	4.3			
	20	1	0.5			
Grade level	9	8	3.8			
	10	17	8.1			
	11	26	12.4			
	12	159	75.7			
Plans to Attend College	Yes	185	88.1			
	No	6	2.9			
	Unsure	19	9.0			
Qualification for Free or Reduced lunch						
	Yes	155	73.8			
	No	44	21			
	Unsure	11	5.2			
Expects to graduate HS	Yes	204	97.1			
	No	1	0.5			
	Unsure	4	1.9			
Immigration Status	Born in the Us	146	69.5			
	Younger than 5	29	13.8			
	Between 5-10	25	11.9			
	11 or older	9	4.3			

Variable		n	%	M	SD	Range
How often Speak Spanish at School	All the time	7	3.3			
	Most of the time	24	11.4			
	Some of the time	114	54.3			
	Never	40	19.0			
	All the time	128	61.0			
How often Parents Speak Spanish	Most of the time	36	17.1			
	Some of the time	29	13.8			
	Never	16	7.6			
Mother born in US	Yes	44	21.0			
	No	65	78.6			
	Unsure	1	0.5			
Father born in US	Yes	37	17.6			
	No	170	81.0			
	Unsure	3	1.4			