Hispanic Students' Perceptions of Hispanic Student Organizations: Underutilized Campus Community

Kelly M. Torres[1]
The Chicago School, Chicago, IL, USA

Samantha Tackett
Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL, USA

Meagan Arrastia-Chisholm
Valdosta State University, Valdosta, GA, USA

Abstract: Hispanic students represent a small percentage of enrolled college students. Because underrepresented students may feel a lack of belonging, they may seek group membership in racial/ethnic student organizations. This qualitative study investigated 15 Hispanic students' reasons that they may or may not join Hispanic student organizations. Findings from this study revealed that participants' desires to engage with student organization activities were dependent on availability, friendships, sense of belonging, and perceptions of value for engagement.
Keywords: Hispanics, student organizations, higher education, qualitative research, value theory

Similar to individuals of other ethnic backgrounds, the importance of obtaining a university degree has progressively become more important for Hispanic populations. Quintana et al. (1991) previously proclaimed "for poor and working-class Hispanics, who constitute the majority of the United States Latino population, a college degree is a critical route to a secure, well-paying job" (p. 155). In 2023, the United States Census Bureau reported there were approximately 63.7 million Hispanics residing in the United States. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, n.d.), Hispanic student enrollment in higher education has increased in recent years. For example, in fall 2021, the NCES reported that nearly 3.7 million Hispanic students were enrolled in degree-granting postsecondary institutions, making up 21% of all students enrolled in these institutions. Additionally, the Pew Research Center (2022) reported that Hispanic student enrollment has continued to increase resulting in approximately three in 10 Hispanics adults aged 18 to 24 being enrolled in college. However, although there is an influx in Hispanic student enrollment, there are relatively small percentages of Hispanics enrolled in colleges compared to ethnic groups (e.g., 32% Hispanics compared to 33% Blacks and 58% Asians) (Mora, 2022). Additionally, Weissman (2023) reported that time-to-completion rates for Hispanic students is

---

[1] Corresponding author; is the Department Chair of the Educational Psychology and Technology program at The Chicago School. 325 N. Wells Street, Chicago, IL 60654. Phone: (312) 488-6028. Email: ktorres@thechicagoschool.edu

approximately six years which is higher than other ethnic groups. The term Hispanic is used in this study based on participant identification and methodological considerations. It serves as an inclusive, pan-ethnic identifier for Spanish-speaking students and aligns with institutional terminology, helping to ensure clarity, comparability with prior research, and relevance to students in Hispanic Study Organizations, while acknowledging that other identifiers (e.g., Latino, Latinx, Latine) may also be appropriate (Miranda et al., 2023; Noe- Bustamante et al., 2024).

Enrollment and Persistent Challenges for Hispanic College Students

Hispanic student *enrollment* increases are also reflected in their *graduation* rates. However, Hispanic college students typically take longer to obtain an undergraduate degree in comparison to other student populations (Santiago et al., 2023; Tate, 2017). That is, on average, Hispanic students spend six years or more on undergraduate degree completion in comparison to White students who complete their degree in four to five years (National Center for Education Statistics 2019; Postsecondary National Policy Institute 2023; Tate, 2017). In the 2020-2021 academic year, the NCES reported that the six-year graduation rate for Hispanic students who began their postsecondary education in fall 2013 was 56%, which is an increase from 53% for those who began in the prior cohort of fall 2008. They further highlighted that 18% of all bachelor's degrees were conferred to Hispanic students.

Despite the increase in Hispanic enrollment in higher education, there are persistent challenges that need to be addressed. One concern faced by Hispanic students in higher education is financial barriers that pose a formidable hurdle for many Hispanic students aspiring to pursue a post-secondary degree and/or professional credentials. A substantial proportion of Hispanic students are from low-income families, grappling with the daunting burden of soaring tuition costs and a lack of access to essential financial aid resources. These financial constraints can deter them from pursuing their educational dreams, limiting their opportunities for personal and professional growth (Gandara, 1995; Mora, 2022; Tackett et al., 2024). Language barriers also constitute another significant hurdle for Hispanic students. Many of these Hispanic college students originate from households where Spanish is the primary language. Consequently, McCallen and Johnson (2020) shared that Hispanic students, especially first-generation students, experience additional challenges stemming from understanding the English language that result in difficulties comprehending instruction in higher education institutions. This language barrier not only impacts their academic performance but also hinders effective communication and integration into the college community (Arrastia-Chisholm et al., 2021).

Cultural barriers also play a crucial role in the experiences of Hispanic students in university settings. The underrepresentation of Hispanic faculty and staff within academic institutions can create a sense of isolation and disconnect for these students. Indeed, Banks and Dohy (2019) recommended that universities develop initiatives focused on hiring qualified faculty from different backgrounds and cultures since these focuses are essential in further creating inclusive learning environments. Chernosky and Juarez (2025) also discovered that despite higher levels of Hispanic degree attainment there is still a significant need for culturally responsive mentorship and institutional support to enhance Hispanic student academic success. Furthermore, a lack of understanding of students' cultural backgrounds can lead to feelings of marginalization and hinder their ability to engage fully in the college environment. Navigating a new educational climate coupled with a lack of a sense of belonging creates obstacles (e.g., cultural mismatches, social relationships, academic adjustments) that are difficult for students to overcome (Arrastia-Chisholm, 2020; Arrastia-Chisholm et al., 2021; Rodriguez et al., 2019; Tackett et al.,

2024). However, fostering cultural inclusivity promotes belongingness by helping students from diverse backgrounds feel valued, respected, and connected (Chavkin & Williams, 1989; Moll et al., 2009).

Student Organizations

One problem found on university campuses is that minority students are less likely to express satisfaction with their experiences (Hussain & Jones, 2021; Lewis et al., 2019; McGlynn, 2010) and are less likely to report feelings of belongingness and community (Duran et al., 2020; Ostrove & Long, 2007; Tackett et al., 2024). Additionally, non-dominant student populations interact less often with university faculty members and staff, infrequently hold leadership positions, and hold lower status leadership positions in campus organizations and clubs (McGlynn, 2010; Stephens et al., 2012). This overall pattern is another risk for minority student retention and college success (Swail et al., 2003). Yet, students who hold leadership positions in student organizations feel more committed to their institution and are less likely to discontinue enrollment (Harper & Quaye, 2014; Kuh, 2008a, 2008b, 2016). In general, students reported peer leadership experiences on campus (e.g., academic tutor, residence hall, orientation facilitator, visitors' guide) as highly beneficial to their personal development and instrumental to becoming a member of the campus community (Keup, 2016). Students' peer leadership experiences during college enrollment are recognized as a high impact practice for student engagement (Kuh, 2008a, 2008b, 2016) related to service-, collaborative-, and community-focused learning experiences.

During this transitional phase from home to college, Hispanic students may explore their ethnicity, developing a greater understanding of their cultural background and its meaningfulness to them (Maramba & Velasquez, 2012). Hispanic student organizations in universities can provide a range of benefits to their members (Delgado-Romero et al., 2004; Luedke, 2019; Simpson & Bista, 2021). For instance, these organizations can provide a supportive community for students to connect with others who share their cultural background, history, and values. They also can offer tutoring, mentorship, and other academic support services to help students succeed in their studies. Students who participate in student organizations have also consistently reported higher levels of sense of belonging on their university campuses (Dueñas & Gloria, 2020; Trolian, 2019). Most importantly Hispanic student organizations in universities can play a crucial role in supporting the achievement and development of Hispanic students and contributing to a more diverse and inclusive higher education landscape.

Theoretical Framework

The core idea of expectancy value theory is that individuals evaluate the potential outcomes of their choices by considering both the expectancy of success and the value of the expected outcomes. The theory suggests that people are more likely to engage in a behavior when they believe it is likely to lead to a highly valued outcome (Eccles, 1983). Eccles and Wigfield (2020) explained that this theory centers on achievement-related choices, persistence, performance, and engagement in chosen activities. For example, in education, students are more likely to put effort into their studies if they believe that their academic efforts (expectancy) will result in desired grades (value). In career choices, individuals may pursue a particular profession if they expect success and find the career personally rewarding (Geogan et al., 2021).

Expectancy value theory has been applied to various domains, including education, career decision-making, health behavior, and consumer choices. The exploration of this theory in the context of Hispanic student organizations offers a unique insight into how cultural identity, a sense of belonging, and perceived relevance of participation impact students' levels of motivation, engagement, and persistence within their academic communities (Santa-Ramirez, 2022). Accordingly, the inclusion of expectancy value theory offers a theoretically meaningful context for examining culturally specific spaces that enhance both the perceived value and expectancy of academic success for students (Seals, 2016; Eccles & Wigfield, 2023). Specifically, Hispanic student organizations allow students to engage with peers who share similar cultural backgrounds, providing validation of their identity, social support, and mentoring opportunities (Alcocer & Martinez, 2017). This environment increases the subjective value of participation in campus life and strengthens students' confidence in navigating academic and social challenges. While broader institutional support may offer general resources, they often lack the targeted cultural relevance and relational reinforcement (Delgado-Guerrero & Gloria, 2025). Thus, Hispanic student organizations may serve as vital social communities where cultural identity, belonging, and skill development intersect, illustrating how culturally specific student organizations can directly influence motivation, engagement, and persistence within higher education (Martinez-Cortes, 2024).

When we examine student organizations through this lens, we see that students are more likely to join student organizations when they feel competent in contributing effectively to the group and anticipate various positive outcomes, such as personal growth, skill development, social connections, or leadership opportunities (Jones & Giles, 2022). Further, the theory acknowledges that students weigh these factors against the perceived costs (e.g., time commitments) when deciding to participate (Beymer, et al., 2023; Flake et al., 2015; Jones & Giles, 2022; Munoz et al., 2016). Therefore, to better understand how Hispanic students adjust to their new educational experiences at a predominately White public university located in the southeast United States, a qualitative research study was conducted to explore the following questions:

- What factors influence students to join Hispanic student organizations?
- What factors influence Hispanic students' perceptions of their university experiences?

Methods

This study investigated Hispanic students enrolled in a public university located in north Florida where approximately 21% of the current student enrollment identified as Hispanic. The purpose of this study was to investigate how students perceived Hispanic student organizations and their overall university experiences. Participants completed individual, semi-structured interview sessions that were approximately one hour in length. Data were coded for components of expectancy value theory as well as open coded through a phenomenology qualitative framework. This method was selected to develop an understanding of individuals' lived experiences (Esposito & Evans-Winters, 2021; Matias, 2021; Neubauer et al., 2019; Rossman & Rallis, 2003). In phenomenological inquiry there is an assumption that there is an essence among participants' shared experiences (Matias, 2021; Patton, 2002); therefore, our intention was to study individual experiences to create a description of the universal essence (Esposito & Evans-Winters, 2021; van Manen, 1990) of the phenomenon among students who identify with the minority Hispanic or Hispanic related ethnic identities (e.g., Chicano, Latina, Latino, Latinx). Specifically, phenomenology often involves conducting in-depth interviews or focus groups with individuals who have experienced the phenomenon in question. These interviews typically focus on the

individuals' subjective experiences, thoughts, and emotions related to the phenomenon, and aim to identify the key themes or patterns that emerge across these experiences.

Participants

Upon receipt of institutional review board approval, participants were recruited for this research via flyers posted within the Hispanic student organization common space on campus and through research study overviews shared within Spanish heritage language classes. A total of 15 participants were interviewed for this research. To ensure anonymity in this study, pseudonyms were utilized for participant names. Participants' ethnicities included: Colombian (n =2), Costa Rican (n 1), Cuban (n =4), Dominican (n =1), Honduran (n=1), Peruvian (n =1), Mexican (n =3), Puerto Rican (n =1), and Puerto Rican/Caucasian (n =1). All participants were completing undergraduate programs. The majority (n =14) had moved away from home (central Florida n =3; south Florida n =11) to pursue their studies in higher education.

Analysis

All interview data were transcribed verbatim. To ensure our study's accuracy, credibility, and validity, we incorporated member checks (Esposito & Evans, 2021; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) by emailing each participant their interview transcript. Eleven participants responded that their interview transcript appeared accurate, and four participants provided feedback and/or further information. Further, peer debriefing procedures were also conducted and included consultation with research peers to review data, discuss emerging themes, and challenge potential biases in interpretation. Stanley (2023) conveyed that the inclusion of these research strategies collectively strengthens the rigor, credibility, and transparency of qualitive studies.

To provide both theoretical and experiential insights, this study employed a dual coding approach combining expectancy value theory deductive coding with phenomenological open coding. Deductive coding was utilized for identifying components of expectancy value theory (Eccles & Wigfield, 2020; Flake et al., 2015; Wigfield, 1994; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000), while open coding allowed themes such as belonging, time constraints, and cultural identity to emerge organically from participants' narratives. This approach ensured that the analysis captured both the motivational mechanisms predicted by expectancy value theory and the contextual factors influencing Hispanic students' engagement in student organizations. When coding for components of the expectancy value theory, we used an ad hoc list of codes (e.g., IAV, UV, Cost; see Table 1). The first inter-coder reliability score for ad hoc coding resulted in .64. However, after deliberations and discussions regarding the data and codes, the second round of analysis resulted in an inter-coder reliability of .91. The open coding for themes was discussion based and not measured with an inter-coder reliability score.
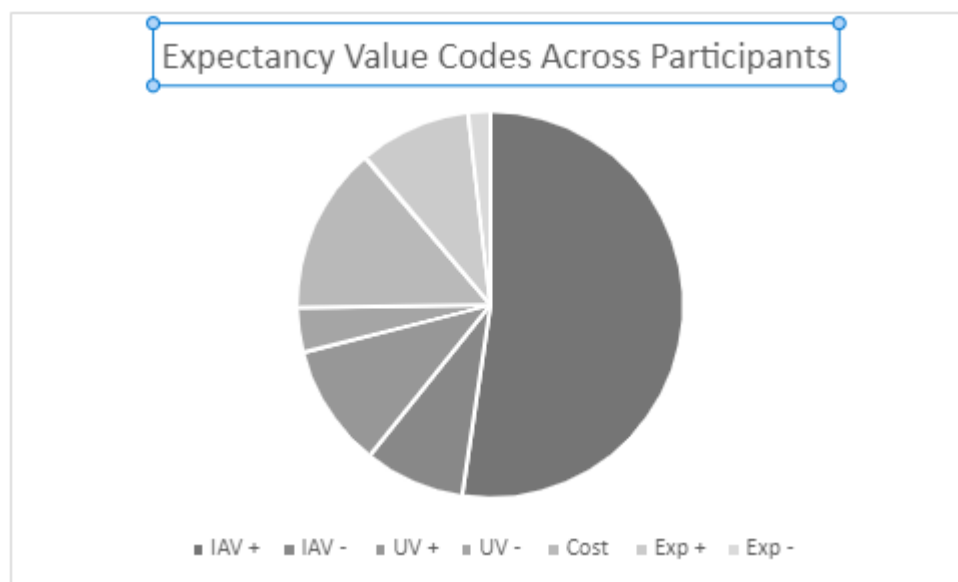
Table 1
Expectancy Value Theory Codes

EVT Codes	Description
Expectancy (+ and – Valence): "beliefs about how well they will do on upcoming tasks, either in the immediate or longer-term future" (Eccles & Wigfield, 2001, p. 70).	How well do think you will do in Spanish? How good would you be at learning something new in Spanish? How well do you network with other students/Latinos?
Subjective Task Value	
Incentive and Attainment Value (+ and – Valence): "the importance of doing well on a given task" (p. 72).	It is value to be part of an org. I want to be part of an org. Membership is important.
Utility Value (+ and – Valence): "how a task fits into an individual's future plans" (p. 73).	Would you get anything out of joining an org? Would joining an org help you learn Spanish? Would joining help network for future job?
Cost: "how the decision to engage in one activity (e.g., doing schoolwork) limits access to other activities (e.g., calling friends), assessments of how much effort will be taken to accomplish the activity, and its emotional cost" (Flake et al., 2015, p. 73).	Task effort cost: It is too much effort to join an org. Outside effort cost: I have too many other orgs. I have too many other responsibilities that I am unable to put un the effort that is necessary for an org. Loss of valued alternatives cost: I have to sacrifice too much for an org. Emotional cost: The org is too stressful.

Results

Expectancy Value and Cost Results

When applying the ad hoc categories from the expectancy value theory (e.g., incentive and attainment value, utility value, cost), we identified students' perceived value and cost for participation with Hispanic student organizations. More instances were found in the interviews of students describing a positive expectancy for joining Hispanic student organizations (9%) as compared to negative expectancy (2%; see Figure 1). In other words, when it came to the use of Spanish and the presence of Hispanic culture, participants expressed looking forward to being around other Hispanic students more often than they expressed disinterest.

In fact, the majority of the students' statements (54%) about participation with Hispanic student organizations focused on their positive instrumental attainment value for developing friendships. For example, Camilla shared that being with people who spoke Spanish and having similar ethnicity/cultural heritage was important. Likewise, Camilla, Jose, Lucia, and Willa indicated that these organizations had fun and/or interesting activities. Overall, joining and being members of Hispanic student organizations seemed important to these participants.

Figure 1

Expectancy Value Codes across Participants.

Note: IAV+ = High Incentive and Attainment Value; IAV- = Low Incentive and Attainment Value; UV+ = High Utility Value; UV- = Low Utility Value; Cost = Opportunity Cost; Exp+ = Positive Expectancy; Exp- = Negative Expectancy

The primary reason reported by students for *not participating* in Hispanic student organizations was due to a perceived cost (14%). For example, they identified conflicts with time commitment where engaging with the Hispanic student organization took time away from other valuable activities such as studying, class enrollment options, and work schedules. Similarly, a few identified task effort cost or emotional cost being too much for the perceived value of participating in the Hispanic student organization (e.g., not fitting well with others in the organization. Specifically, Irene, Daniela, and Mayra shared that the students in the organization had interests, backgrounds, or social goals that were too different from their own. For example, Mayra's social goal was to find and invest in a romantic relationship whereas Willa was interested in developing professional connections rather than hanging out with people. Furthermore, Willa and Daniela expressed a lack of instrumental or utility value for participation with the Hispanic student organization on their campus because the other members of the Hispanic student organization did not speak Spanish. Willa and Daniela both had a personal interest in finding a place on campus where they could communicate in their first language with peers (Torres et al., 2019).

At least 10% of the students' statements referenced high utility value for participation in specific Hispanic student organizations because it was valuable for their future, good to list on a resume, and for professional networking. Likewise, 4% of the students' statements referenced non-participation because of low utility value (e.g.., Sebastian shared lack of cultural and language value) in that it was not valuable for their future professional goals, "Because I'm definitely not going to want to spend an hour doing something that's not going to benefit me at least" (Willa). In other words, at the time of the interview the future benefits of membership or participation in an Hispanic student organization were not apparent to these students.

Hispanic Student Experience

Without using the ad hoc labels for the expectancy value theory, we identified four patterns across the participants' responses. As summarized in Table 2 *Hispanic Student Experiences*, four common themes were found among participants in this study: lack of time, friendships, sense of belonging, and college experience. The following subsections provide a more descriptive overview of each of these themes.

Table 2
Hispanic Student Experiences

Names	Time	Friendship	Belonging	College
Camilla	•	•	•	•
Irene				•
Jose	•			•
Lucia		•	•	•
Sebastian	•		•	•
Marisol				•
Daria	•	•	•	•
Mary		•		•
Alejandro	•	•		•
Leo				•
Carmen	•		•	•
Daniela		•	•	•
Jordana	•	•		•
Mayra		•		•
Willa	•	•		•

Lack of Time

Joining a university student organization can be a valuable experience for students, offering opportunities to build social networks, develop leadership skills, and engage in meaningful activities. However, many students may struggle to balance their involvement in student organizations with the demands of academic coursework and other responsibilities, leading to a lack of time to fully participate in these organizations. Most participants (*n*=8) reported that they did not join an Hispanic student organization since they lacked extra time to devote to participating in these types of groups. One participant exclaimed "I barely have time for my homework since I work and take five classes." (Daniela) These students, while intrigued by the prospect of becoming part of such organizations, found themselves constrained by the numerous commitments they juggled daily, including academic pursuits, employment responsibilities, and personal obligations. These individuals expressed the very real challenges of carving out the necessary time for active involvement in student organization activities, a sentiment that resonates with countless students facing similar dilemmas.

Although many students proclaimed that they did not have time to join a student organization, there were two participants who expressed interest. These two participants believed that membership in student organizations would help them feel more connected to others with

similar cultural/ethnic backgrounds and dissipate their feelings of loneliness. Particularly, they conveyed that becoming a part of these organizations would not only help them forge meaningful connections but also alleviate the pangs of loneliness that sometimes accompany the college experience. This sentiment was highlighted by a participant stating that "I feel so lonely being away from home and call my family every day." (Daria) For them, the potential benefits of belonging to an Hispanic student organization outweighed the challenges of time management and competing commitments. This dichotomy of perspectives underscores the complex interplay between student organizations and the multifaceted lives of college students. It highlights the pivotal role that time management and personal motivations play in shaping students' decisions regarding extracurricular involvement. Understanding these dynamics can inform universities and student organizations in tailoring their strategies to accommodate the diverse needs and aspirations of their student body, ultimately creating a more inclusive and supportive campus environment.

Friendships

University student organizations serve an important role in helping students build and maintain friendships during their college years. These organizations offer opportunities for students to connect with others who share similar interests, passions, and goals, and to form social networks that can be an important source of support and camaraderie. These organizations provide a supportive and welcoming environment for students to bond, share experiences, and develop lasting friendships. A notable finding was that a majority of participants (n=9) did not actively seek out student organizations. This was primarily because they had already cultivated new friendships through other means, such as through their classes, living arrangements, or extracurricular activities unrelated to formal organizations. This observation underscores that college friendships can form organically through physical proximity and other various channels, making involvement in student organizations just one of many pathways to building social connections. In contrast to those who had already established friendships, four participants expressed a clear intent to join a student organization, particularly an Hispanic student organization, with the explicit goal of developing new friendships. For them, membership was a means to broaden their social circles and potentially deepen their connections with peers who shared their cultural background. A participant indicated that "joining the student organization could help me connect with others who are like me." (Carmen). Additionally, two participants mentioned that they joined with the specific aim of improving their proficiency in the Spanish language, highlighting the dual benefit of enhancing language skills while forming friendships. For example, a participant voiced "I really need to improve my Spanish and could probably practice [my Spanish] if I joined the student group." (Lucia)

Interestingly, one participant voiced disappointment with their experience in an Hispanic student organization, citing a challenge in connecting with fellow members due to a lack of shared language proficiency. She complained that "the other students in the organization didn't even speak Spanish. Everyone was always talking in English." (Irene). This underscores the importance of effective communication and common interests within student organizations to facilitate the formation of meaningful connections. It also highlights the need for organizations to address potential barriers to inclusivity, such as language differences. Despite challenges, it is noteworthy that two participants mentioned enjoying their participation in an Hispanic student organization. This suggests that, when student organizations successfully align with individuals' interests and goals, they can indeed serve as sources of enjoyment, personal growth, and positive social

experiences. These findings emphasize the multifaceted roles of student organizations. While they can be instrumental in helping students develop friendships and achieve specific goals, they are not the sole avenue for social connections. Student organizations can benefit from creating welcoming and inclusive environments and aligning their activities with the interests and needs of their members.

Sense of Belonging

Student organizations emerge as powerful agents in cultivating a profound sense of belonging among Hispanic students. These organizations offer a unique opportunity for individuals with shared cultural backgrounds and experiences to connect, creating an atmosphere where students feel less isolated and more understood. This sense of belonging is not only pivotal for their academic success but also crucial for their overall well-being and emotional fulfillment during their college journey. Particularly, student organizations help foster a sense of belonging for Hispanic students by providing a sense of community and support. For example, participants voiced that student organizations can offer opportunities for them to connect with other Hispanic students who share similar cultural backgrounds and experiences. These shared cultural bonds forge strong connections and a sense of kinship, making students feel less alone in a sometimes-unfamiliar academic environment.

This emotional connection can be a source of strength and resilience, providing crucial support during the challenges of college life. These connections can help students feel less isolated and more understood and can provide a sense of belonging that is critical to academic success and well-being. The positive impact of student organizations on participants' college experiences was evident, with two students highlighting how their membership significantly enriched their time at the institution. These experiences not only fostered a greater sense of belonging but also enhanced their overall enjoyment of college life. Specifically, these two students conveyed that their membership in the student organization helped to provide a greater sense of belonging at the institution. Specifically, one participant indicated,

> "I spend a lot of my free time with the friends that I met in the student organization. We go dancing salsa together and we even went camping. I have enjoyed my college experiences more since I started to hang out at the student organization office."

Their comments illustrate how involvement in student organizations can contribute to a more vibrant and fulfilling college experience.

While student organizations played a significant role in fostering belonging for some participants, it is noteworthy that others found a sense of connection and belonging through alternative approaches. Three participants mentioned that they felt a strong sense of belonging by attending campus events with friends from their hometown, who had also enrolled at the college. This highlights that multiple paths to belonging exist, and student organizations are just one of several options for building a sense of community and connection. These participants (n=3) felt a sense of belonging by attending campus events with hometown friends who were also at the college, stating, "many of my friends moved here from Miami so I feel a sense of belonging without needing to join a student organization." These findings emphasize the importance of student organizations in providing spaces for cultural affinity and support, particularly for minority and ethnic groups. Universities can use this knowledge to further enhance the support and resources available to such organizations, ensuring they continue to be hubs of belonging and camaraderie. Moreover, institutions can leverage this insight to develop diverse campus events and initiatives

that cater to a wide range of student needs and preferences when it comes to fostering a sense of belonging.

Perceptions of College Experience

Overall, the majority of participants experienced a relatively easy transition to their new college environments. They expressed satisfaction with their college experiences, characterized by excitement about being in a new place, positive interactions with peers, and enthusiasm for their academic pursuits. This sentiment speaks to the resilience and adaptability of these students, who embraced their college journeys with a positive outlook. However, there were two participants who voiced feelings of loneliness due to the difficulties they experienced in developing new friendships. They grappled with the challenge of establishing new friendships, which can be a common struggle for many Hispanic college students, particularly when navigating a predominantly White institution. One participant's limited knowledge about Hispanic student organizations and their benefits highlighted the importance of effective communication and outreach efforts by such organizations to ensure that students are aware of the resources available to them. Although one participant shared her frustrations with trying to "fit into" a predominately White institution, she had not actively sought group membership in the Hispanic student organization. In fact, she had limited knowledge about the Hispanic student organizations, their benefits, and types of events that they sponsored.

There were also five participants who described their initial college-going experiences as a culture shock in which they felt conspicuously different from their White peers initially contributing to feelings of being an outsider. This sense of cultural disparity was further exacerbated by experiences of being stared at or misunderstood when speaking their native language. These feelings of difference underscore the importance of fostering inclusivity and cultural sensitivity on college campuses to create environments where students from diverse backgrounds feel valued and respected. One participant even expressed a specific frustration with her White peers, "they are always staring at me when I speak Spanish on the phone. I mean I don't understand why they are looking at me, it's not like I am talking about them."

Eight participants felt that they had adjusted well to their new environments and explained that college had been a "positive" experience for them. They described excitement in being in a new place and enjoyed their newfound friendships and their courses of study. Two participants further highlighted that they had received mentorship experiences from faculty, which had further strengthened their positive college-going experiences. These findings offer a nuanced understanding of the college transition experiences of Hispanic students, revealing both the triumphs and tribulations they encounter. While many students adapt well to their new environments, others face challenges related to loneliness, cultural differences, and a lack of awareness regarding available support resources. These insights underscore the need for proactive efforts by colleges and universities to foster inclusive and culturally sensitive environments while providing effective communication about available support structures, including student organizations and faculty mentorship programs, to help all students thrive during their college journeys.

Conclusions

Research has shown that involvement in university student organizations can positively impact students' academic success, career readiness, and social well-being (Foubert & Grainger, 2006; King et al., 2020; Sahin-Kiralp & Ummanel, 2023; Shine et al., 2021; Smith & Chenoweth, 2015). However, in our study, we found that Hispanic students are less likely to participate in student organizations, which may hinder their academic and social success. Students who experience a negative campus climate often build counterspaces to help them navigate their multiple spaces which could include their homes, campus, community, and online (Keel, 2020; Luedke, 2018; Tackett et al.). By bridging the gap between these contexts, minority students experience a more positive college transition process.

This integration not only enhances their sense of belonging but also contributes to a more inclusive and enriching campus environment for all students. When students feel a lack of a sense of belonging, they often describe racial and ethnic tensions and academic difficulties (Gopalan et al., 2022; Luedke, 2018; Morris et al., 2020). In contrast, ethnic socialization helps shape students' cultural identities, self-esteem, and coping strategies (Bernal et al., 1990). The development of ethnically- and culturally-based student organizations can offset these feelings and offer safe counterspaces on campuses and in digital spaces (Keel, 2020; Gomez & Cabrera, 2023). By understanding the expectations and values that influence Hispanic students' involvement in student organizations, universities can create more targeted support programs to enhance the academic and social success of their students. Further, universities can engage in hiring practices that further diversify their faculty, providing mentorship experiences for students with instructors who further understand and can relate to their cultural backgrounds (Cavanaugh & Green, 2020; Bradley et al., 2022; Hofstra et al., 2022; Llamas et al., 2019). Faculty mentorship provides a key role in student persistence and completion of their college degrees (Rodriguez et al., 2019).

Based on the findings of this study, students who join Hispanic student organizations may be able to develop friendships with others who possess similar cultural backgrounds. Since the college transition process can provide students the opportunity to further explore their own and other cultures, beliefs, religions; and expand their content knowledge; student organization membership may help students to maintain or strengthen their ethnic backgrounds (Bennett & Okinaka, 1990; Gutierrez- Serrano et al., 2022). Further, based on the costs associated with joining a Hispanic student organization, it is clear that college students have many time constraints that further impact their free time pursuits and ability to join student organizations. For example, several participants in this study shared that although they would like to join the Hispanic student organization, they experienced time constraints in their ability to do so. Geographic factors may also impact a student's desire to join a student organization. Particularly, students who move from predominately Hispanic communities, whose friends do not relocate to the same predominately White institution may benefit from group membership in these types of organizations. As was found in this study, participants' feelings of loneliness and a lack of belonging often stemmed from their limited friendships on campus and their association of being "different" from most other students enrolled at the institution with predominantly White student enrollment.

Significance in Higher Education

Understanding the expectations and values that influence Hispanic student participation in student organizations is essential for developing targeted support programs that promote membership and engagement. By identifying the unique needs and motivations of these students,

higher educational professionals can design interventions that enhance their involvement and foster a stronger sense of community. Mentorship and faculty engagement also play a critical role in supporting student success. Diverse faculty who can relate to students' cultural experiences provide invaluable guidance, promoting persistence, retention, and degree completion (Cavanaugh & Green, 2020; Bradley et al., 2022; Hofstra et al., 2022; Llamas et al., 2019; Peltier et al., 2026; Rodriguez et al., 2019).

Institutions must also address structural barriers that may limit participation, including time constraints, financial challenges, and geographic limitations. Implementing strategies such as flexible meeting times, virtual engagement options, and financial support for student involvement can help mitigate these obstacles. Additionally, fostering inclusive campus environments through training, programming, and community-building initiatives can enhance students' sense of belonging and motivate them to participate in student organizations. Costello et al. (2022) further highlighted the need for creating spaces where students feel valued, supported, and connected particularly for underrepresented populations since this results in strengthening the campus community as a whole.

Supporting Hispanic student engagement in student organizations has far-reaching implications for equity, retention, and holistic student development. Higher education institutions that prioritize culturally responsive programming, mentorship, and inclusive learning environments promote both academic and social success for underrepresented students while enriching the broader campus community (Suiter et al., 2024). By implementing targeted interventions informed by research on student engagement and cultural identity, institutions can ensure that all students have equitable opportunities to thrive academically, socially, and personally, fostering a more inclusive, supportive, and effective educational experience.

Alignment with Theoretical Framework

The application of expectancy value theory to examine the dynamics within Hispanic student organizations represents a novel contribution to higher education and motivation research. While expectancy value theory has been extensively used to explore academic motivation, career choices, and persistence among students (Eccles & Wigfield, 2020), its application to co-curricular and identity-based student organizations remains limited. Hispanic student organizations serve as critical spaces for fostering belonging, leadership development, and cultural affirmation among Hispanic students. Yet, the motivational processes that drive student engagement, leadership participation, and sustained involvement within student organizations have received little empirical attention. By employing expectancy value theory as a conceptual lens, this study sought to understand how students' beliefs about their ability to contribute (i.e., expectancy) and the value they assign to participation (i.e., intrinsic, attainment, utility, cost values) influence their decision to join, participate, and lead in Hispanic student organizations. This perspective extends traditional applications of expectancy value theory beyond academic performance to the social and cultural contexts of higher education, offering insight into how motivation interacts with cultural identity, representation, and community engagement.

Limitations

Several limitations of this study should be acknowledged. First, the study utilized a small sample size, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to broader populations. Second,

the research was conducted at a single site, specifically a Hispanic student organization on one research-intensive, public university campus, which further constrains the applicability of results to other contexts or institutions. However, as Andrade (2020) conveyed, a large majority of research utilizes convenience sampling and this type of research is necessary when sociocultural factors are examined. Third, self-selection bias may have influenced the sample, as individuals who chose to participate may have had particular interests, experiences, or comfort levels that differ from those who did not volunteer. Nevertheless, Popovic and Huecker (2023) indicated that bias is inherent in all research resulting in the need for researchers to conduct and report their findings transparently and honesty.

Bowman et al. (2015) proclaimed that underrepresented college students may be more likely to feel disconnected and isolated in institutions in comparison to their peers. This may be particularly true for students who move to new cities and states to attend colleges that are classified as predominately White institutions (Keel, 2020). Although researchers suggest that student organizations can help to provide students with a sense of belongingness and support (Gopalan & Brady, 2019; Laur et al., 2019; Museus, 2008; Von Robertson, Bravo, & Chaney, 2016), many students in this study did not seek out opportunities for group membership.

To better promote student organizations, colleges can share information about upcoming student organization events and articulate the benefits of joining these types of groups. Particularly, institutions of higher education may need to demonstrate their commitment to cultural competency by proving "that they value these students by creating and developing a climate wherein the history, culture, and heritage of these students is inherently respected, valued, and accepted" (Von Robertson et al., 2016, p. 732). In essence, higher education institutions must actively cultivate an environment where the history, culture, and heritage of all students are acknowledged, engaged, and celebrated.

References

Alcocer, L. F., & Martinez, A. (2018). Mentoring Hispanic students: A literature review. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education, 17*(4), 393-401. https://doi.org/10.1177/1538192717705700

Andrade, C. (2020). The inconvenient truth about convenience and purposive samples. *Indian Journal of Psychological Medicine, 43*(1). https://doi.org/10.1177/0253717620977000

Arrastia-Chisholm, M. C. (2020). Call me Dr. A. In F. E. Obiakor & J. Martinez (Eds.), *Latin@ voices in multicultural education: From invisibility to visibility in higher education* (pp. 93–110). Nova Science Publishers.

Arrastia-Chisholm, M.C., Tackett, S., Torres, K. M., Patel, K., Highsmith, J.W., & Mixon, K. (2021). Deployments to diplomas: An examination of academic motivation among military dependents using self-determination theory. *Georgia Journal of College Student Affairs, 37*(1), 2-25. https://doi.org/10.20429/gcpa.2021.370101

Banks, T., & Dohy, J. (2019). Mitigating barriers to persistence: A review of efforts to improve retention and graduation rates for students of color in higher education. *Higher Education Studies, 9*(1), 118-131. https://doi.org/10.5539/hes.v9n1p118

Bennett, C., & Okinaka, A. (1990). Factors related to persistence among Asian, black, Hispanic, and white undergraduates as a predominately White university: Comparisons between first and fourth year cohorts. *Urban Review*, *23*, 33-60. https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1007/BF01110631

Bernal, M., Knight, G. P., & Cota, M. K. (1990). The development of ethnic identity in Mexican-American children. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences, 12*(1). https://doi.org/10.1177/07399863900121001

Beymer, P. N., Flake, J. K., & Schmidt, J. A. (2023). Disentangling students' anticipated and experienced costs: The case for understanding both. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *115*(4), 624. https://doi.org/10.1037/edu0000789

Bowman, N., Park, J., & Denson, N. (2015). Student involvement in ethnic student organizations: Examining civic outcomes 6 years after graduation. *Research in Higher Education, 56,* 127-145. https://www.jstor.org/stable/24572008

Bradley, S. W., Garven, J. R., Wilson, W., & West, J. E. (2022). The impact of chief diversity officers on diverse faculty hiring. *Southern Economic Journal, 89*(1), 3-36. https://doi.org/10.1002/soej.12584

Cavanaugh, C., & Green, K. (2020). Training faculty search committees to improve racial and ethnic diversity in hiring. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research, 72*(4), 263-274. https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/cpb0000167

Chavkin, N. F., & Williams, D. L. (1989). Low-income parents' attitudes toward parent involvement in education. *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare, 16*(3). https://doi.org/10.15453/0191-5096.1905

Chernosky, J. M., & Juarez, E. (2025). Navigating graduate education pathways: Cultural wealth and the American dream in Hispanic students' academic aspirations. Journal of Latinos and Education. https://doi.org/10.1080/15348431.2025.2477509

Costello, M. A., Nagel, A. G., Hunt, G. L., Rivens, Hazelwood, O., Pettit, C., & Allen, J. P. (2022). Facilitating connection to enhance college student well-being: Evaluation of an experiential group program. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 16*(70), 3-4. https://doi.org/10.1002/ajcp.12601

Delgado-Guerrero, M., & Gloria, A. M. (2025). Cultivating Latinx undergraduates' belonging and persistence through relationally-based, culturally-centered, and interpersonally-specific mentorship. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice, 27*(3), 655-678. https://doi.org/10.1177/15210251231201578

Delgado-Romero, E. A., Hernandez, C., & Montero, H. (2004). Mapping the development of Hispanic/Latino/a organizations: A model at the University of Florida. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education, 3*(3), 237-253. https://doi.org/10.1177/1538192704264441

Dueñas, M., & Gloria, A. M. (2020). ¡Pertenecemos y tenemos importancia aquí! Exploring sense of belonging and mattering for first-generation and continuing-generation Latinx undergraduates. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences, 42*(1), 95-116. https://doi.org/10.1177/0739986319899734

Duran, A., Dahl, L. S., Stipeck, C., & Mayhew, M. J. (2020). A critical quantitative analysis of students' sense of belonging: Perspectives on race, generation status, and collegiate environments. *Journal of College Student Development, 61*(2), 133-153. https://doi.org/10.1353/csd.2020.0014

Eccles, J. (1983). Expectancies, values and academic behaviors. In J. T. Spence (Ed.), *Achievement and achievement motives: Psychological and sociological approaches* (pp. 75-146). Free man.

Eccles, J. S., & Wigfield, A. (2020). From expectancy-value theory to situated expectancy-value theory: A developmental social cognitive, and sociocultural perspective on motivation.

Contemporary   Educational   Psychology,   61. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cedpsych.2020.101859

Eccles, J. S., & Wigfield, A. (2023). Expectancy-value theory to situated expectancy-value theory: Reflections on the legacy of 40+ years of working together. *Motivation Science, 9*(1), 1–12. https://doi.org/10.1037/mot0000275

Esposito, J., & Evans-Winters, V. E. (2021). *Introduction to intersectional qualitative research.* Sage Publications, Inc.

Flake, J. K., Barron, K. E., Hulleman, C., McCoach, B. D., & Welsh, M. E. (2015). Measuring cost: The forgotten component of expectancy-value theory. *Contemporary educational psychology*, *41*, 232-244. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cedpsych.2015.03.002

Foubert, J. D., & Grainger, L. U. (2006). Effects of involvement in clubs and organizations on the psychosocial development of first-year and senior college students. *NASPA Journal, 43*(1), 166-182. https://www.albany.edu/involvement/documents/effects_of_involvement.pdf

Gándara, P. (1995). *Over the ivy walls: The educational mobility of low-income Chicanos.* State University of New York Press.

Goegan, L. D., Dueck, B. S., & Daniels, L. M. (2021). Are you feeling successful?: Examining postsecondary student perceptions of success with an expectancy value theory lens. *Social Psychology of Education*, *24*(4), 985-1001. https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1007/s11218-021-09641-y

Gomez, V., & Cabrera, J. (2023). Theorizing virtual counterspaces: How Latina graduate students build   community   online.   *Race   Ethnicity   and   Education,*   1-17. https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2023.2292509

Gopalan, M., & Brady, S. T. (2019). College students' sense of belonging: A national perspective. *Educational Researcher, 49*(2). https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X19897622

Gopalan, M., Linden-Carmichael, A., & Lanza, S. (2022). College students' sense of belonging and mental health amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 70*(2), 228-233. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8741285/

Gutierrez-Serrano, G., Romo, L. F., & Chagolla, D. (2022). Latina first-generation college students' motivation to persist: An attribution theory and self-determine theory perspective. *Journal   of   Latinos   and   Education,   22*(5),   2164.2177. https://doi.org/10.1080/15348431.2022.2096611

Harper, S., & Quaye, S. (2014). *Making engagement equitable for students in US higher education* (2nd ed.)*.* Routledge.

Hofstra, B., McFarland, D. A., Smith, S., & Jurgens, D. (2022). Diversifying the professoriate. *Socius, 8.* https://doi.org/10.1177/23780231221085118

Hussain, M., & Jones, J. M. (2021). Discrimination, diversity, and sense of belonging: Experiences of students of color. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education, 14*(1), 63-71. https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/dhe0000117

Jones, J. A., & Giles, E. H. (2022). Higher education outreach via student organizations: Students leading the way. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement, 26*(3), 99-115. https://openjournals.libs.uga.edu/jheoe/article/view/1600/2768

Keels, M. (2020). *Campus counterspaces: Black and Latinx students' search for community at historically White universities.* Cornell University Press.

King, A. E., McQuarrie, F. A. E., Brigham, S. M. (2021). Exploring the relationship between student success and participation in extracurricular activities. *Journal of Leisure Studies and   Recreation   Education,   36*(1-2),   42-58. https://doi.org/10.1080/1937156X.2020.1760751

Kuh, G. D. (2008a). High-impact educational practices. *Peer Review, 10*(4), 30-31. https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A203770127

Kuh, G. D. (2008b). *High-impact educational practices: What they are, who has access to them, and why they matter*. Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges & Universities.

Kuh, G. D. (2016). Making learning meaningful: Engaging students in ways that matter to them. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, *2016*(145), 49-56. https://doi.org/10.1002/tl.20174

Lau, J., Garza, T., & Garcia, H. (2019). International students in community colleges: On-campus services used and its affect on sense of belonging. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice, 4*(2), 109-121. https://doi.org/10.1080/10668926.2017.1419891

Lewis, J. A., Mendenhall, R., Ojiemwen, A., Thomas, M. Riopelle, C., Harwood, S. A., & Huntt, M. B. (2019). Racial microaggressions and sense of belonging at a historically White university. *American Behavioral Scientist, 65*(8), 1049-1071. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764219859613

Lincoln, Y.S. & Guba, E.G. (1985). Naturalistic inquiry. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Llamas, J. D., Nguyen, K., & Tran, A. G. (2019). The case for greater faculty diversity: Examining the educational impacts of student-faculty racial/ethnic match. *Race Ethnicity and Education, 24*(3), 375-391. https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2019.1679759

Luedke, C. L. (2018). "Es como una familia: Bridging emotional support with academic and professional development through the acquisition of capital in Latinx student organizations. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education, 18*(4), 372-388. https://doi.org/10.1177/1538192717751205

Maramba, D.C., & Velasquez, P. (2012). Influences of the campus experience on the ethnic identity development of students of color. *Education and Urban Society*, *44(*3), 294-317. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013124510393239

Martinez-Cortes, J. (2025). Navigating pathways of higher education: The cultural wealth of second-generation Latina immigrant students. *Journal of Latinos and Education*, 1-13. https://doi.org/10.1080/15348431.2024.2448485

Matias, C. E. (2021). *The handbook of critical theoretical research methods in education.* Routledge.

McCallen, L. S., & Johnson, H. L. (2020). The role of institutional agents in promoting higher education success among first-generation college students at a public urban university. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education, 13*(4), 320-332. https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/dhe0000143

Miranda, A. R., Perez-Brumer, A., & Charlton, B. (2023). Latino? Latinx? Latine? A call for inclusive categories in epidemiological research. *American Journal of Epidemiology, 192*(12), 1929-1932. https://doi.org/10.1093/aje/kwad149

Moll, L. C., Amanti, C., Neff, D., Gonzalez, N. (2009). Funds of knowledge for teaching: Using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms. *Theory Into Practice, 31*(2), 132-141. https://doi.org/10.1080/00405849209543534

Mora, L. (2022). Hispanic enrollment reaches new high at four-year colleges in the U.S., but affordability remains an obstacle. *Pew Research Report.* https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2022/10/07/hispanic-enrollment-reaches-new-high-at-four-year-colleges-in-the-u-s-but-affordability-remains-an-obstacle/

Morris, K. S., Seaton, E. K., Iida, M., & Johnson, S. L., (2020). Racial discrimination stress, school belonging, and school racial composition on academic attitudes and beliefs among Black youth. *Social Sciences, 9*(11). 191. https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci9110191

Munoz, L., Miller, R., & Poole, S. M. (2016). Professional student organizations and experiential learning activities: What drives student intentions to participate?. *Journal of Education for Business*, *91*(1), 45-51.

Museus, S. (2008). The role of ethnic student organizations in fostering African American and Asian American students' cultural adjustment and membership at predominately White institutions. *Journal of College Student Development, 49,* 568-586. https://doi.org/10.1353/csd.0.0039

National Center for Education Statistics (n.d.). *Fast facts.* https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=1142

National Center for Education Statistics (2019). *Postsecondary graduation rates.* https://nces.ed.gov/programs/raceindicators/indicator_red.asp

Neubauer, B. E., Witkop, C. T., & Varpio, L. (2019). How phenomenology can help us learn from the experience of others. *Perspectives on Medical Education, 8,* 90-97. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40037-019-0509-2

Noe-Bustamante, L., Martinez, G., & Lopez, M. H. (2024). U.S. Hispanics' preferences among pan-ethnic terms. Pew Research Center. https://www.pewresearch.org/race-and-ethnicity/2024/09/12/u-s-hispanics-preferences-among-pan-ethnic-terms/

Ostrove, J., & Long, S, (2007). Social class and belonging: Implications for college adjustment. *Review of Higher Education*, *30*, 363–389. https://doi.org/10.1353/rhe.2007.0028

Patton, M.Q. (2002). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods*. (3rd ed.). Sage.

Peltier, R., Miller, E., Anderson, T., & Langlais, M. (2026). Autoimmune Diseases and College Students' Academic Performance and Mental Health: A Qualitative Examination. *American Journal of Qualitative Research, 10*(1), 163-181. https://doi.org/10.29333/ajqr/17386

Popovic, A., & Huecker, M. R. (2023). Study bias. *National Library of Medicine.* https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK574513/

Postsecondary National Policy Institute (2023). *Latino students in higher education.* https://pnpi.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/LatinoStudents_FactSheet_Apr25.pdf

Quintana, S. M., Vogel, M. C., & Ybarra, V. C. (1991). Meta-analysis of Latino students' adjustment in higher education. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences, 13*(2), 155-168. https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1177/07399863910132003

Santa-Ramirez, S. (2022). A sense of belonging: The people and counterspaces Latinx undocu/DACAmented collegians use to persist. *Education Sciences, 12*(10), 691. https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci12100691

Santiago, D., Labandera, E., & Nour, S. R. (2023). Latino college completion. *Excelencia in Education.* 1-114.

Seals, C. (2016). Expectancy value theory and racial opportunity cost: Racializing values in motivation theory. *Urban Education Research & Policy Annuals, 4*(2). https://doi.org/10.55370/uerpa.v4i2.597

ahin Kıralp, F. S., & Ummanel, A. (2023). Examination of Preschool Children's Social Emotional Skills & Resilience Levels and Father-Child Communication. *Asian Journal of Instruction, 11*(Special Issue), 92-110. https://doi.org/10.47215/aji.1299889

Shine, D., Britton, A., Wellington, D. S., Hellkamp, K., Britton, Z., & Moore, K. (2021). The role of mattering and institutional resources on college student well-being. *College Student Journal, 55*(3), 281-292.

Simpson, J., & Bista, K. (2021). Examining the minority students' involvements and experiences in cultural clubs and organizations at community colleges. *Community College of Journal of Research and Practice, 47*(2), 78-89. https://doi.org/10.1080/10668926.2021.1934753

Smith, L. J., & Chenoweth, J. D. (2015). The contributions of student organization involvement to students' self-assessments of their leadership traits and relational behaviors. *American Journal of Business Education, 8*(4), 279-288.

Stephens, N., Fryberg, S., Markus, H., Johnson, C., & Covarrubias, R. (2012). Unseen disadvantage: How American universities' focus on independence undermines the academic performance of first-generation college students. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 102* (6), 1178-1197. https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/a0027143

Suiter, S., Byars-Winston, A., Sanchieznieto, F., Pfund, C., & Sealy, L. (2024). Utilizing mentorship education to promote a culturally responsive research training environment in the biomedical sciences. *PLoS One, 19*(8). https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0291221

Swail, W., Redd, K., & Perna, L. (2003). *Retaining minority students in higher education: A framework for success*. ASHE Higher Education Report, *30*(2). Jossey-Bass.

Tackett, S., Torres, K. M., & Arrastía-Chisholm, M. (2024). First-year Latinas' acculturation experiences while enrolled in a predominantly White institution: Four narratives. *Journal of Latinos and Education, 23*(2), 692-707. https://doi.org/10.1080/15348431.2023.2180363

Tate, E. (2017). Graduation rates and race. *Inside Higher Ed.* https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2017/04/26/college-completion-rates-vary-race-and-ethnicity-report-finds

Torres, K.M., Tackett, S., & Arrastia-Chisholm, M. (2019). Cuban American college students' perceptions surrounding their language and cultural identity. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education,* 1-16. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1538192718822324

Trolian, T. L. (2019). Predicting student involvement in the first year of college: The influence of students' precollege professional and career attitudes. *Journal of College Student Development, 60*(1), 120-127. https://doi.org/10.1353/csd.2019.0009

Von Robertson, R., Bravo, A., & Chaney, S. (2016). Racism and the experiences of Latino/a college students at a PWI (predominately White institution). *Critical Sociology, 52*(5), 715-735. https://doi.org/10.1177/0896920514532664

Weissman, S. (2023). Degree-completion gap widens for Latino students. *Inside Higher Ed.* https://www.insidehighered.com/news/quick-takes/2023/07/19/widening-degree-completion-gap-among-latino-students#:~:text=The%20six%2Dyear%20graduation%20rate,percentage%2Dpoint%20difference%20in%202018

Notes on Contributors

Kelly Torres, PhD is the Department Chair of the Educational Psychology and Technology program at The Chicago School. She has extensive experience teaching university-level courses in both online and in-person formats, covering topics such as educational psychology, foundations of education, assessment, curriculum development, linguistics, and culture. Her research focuses on integrating technology in educational settings to enhance student outcomes, as well as exploring motivational factors that influence second language learning and cultural engagement.

Samantha Tackett, PhD is faculty at Florida State University where she serves as the Director of the Proactive Referral & Engagement Program, and Assistant Director of the Academic Center for Excellence in the Division of Undergraduate Studies. In these roles, Dr. Tackett directs the university's early alert process, teaches academic recovery curriculum, consults with the university's teaching faculty, and manages student success staff. Her research interests include students' development of skills to improve their academic recovery, motivation, engagement, persistence, and resilience, and the academic experiences and retention of first-generation and other underrepresented student populations within American educational systems.

Meagan Arrastia-Chisholm, PhD, LPC is an educator, therapist, and researcher whose work centers on diverse learners and post-traumatic growth. Her professional interests include counselor and teacher education, somatic work, and the integration of reflective and experiential approaches in educational and clinical settings. As a Professor at Valdosta State University, she teaches undergraduate and graduate students where she supports student growth, well-being, and professional identity development.

ORCID

Kelly Torres, https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4374-6366
Samantha Tackett, https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2250-7972
Meagan Arrastia-Chisholm, https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5491-5554