

Understanding Sense of Belonging among Undergraduate Latino Men at Indiana University Bloomington

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This study examined the experiences of undergraduate Latino men in relation to their sense of belonging at Indiana University Bloomington (IUB). Participants discussed how being a first-generation student affected their college preparedness. Participants explained how the campus climate affected their integration into the community. Participants also shared their level of identity awareness and described the support they received. These findings can inform practice for professionals working with undergraduate Latino men as well as benefit future research and recommendations.

Higher education institutions have a responsibility to not only educate but support their students, particularly students who have been historically underrepresented in higher education. In the United States (US), the Latino community is projected to make up over 31 percent of the total US population by 2060 (United States Census Bureau, 2012). With this population growth, more members of the Latino community are likely to enter institutions of higher education. Currently, over 70 percent of the Latino population has pursued a college degree; however, only 22 percent have successfully obtained one (Excelencia in Education, 2015). Within this population there is a growing concern about the educational attainment gap between Latino men and women, which has widened over the last 20 years where over 66 percent of bachelor's degrees were earned by Latino women in 2009 (Saenz & Ponjuan, 2011). Research has also suggested that Latino men are more likely to drop out of college before graduating (Saenz & Ponjuan, 2011).

The challenges Latino men face in higher education degree attainment nationally are reflected at Indiana University Bloomington (IUB). Indiana University Institutional Research and Reporting (2015) data shows that for the IUB 2008 cohort, 77.6 percent of all students received degrees while only 68

percent of Hispanic students did. Furthermore, conversations with Lillian Casillas-Origel, Director of IUB's Latino Cultural Center (La Casa), revealed that undergraduate Latino men at IUB are disappearing in leadership roles at the cultural center and are struggling to matriculate. Given these statistics and Casillas-Origel's concern, we felt it was imperative that the field of higher education address the current needs of Latino men in order to better support them now and in the future. The following research questions were developed to facilitate conversations surrounding their experiences at IUB and how their sense of belonging might play a role in degree attainment:

1. How do undergraduate Latino men experience IUB?
2. How does sense of belonging affect their experiences?
3. In what ways do campus resources affect their sense of belonging?

This study hopes to inform higher education professionals about the specific needs of Latino men and suggest specific strategies for improving efforts to support this student population on IUB's campus.

Definition of Terms

In relevant literature, the term Hispanic and Latino are used interchangeably. This study, however, will be using the term Latino as it encompasses a broader range of individuals with cultural ties to Latin America as well as nationalities within the bounds of Latin America, which is a common practice among researchers of this population (Excelencia in Education, 2015; Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009). In terms of participant identification, students identified with either term and had the opportunity to share how they self-identify.

Literature Review

Relevant literature revealed that Latino men experience discrimination and unwelcoming environments throughout their educational experiences, which can lead to low enrollment at four-year institutions. For undergraduate Latino men enrolled in four-year institutions, positive relationships with peers and support from family members was found to contribute to their overall student success. The literature demonstrates the need for additional research on undergraduate Latino men, particularly at predominantly White, large research institutions.

Latino Men and College

A main concern for undergraduate Latino men is how the educational and emotional support they receive during their primary education affects their college experience. For example, studies have shown that Mexican American men who had experienced microaggressions, or subtle forms of racial discrimination (Nadal, Wong, Griffin, Davidoff, & Sriken, 2014) at a young age have received these negative messages from White teachers who discourage their aspirations to attend college

and White peers that narrowly categorize Latinos as unsuccessful (Cerezo, Lyda, Beristianos, Enriquez, & Conner, 2013). These challenges are important to consider in order to fully grasp how Latino men's previous educational and social environments affect their perceptions about college.

According to Nuñez (2011), the percentage of Latino students enrolling in higher education is lower compared to White students; however, the number is growing. Latino men have increased enrollment but have done so at lower rates than other racial groups. This has led to an overrepresented population of Latino men in two-year institutions (Nuñez, 2011) and a decreased probability of continuing on to pursue a four-year degree (Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009). As of 2013, less than 15 percent of Latinos aged 25 to 29 had graduated with a four-year degree (Krogstad, 2015). Research has also found that Latino men do not have high success rates when compared to Latina women. Enrollment patterns also differ, showing that the college enrollment gap between Latino men and women is widening (Oguntoyinbo, 2009).

Additionally, research emphasizes the hardships Latino men face during college. Students with underrepresented identities at public research universities more often encounter unwelcoming campus climates than their majority peers (Harper & Hurtado, 2007). Latino students have reported a lack of support from faculty and staff members, thus creating a struggle to articulate academic goals and needs (Sanchez, 2012). Likewise, environmental challenges have negative effects on Latino students' experiences in college, as linked to limited financial resources, lack of employment, low educational capital, and more demanding familial responsibilities (Sanchez, 2012).

In contrast, research has found that positive factors for Latino men's educational experiences are role models of success and strong relationships with family and peers (Cerezo et al., 2013). Cerezo et al. (2013) found that many students' parents were the reason they attended college because students saw how hard their parents worked and yet still struggled because of their lack of higher education. They were, therefore, encouraged to go to college to have a better life than their parents (Cerezo et al., 2013). Furthermore, positive relationships with peers, regardless of race or ethnicity, led to educational and social success for Latino men (Ayro, 2012).

Sense of Belonging

With current trends showing a small percentage of undergraduate Latino men enrolling and completing their education at four-year colleges and universities, there is much to understand about their sense of belonging at these institutions of higher education (Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009, 2011). Meeuwisse, Severiens, and Born (2010) found that students who come from backgrounds where there is little history of participation in higher education may find academic culture particularly bewildering and may lack the support and guidance that comes from having friends or family that have been through the experience of attending college. Researchers have found that Latino students at PWIs perceived a more antagonistic campus climate than White students and reported more negative experiences, such as racism (Cerezo & Chang, 2013). Harper and Hurtado (2007) support this by stating that students with underrepresented identities at public research universities more often encounter a non-welcoming campus climate than their majority peers, in turn affecting their sense of belonging. The racial climate at PWIs lack the power provided by numerical

diversity to challenge "prevailing norms, values, and practices [that] cater mostly to White students" (Chang, 2002, p. 3) and may result in Latino men, and other students of color, to feel less understood and affirmed (Cerezo & Chang, 2013). This led the research team to further assess the campus climate at IUB by focusing on undergraduate Latino men and analyzing if their experiences on campus relate to the literature.

Methodology

Conceptual Framework

To understand the experiences of undergraduate Latino men on IUB's campus, this study used a socially constructed framework. Strange and Banning (2015) note that constructed approaches focus on the collective, subjective views and experiences of participant observers, assuming that environments are understood best through the perceptions of the individuals within them. One of the main assumptions in these approaches is the concept that examining collective personal perspectives of an environment is critical to understanding how people are likely to react to those environments (Strange & Banning, 2015). A facet within a constructed environment is sense of belonging, which is how an individual perceives their level of integration in a particular setting (Strayhorn, 2012). For this study, the research team used Strayhorn's (2012) definition of sense of belonging, which is described as "relatedness, membership, acceptance, and support" in relation to "students' psychological experiences and their subjective evaluation of the level of integration in a particular context (e.g., school, college)" (p. 8). This definition helped shape the lens the research team intended to carry throughout the study.

Researchers’ Positionality

The research team was made up of one Latino man, two Latina women, two White men, and one White woman. Baca Zinn (1979) found that outsiders, or researchers who do not share an identity with their participants, may find it challenging to interpret participants’ behaviors because participants can feel obligated or might conform to the stereotypes they think the researcher has of them rather than expressing their own attitudes and opinions. Baca Zinn (1979) also suggested that individuals in minority communities have developed many self-protective behaviors for dealing with outsiders. Therefore, the researchers recognized how race and gender may influence participants’ participation and behavior in data collection.

Insiders have the unique ability to gain access to their participants trust because of their commonalities, which lends participants to be more open with their experiences (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). It is possible, however, that the insider’s closeness to the subject might cloud data analysis and objectivity during the research process (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). Collaboration between insider and outsider researchers can reap the benefits of gaining access to participants’ trust and staying objective throughout the research process (Louis & Bartunek, 1992; Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). With this in mind, each focus group was organized according to the insider and

outsider identities of the researchers. For example, there were generally two focus group leaders and two note takers in each session. At least one focus group leader in each session shared one or more identities similar to the participants, including race, ethnicity, and or gender. The research team was cognizant of each researcher’s identities and therefore decided to disclose their own racial and gender identities to the participants during the focus group sessions to make transparent how intersectionality might influence the research process.

Recruitment and Participants

This study focused on self-identified undergraduate Latino men at IUB and used criterion sampling as the main recruitment strategy. After receiving Institutional Review Board approval, the research team collaborated with Casillas-Origel, who sent recruitment emails through the Latino Cultural Center’s listserv to current undergraduate students that have self-identified as Latino men with the university. Members of student organizations with strong ties to this identity were also recruited via email. Table 1 briefly describes the participants, including their self-selected pseudonym, identity, year in school, and first-generation status. Each participant brought a diverse perspective to the study from a pan-ethnic context.

Table 1.
Research Participants

<u>Pseudonym</u>	<u>Year in School</u>	<u>Identity</u>	<u>First-Generation</u>
Abril	1st Year	Latino	Yes
Dallas	2nd Year	Mexican American	Yes
Emmanuel	2nd Year	Mexican	Yes
Límon	4th Year	Latino	Yes
Pablo	1st Year	Honduran, White	No
Rico	1st Year	Hispanic American	Yes
Xicano Consciousness	3rd Year	10Latino	Yes

Data Collection

A constructivist qualitative case study approach was used to study a single institution (IUB) and learn more about a specific population's (undergraduate Latino men) experience within that institution. The research team chose this design because it provides "insight, discovery, and interpretation" (Merriam, 1988, p. 10). Using the case study with a constructivist framework allowed the research team to make meaning with participants thus avoiding making assumptions about the data.

Four semi-structured focus groups and interviews were conducted for up to 90 minutes with up to three participants at each session. The participants gave verbal consent and were given a study information sheet explaining the purpose of the study and their voluntary status to participate. The focus group leaders engaged in dialogue regarding topics such as identity, high school experience, campus involvement, sense of belonging, and more. Interview questions used for data collection were inspired by several studies but were based primarily from the quantitative 27-item Sense of Belonging Instrument, as created by Hagerty and Patusky (1995) and adapted by Strayhorn (2012). Using the qualitative framework of Palmer and Maramba (2015), questions were adapted from the Sense of Belonging Instrument (Hagerty & Patusky, 1995) for this qualitative study. Thus, the researchers were able to construct a qualitative framework from a previously quantitative one. Through this process, interview questions were generated to capture the focus of students' sense of belonging in relation to their experiences of being a Latino man at IUB.

Interview Data Analysis

During each focus group and interview, clarifying questions were asked to ensure that the researchers had gathered enough responses to capture a full picture of each student's experience. Once all focus groups and interviews were completed, the research team transcribed the four audio-recordings from each session, including any pertinent observation notes. Using strategies from Cooper and Shelley (2009), the research team first reviewed the transcripts individually in order to identify codes throughout the narratives. Having identified these codes, the team collaborated to find major significant themes that were salient through each researcher's individual analysis. From this process, there emerged four main themes. By having all researchers involved, the data was viewed from multiple perspectives and lenses. Researchers did not explicitly use the research questions to determine coding or themes, but through the interview protocol process each research question was answered based on the participants' responses.

Limitations

Although there is value in this study's findings, the research team has identified some areas for future considerations. First, the level of in-depth discussion and participation was largely influenced by the number of participants in each focus group. Two focus groups had one participant, thus creating an individual interview rather than a focus group. The researchers recognize that the dynamics of having more than one individual in a focus group may produce different qualitative data than a focus group with only one individual; however, it was necessary to complete the individual interview instead of rescheduling due to the

limited time for recruitment and data collection.

A second limitation was related to student involvement on campus. While the study itself hoped to understand the effects of sense of belonging, it was found that many of the participants experienced acceptance and membership through their involvement with IUB's cultural centers and transition programs, such as La Casa and the Groups Scholars Program. Future research could be directed to analyze the effect other organizations play in the sense of belonging amongst undergraduate Latino men at IUB.

Lastly, all of the participants had attended high school in Indiana and were Indiana residents. This might have influenced their perceptions of IUB, a state flagship institution. Further analysis of non-Indiana students could have provided the perspective of out-of-state students and their reasons for attending IUB and how they perceive the university as a whole.

Findings

Through analyzing the participants' descriptions of their experiences, beginning with their transition from high school and ending with current involvement at IUB, four themes emerged.

First-Generation Status

A common factor that affected the experiences of the participants was whether they identified as first-generation students. Six of the seven participants identified as a first-generation student, or "as students whose parents never attended college" (Ishitani, 2006, p. 862). Among the six participants, most were the oldest child in their family and only one was the youngest. Throughout conversations with students, it became evident that their status as first-generation directly affected both their

college application process and feeling of preparedness once arriving at college.

When looking at first-generation students, applying to college was difficult. Límon explained that college was challenging from the "get-go," because his mom could not help him, stating, "I had to figure everything out on my own, which was cool, but it did make it a little harder." Many other participants also felt this way; Xicano Consciousness explained that he needed to convince his parents to attend college because they did not know there would be financial resources available to him. Once participants had become familiar with the college process, they were then viewed as resources to help their younger siblings and extended family. Abril expressed that he feels "like a guinea pig" for his family, a test to see if a member of his family can be successful in college. However, due to different family dynamics, one of the first-generation students did not encounter the same obstacles as other participants due to having older siblings who attended college and could use them as a resource. This demonstrates the differences that existed between first-generation students in our study who had older siblings or other family members currently in college versus those that were the oldest and did not.

Some of the first-generation participants in this study were participants in the Groups Scholars Program (Groups), a summer pre-college transition program to help students from low-income or first-generation households' transition into college life. While all the participants who were in the program regarded their experience as positive, each noted they had a substantial amount of difficulty with their new college coursework. When discussing the Groups program, Límon said, "I was not prepared for that [level of difficulty]. I had done really well in high school...and then I came here and I realized my writing actually

wasn't as good as they had told me." Emmanuel echoed this sentiment, sharing, "[the Groups Program] kicked my butt every day." However, in addition to these feelings of unpreparedness, participants who identified as first-generation also shared that they feel more motivated to do well in college and prove themselves. Emmanuel shared, "Being first-generation there's this pressure that you have to be the best... being first-generation has made me more driven." When sharing these sentiments, students seemed very motivated to do well not only because they valued their education but also because of the importance it played for their family.

Cultural Integration

Several participants experienced culture shock upon arriving at IUB and identified campus as a White space, which was described as locations on campus that are created for and used predominately by White students. Emmanuel shared that he experienced a high level of culture shock during his transition to IUB because he had been used to the racially diverse population in his hometown and wished he had been prepared for that experience. For future incoming Latino students, he expressed, "...be prepared that there's going to be a large majority of White students instead of Latino students or African American students. And that it will be hard to adjust." Rico had similar thoughts in relation to the diversity of his high school and the diversity at IUB, "I never experienced racism and that. But, like, I got here and there's a weird tension between some of the Whites and Hispanics and just minorities in general." Therefore, the researchers found that participants who came from racially diverse hometowns and high schools, like Emmanuel and Rico, experienced a higher level of culture shock compared to those

who came from a predominantly White hometown and high school.

In addition to culture shock, participants expressed that they feel like there is a tension between racial identities on campus in relation to the concept of White space. Xicano Consciousness claimed that White students often segregate themselves from others, "They don't really venture off to go experience other people's communities. I feel like some of us Latinos and Blacks are more willing to reach out to them than they will reach out to us." This perception of segregation between students has led participants to feel like they have to prove themselves to their peers, particularly to their White peers, in order to justify their presence on campus. Students who identify as first-generation found this revelation challenging. Xicano Consciousness shared:

I feel like a lot of times I have to prove myself. Just because it's like you're kind of entering a space that is not completely yours. So you kind of have to show what you're about and what you represent. I also feel like my actions will be indicative of a whole group so anything I do is a Latino action. But, anything a White person does is an individual action.

Límon and Emmanuel also experienced similar feelings of an internal motivation to do better than their White peers in order for validation that they deserve to be a part of the campus community.

Identity Awareness

Many of the participants were not fully aware of the implications of what it means to be a minority until they arrived at IUB. Those participants that came from more diverse high schools as Emmanuel, Límon, and Abril did, described that before starting at IUB they did not have a heightened sense of racial identity awareness. Their Latino identity development began when they

realized there were people at IUB who now only saw them as Latino and nothing else. Emmanuel came from a diverse high school where he did not actively recognize that he was minority until his experiences on campus, stating, "It was intimidating. I didn't feel like I belonged. But, in a way it helped me get closer to my Latino side more." Emmanuel describes his experience as being intimidating while another participant, Abril, described his experience as uncomfortable but stated that it made him appreciate his ethnicity and race.

Participants also explained their experiences in the classroom that made them further understand their status as a minority, often contesting that they were one of only a few in their classroom. This sometimes led to feelings of not belonging as described by Emmanuel, "I think about [my ethnicity] when I'm in those classes when I am the only Latino student. Just like, 'what are you doing here?'" When discussing experiences in the classroom, Límon shared, "It's funny because we have our crew, we always do our projects together. We're all minorities in our crew because it's all the minorities in our whole class."

Additionally, participants described learning more about their identity through their coursework. These experiences were a catalyst to further understanding their culture and identities. Límon discussed that college is a place where people discover who they are, stating, "I have discovered a lot about my Latino identity.... I've taken a lot of Latino studies courses and I've actually learned a lot more about where I come from and that actually Latino history is US history." Classes like these have been a positive experience for others, like Xicano Consciousness who has developed a passion for social justice through different classes and experiences at IUB. He shared that he values his experiences on campus, disclosing, "If I hadn't come down here [to

IUB] those are things I would not think about and I would not be knowledgeable about. And I wouldn't be able to warn somebody about issues we face today and how to exploit it." From these examples, it is clear that students' experiences on campus have made them more cognizant of their racial and ethnic identities, specifically in relation to the environment in their classrooms and in other spaces on campus.

Support

As with any college student population, an important theme that emerged from the participants was the support they receive from family, IUB peers, and campus resources. Although these are types of support needed by all university students, regardless of their privileged or oppressed identities, there are important considerations that tie specifically to the participant's identities as Latino men.

Family. All but one participant mentioned that they regularly communicated with their family, whether it was their parents, siblings, or other relatives. Although not much information was given about the specificity of these conversations, it can be assumed that this constant contact is providing some support for these students. As with most participants, Límon initially mentioned that he was excited to move away from home and be independent; however, he later states, "I wasn't uncomfortable coming here but I got to realize how much I miss my family." In contrast, Xicano Consciousness stated that although he does not talk to his family often he still thinks about them regularly, "I know [my brother] misses me and he does a lot of things that shows me that he misses me."

IUB peers. The majority of the participants discussed the deep sense of support they feel from their Latino peers or those who share other aspects of their identity. As stated earlier, most participants

feel a quicker, deeper connection to other Latinos on campus. Additionally, Emmanuel disclosed, “I agree in the sense that after a while once [non-Latinos] get to know you, I will start to get comfortable around them regardless of race. I just feel that instant connection with a Latino.” That instant connection was mirrored by Xicano Consciousness who would highly encourage an incoming Latino student to get involved:

I think it’s important to experience that sense of community. I didn’t really get too familiar with it until this year and I feel like I really missed out in the last two years. I know a lot of Latinos aren’t very knowledgeable about their Latinidad [Latino heritage] and I would want them to experience it and become more informed about the title of Latino.

Another insight shared about the importance of connecting with Latino peers at IUB came from Límon, who talked about the differences in the Latino community at IUB and his hometown, “Back home a lot of people don’t talk to each other like that sense of pride. But here everyone is...kind of like a big family, because you are supported here and we all are fighting for this common goal [of graduating].” Regardless of the students’ level of involvement, participants all mentioned feeling an instant connection to their Latino peers that helps them feel more comfortable or prideful being at IUB.

Campus resources. Conversations with participants revealed the various ways that they are supported by campus resources, such as academic support, faculty, staff, and specific resources related to their identities.

Groups Scholars Program. Most participants went through the Groups Scholars summer program, mentioning that they continued going to Groups for tutoring. Límon shared that he preferred going to Groups over other tutoring centers on

campus because he had negative experiences, “I’ve just had experiences where they’re a lot more patient and understanding and actually sit down and try to understand you and what you’re struggling with.” In general, participants who went through Groups found that it was one of the main resources helping them through college. Dallas stated, “the Groups office has been helping me out, getting me through college.” Emmanuel took advanced placement courses in high school but still struggled academically during the Summer Experience Program, stating, “I thought, wow, this sucks. But then I realized that this is college and that there would be days like this. But now I just feel like it’s high school again. It’s not hard.” All participants who went through Groups mentioned that it helped prepare them academically or continued to provide support for their college coursework.

Faculty. Although not all participants said that they take advantage of office hours with their professors, most mentioned that they feel comfortable approaching them for help. Emmanuel provided an interesting anecdote when he mentioned trying to relate to a professor but that their relationship fell flat of his expectations:

I feel treated the same [by IUB faculty] as other students. One expectation I did have was I was taking a music course and the instructor was Mexican, so I was like, hey, we’re going to get along so well. This is going to be so cool. But that didn’t happen. She still treats me like every student. Professional. So I just feel like other students would.

It is evident, however, that this did not hinder his overall experience in the classroom, just detracted from his personal expectations to connect with a professor with a shared identity. Xicano Consciousness has a particularly good

relationship with one of his old professors, who no longer works at IUB, stating, “He’s been really supportive of me lately. He really wants me to pursue graduate school...we keep in touch all the time...he sends me messages every once in awhile to see how I’m doing.”

La Casa. All but one participant said that they have taken advantage of La Casa’s resources and opportunities to be involved. Pablo attributes his success on campus to the center, “La Casa has really helped me get out there and navigate and give me more information about Bloomington and campus life.” Similarly, Emmanuel shared one of his first experiences that has highly impacted his sense of belonging at IUB, recounting an interaction he had during the beginning of his first semester with a graduate student who worked at the center, “I asked, ‘Can I sit down?’ and she said, ‘Yeah, this is your house.’ That was one of the best things ever.”

Mentoring. Only one participant said they had a current mentor who assisted them in applying to IUB and helped them understand various aspects of college life and college transition. Those who did not have a mentor, like Dallas, mentioned the importance of this type of support, stating, “Finding a mentor, especially if the mentor is in an area you’re interested in is important. You can learn from their mistakes and you’re able to learn quicker because they have gone through it. Mentors are a key to success.” Most participants said that they would appreciate a mentor who had similar career focuses and had some similarities based on race or background experiences. Yet, most participants were unaware as far as how to develop this type of relationship with someone. Some had heard of mentoring programs external to the institution, but would be interested in a program catered to their interests and needs as Latino men.

Discussion

A common theme among participants was their transition from high school to college. Most notably, a challenge that most participants faced stemmed from their status as a first-generation college student and their identity as a Latino man. As outlined by Cerezo et al. (2013), experiences before college are important to consider for how Latino men experience college. Difficulties faced by participants transitioning to college aligned with the literature, finding that participants who were first-generation or had families with little experience dealing with higher education had more difficulty in their transition because they lacked the support and guidance from others who had been through college (Meeuwisse, Severiens, & Born, 2010). Some of the challenges participants faced in regards to their identity as a first-generation college student were not knowing how to utilize campus resources; how to use, access, and understand financial aid; and how to anticipate the higher level of academic rigor at IUB.

These challenges were compounded by the culture shock experienced by some of the participants. Students that directly experienced culture shock had a heightened sense of awareness of the racial dynamics on IUB’s campus. Participants felt that IUB was a White space except for the cultural centers (i.e. La Casa, Neal-Marshall Black Culture Center), causing them to seek out and create community among other students of color in these environments. This in turn led to a stronger sense of belonging within these spaces and an increased awareness of their racial and ethnic identities, which allowed them to form support networks with peers who shared similar experiences.

Some study participants also received valuable support from mentors or individuals who were able to provide

guidance during their transition to college. Cerezo et al. (2013) mentioned that success in college for Latino men is closely linked to their support system, including both family and peers. Participants who had an official mentor, went through the Groups Scholars Program, or were involved with campus resources (i.e. La Casa) identified that the additional support helped them adapt and have positive experiences at IUB. While not all participants had a mentor, they expressed that having a mentor would have benefited them in their transition and throughout their college career.

Implications for Practice

The research team found persistence among the participants in this study; however, they recognize that it only highlights a small number of the population of Latino men at IUB. Given the challenges students faced as first-generation and experiencing culture shock, it is evident that intentional spaces and social support networks contribute to their success and retention. Therefore, the researchers suggest that IUB work to transform physical spaces on campus to be more inclusive and develop mentoring programs tailored to undergraduate Latino men.

Transforming Physical Spaces

The researchers propose that the institution work towards transforming more physical spaces on campus into inclusive, multicultural learning environments. Cultural spaces, such as race-based centers, should not confine students' comfort levels nor should it limit where students are asked to talk about their race and ethnicity. Some of the participants stated that they thought about their race and ethnicity the most while walking to class, sitting in the classroom, and in other public spaces, such as the campus buses. To transform a physical

space into a multicultural learning environment, the institution should involve students and multicultural student groups in the initiation, planning, and implementation of space design or redesign (Kinzie & Mulholland, 2008). Student organizations could display physical artifacts in spaces that have historically and socially been deemed White spaces. This could help to minimize the level of culture shock that the participants' experience and show that the campus community values their identity.

Mentoring

Additionally, the researchers propose a mentoring program tailored to undergraduate Latino men, which would allow students to connect with positive role models and form meaningful relationships with someone who can help them navigate their college experience. This program could provide students with a mentor, preferably someone in the field of interest of the student, based on the recommendations given by the participants. One way to achieve this is to develop early connections with first-year undergraduate Latino men through promoting campus resources and student organizations. Providing the opportunity to develop these relationships would further aid a student's connectedness, attachment, or membership to IUB (Strayhorn, 2012).

Conclusion

This research adds to the current body of literature that seeks to understand the experiences of Latino men on predominantly White campuses. These findings suggest that the socially constructed environment on IUB's campus has produced some challenges for Latino men related to their adjustment to college and their sense of belonging. The researchers believe that higher education professionals should ensure

that their institution is aware of the challenges that Latino men face in pursuit of a college degree and is actively implementing strategies to create a more inclusive campus environment.

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