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AN ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION OF

Jane F. Reeder for the degree of Doctor of Education in Adult and Higher Education presented on June 14, 2017

Title: The Role of Community Cultural Wealth in the Retention of Latino/a Students in the Community College Setting

Abstract approved: ______________________________________________________

Earl P Johnson

Abstract

Background. Many studies addressing the reasons why minority students fail in higher education are based on what is defined as a deficit model. A deficit model documents that a significant number of minority students fail because their culture is distinct from that of the majority population. Numerous minority students do not possess the means or knowledge to navigate the US system of higher education. Increasingly, more Latino/a students are enrolling in higher education and policymakers and accreditation agencies are requiring that colleges focus on retaining these students and ensuring they complete their degree.

Based on critical race theory (CRT), Yosso (2005) proposed and later developed the community cultural wealth (CCW) theory, which indicates that Latino communities share a
cultural capital that consists of elements of “wealth” that a student possesses. Yosso (2005) identified six forms of capital: aspirational, familial, social, navigational, resistant, and linguistic.

Purpose. The purpose of the study was to examine if it is possible to identify those cultural capitals influencing or empowering Latino student retention. This study sought to identify and analyze those factors known as cultural capitals associated with retaining Latino students. The study addressed the following research questions: (a) In terms of potential cultural influences, what do Latino students identify as a cultural component of their retention at community college? and (b) To what extent do the cultural factors that Latino students identify as important to their retention show similarities to the cultural capitals as defined by Yosso?

Setting. Interviews took place at two rural community colleges in Oregon which contained the minority student demographic studied.

Subjects. The study used a homogenous sampling of subjects who self-identified as Latino/a and were required to meet three criteria outlined below. Subjects were full time students holding good academic standing as defined by the host institution, had completed at least three terms of continuous enrollment at the institution and be a member of a club that served minority populations.

Research design. The study used semi-structured individual interviews with Latino/a students at two rural community colleges in Oregon. The use of a qualitative interview was designed to examine the role of CCW in the retention of Latino/a students at these colleges. A phenomenological study was selected to identify particular accounts and to analyze the phenomena, which in this instance was intrinsic in form, as the researcher sought to understand the role of CCW.
Data collection and analysis. Using semi-structured interviews, interview data were subjected to a six-step analysis that used the theoretical framework of CCW as a lens to interpret the data. Comparing the literature with the findings provided a way to ensure the findings reliability, as well as search for potential new themes that might emerge. In addition, part of the individual interview process included member-checking using narrative accuracy to reflect and summarize the participants’ interviews. Triangulation was adopted through the use of interviews and field notes with both the test participants and the actual respondent participants.

Findings and implications. The findings indicate that the cultural factors the participants identified are very similar, and in many cases, identical to the capitals Yosso identified. While the capitals found in CCW aid retention, they also included deficits within the capitals. These deficits exist as barriers to Latino/a students’ success. These deficits are not to be confused with the deficit model, but rather constitute structural insufficiencies within the capitals that act as barriers to minority students.

The findings of this study hold significance for community colleges that wish to increase their retention of Latino/a students. In accessing and understanding the role of CCW in the retention of these students, colleges cannot only leverage the capitals that students bring with them, but also design better programs that use those capitals in the classroom and in college administration. In addition, colleges can increase Latino/a students’ success by addressing specific structural barriers that impedes their success.

Conclusions. The findings revealed that Latino culture is instrumental in retention at community college, in that all of Yosso’s (2005) cultural capitals were identified through this process. The findings did not identify additional cultural capitals or themes other than those
Yosso identified previously. However, it demonstrated that there are deficits in those capitals that potentially could reduce their efficacy.

*Keywords*: Latino/a; academic retention; undergraduates; ethnicity; race; community cultural wealth; deficit model; community college; aspirational, familial, social, navigational, resistant and linguistic capitals.
The Role of Community Cultural Wealth in the Retention of Latino/a Students in the Community College Setting

by

Jane F Reeder

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I understand that my dissertation will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University libraries. My signature below authorizes release of my dissertation to any reader upon request.

__________________________________________________________________________
Jane F. Reeder, Author
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The Role of Community Cultural Wealth in the Retention of Latino/a Students in the Community College Setting

In 1964, Malcolm X addressed a large crowd of minority Americans and said, “Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today.” Malcolm X recognized that education, and post-secondary education in particular, is an agent of change that leads to greater prosperity and security for those who have traditionally been disenfranchised because of their minority status.

With respect to equality in education, the education provided by post-secondary institutions is one that has been at the forefront of social justice and is a springboard to financial equality and stability (Bureau of Labor, 2015). A post-secondary education provides the “passport for the future” in obtaining skills required to acquire and sustain employment necessary for financial stability in our society (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015). Historically, it has been difficult for multiple minority groups to graduate successfully from post-secondary institutions in the US (American Council on Education, 2011; Casey Foundation, 2006).
Chapter I: Focus and Significance

The US is a nation in which the roots of its modern day demographics lie in immigration. Immigration accounts for the diversity of its people and, in particular, those labeled as minorities. Currently, minority groups account for 37% of the US population, and projected to comprise 57% of the total population by 2060 (US Census, 2012). The most recent US Census (2012) showed that by 2043, the US will become a majority-minority nation, in that no one group will constitute a majority. As the demographics of the country become increasingly more diverse, it is interesting to note that the fastest growing minority race is those people who identify as Latino/a.¹

Latino/as currently account for 17% of the US population, a 50% increase since 2002 (Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, 2015). By 2060, the number of those in the US population who will identify as Latino/a will account for an estimated one of three US residents (Census, 2012). This increase is also reflected in the concurrent growth of Latino/a students who enroll in post-secondary education. In 2004, 1,765,855 Latino/a students enrolled in post-secondary education; by 2010, that number had risen to 2,643,952, a 49.75% increase (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2012). Community colleges in the US, institutions in which the programs of study are two years or fewer, enroll 86% of all Latino/a undergraduates (NCES, 2012). Rural community colleges account for 64% of the total number of community colleges in the US according to the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (as cited by Nelson, 2010). Furthermore, the US Department of Agriculture reported

¹ The Office of Management and Budget defines “Hispanic or Latino” as a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race (2013).
that the Latino/a population also has increased in rural areas across the country (USDA, 2016). Fry and Lopez (2011) noted that community colleges enroll the highest proportion of Latino/a undergraduate students because they offer a wider range of accessible courses that are less expensive and closer to home, and allow Latino/a students to be able to stay at home, work, and be near family and community for support.

Although the Latino/a population of college students is increasing, only a small percentage remain in college long enough to obtain a degree or certificate. The retention\(^2\) of Latinos/as in community colleges has not kept pace with their enrollment. The goal of attending community college is to obtain a degree or certificate, which requires consistent attendance. Therefore, to achieve a community college qualification and a “passport to the future,” the student must continue through a sufficient number of terms either to graduate or to qualify for matriculation to a four-year institution.

Poor retention is a significant problem illustrated by the low numbers of graduating Latino/as. According to the NCES (2014), only 5.7% of Latino males and 6.1% of Latina females hold post-secondary qualifications. It is important to retain Latino/a students so that they may truly participate in the American Dream, and it is time that we honor Malcolm X’s message that education is key to the future. Economic achievement remains attached to academic success and academic success achievement occurs only if a student remains in college. If we are to ensure social justice for Latino/as, a significant number of them must remain enrolled in a community college until they earn a certificate, graduate, or qualify to transfer to a

\(^2\) For the purposes of this study, retention is defined as full time Latino students who have successfully completed at least three terms at community college leading to a post-secondary qualification. Successfully completed shall be that they have maintained the minimum GPA to remain in satisfactory academic standing at the institution.
four-year college. Institutional polices that restrict their retention must be altered and should be based on best practices and sound educational policies that enhance their ability to retain in college.

To avoid the institutional subjugation of Latino/as, practitioners in community colleges should acknowledge that, while more Latino/as enroll in community colleges, a significant number fail to graduate or matriculate to four-year institutions. This is because of high attrition rates or the failure to remain from quarter to quarter. For this study, the choice of focusing on Latino/a community college students and those who are retained was informed by a six-year longitudinal study (NCES, 2012) that examined records of students who had left their institutions before they received a degree or certificate and were no longer enrolled in any educational institution in the US. The study found that the dropout rate in institutions that offer certificates or degrees, which generally take fewer than four years to complete, was significantly higher than in traditional four-year baccalaureate-granting institutions, 39% versus 18%.

Because the retention rate for Latino/a students in community colleges remains an area of concern, this study focused on cultural influences that enfranchise Latino/a students by identifying cultural capitals that they possess, and that enable them to retain for at least one academic year (three quarters). To examine those capitals, the study interviewed Latino/a students who attended rural community colleges, remained for at least three quarters of full-time classes, and maintained satisfactory academic progress. Students excluded from the study were those enrolled in developmental education classes. Existing research has documented that students who complete at least one year of academic work or finish a developmental education sequence and then enroll in regular transfer courses are more likely to remain in college until they earn a certificate, graduate, or matriculate from a community college (Jenkins & Cho,
2012). Furthermore, Fike and Fike (2008) found a positive correlation between students’ retention and completion of developmental courses.

To address possible remediation factors, this study examined Latino/a students who had completed at least three quarters of full-time classes and maintained satisfactory academic progress at a rural community college. In addition to the factors outlined above, students also were required to belong to a club that served minority populations on campus. Dustin (2006) showed a positive correlation between students who were members of a club and who remained in a community college setting. Using three terms of enrollment enabled the study to locate students who had completed their developmental classes and enrolled in a course of study in college level classes, which is a predictor of continued future retention (Michigan Center for Career and Technical Education, 1998). The large number of community colleges located in rural areas and the demographic growth of Latino/a's living and working in those areas informed the choice of a rural community college as the location for the study.

Extensive research has been performed and reported regarding about the reasons why students drop out of institutions of higher education (American Council on Education, 2011; Caberra & Padilla, 2004; Darder & Torres, 2014; Tinto, 1993). In contrast, there is little research about those who retain (Liou, Antrop-Gonzalez & Cooper, 2013). Each student has unique life experiences that s/he brings to the community college setting, but despite these experiences, students remain linked by a sense of the community from which they came (Bourdieu, 1977). Yosso (2005) suggested that Latino/a communities possess a shared sense of community that manifests as capitals that are “…under-utilized assets that Students of Color bring with them from their homes and communities into the classroom” (p. 70). She referred to these assets as capitals and named them as community cultural wealth (CCW). These capitals
are largely unacknowledged by mainstream White culture and yet, according to Yosso, have the potential to “…transform the process of schooling” (p. 70) and are potentially instrumental in Latino/a retention at the community college level. This study examined the cultural capitals Latino/a students bring to the educational setting that support them in their retention.

**Purpose**

The purpose of this research was to determine whether Latino/a students who remain enrolled in community college for at least three terms of full-time academic course work use the capitals Yosso (2005) identified. The study addressed the cultural influences that challenge the existing deficit model and enfranchise Latino/a students by identifying and using the research findings to identify the role in retention of CCW’s six capitals.

**Research Questions**

The study asked the following questions:

(1) In terms of potential cultural influences, what do Latino students identify as a cultural component of their retention at community college?

This question asked the subjects to identify cultural influences that aided in their retention, which I was able to examine through the lens of the CCW model. The question relied upon another study performed by Luna and Martinez (2013), who used the CCW model to interpret findings from their study using four of the capitals Yosso (2005) outlined: aspirational, familial, social, and navigational. Their findings showed that Latino/a students bring unrecognized and undervalued knowledge, skills, and abilities to the educational setting. While accepting the inherent bias this may cause, it helped guide the research while leaving open the possibility that other themes not yet identified by current research might emerge. In this way, I was able to identify those influences that Yosso (2005) termed capitals in order to study the role
of CCW in community college Latino/a students’ retention. This open-ended question was also consistent with the open-ended interview structure of the methodology used.

The second research question asked:

(2) To what extent do the cultural factors that Latino students identify as important to their retention show similarities to the cultural capitals as defined by Yosso?

Yosso’s (2005) cultural capitals are used to document and analyze a broad range of educational issues pertinent to access, persistence, and graduation. In this study, I was interested to determine the way in which these capitals related specifically to students’ retention in community colleges. In doing so, I asked a series of open-ended interview questions regarding Latino culture and retention. The use of CCW capitals during final coding enabled interpretation of the responses for analysis of this secondary question.

**Theoretical Framework**

This chapter reviews the history of social theories that led to CCW. Over 50 years have passed since Martin Luther King Jr. gave his “I have a dream” speech about equality and justice, and in that time we have seen many changes. However, the Pew Research Center found that only 45% of the public feels that the country has made considerable progress in achieving racial equality (Pew Research Center, 2013). Critical race theory (CRT) states: “Power structures are based on White privilege and White supremacy, which perpetrates the marginalization of people of color” (UCLA, 2015. p. 1). CRT is a guiding framework to examine equality issues and those related to race and ethnicity in education (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Dixson & Rousseau, 2006; Tate, 1997). CRT is a social justice issue that works to achieve the emancipation potential of education (Yosso, 2006).
Community Cultural Wealth (Yosso, 2005) has its origins in CRT and the intersection of race, law, and power. Yosso’s research focused not only on this intersection, but also on the way in which it affects access to educational equity. The theory of CCW seeks to advance progress towards greater equality. Yosso acknowledged the role of power in society whose creation is through the dominant society’s interaction with minorities, as proposed by Bourdieu (1997). Furthermore, the role of cultural capital “…provides the means for a non-economic form of domination and hierarchy, as classes distinguish themselves through taste” (Gaventa, 2003, p. 6). Taste, defined as “the cultural patterns of choice and preference” (Sensagent.com, 2012). Yosso (2005) addressed the role of cultural capital by identifying it as CCW that works to develop equality further through acquiring and sharing cultural knowledge and skills as a form of wealth. In developing the CCW model, she focused on the diverse range of knowledge, skills, abilities, and social contacts within a marginalized group.

Yosso’s CCW model includes six capitals: aspirational, familial, social, navigational, resistant, and linguistic. Aspirational capital refers to the ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future, even in the face of real and perceived barriers. Validation of this resilience exists in those who allow themselves and their children to dream of possibilities beyond their present circumstances, often without the objective means to attain those goals (Yosso, 2005). Familial capital is defined as a “…cultural knowledge nurtured around family (kin) that carry a sense of community history, memory and cultural intuition” (p. 48). Social capital refers to Latino/as “networks of people and community resources” (p. 45). Navigational capital includes those skills that Latinos use to navigate through institutions not designed for students of color. Resistant capital, the skills and knowledge created through oppositional behavior to inequalities,
represents an asset in achieving equality. Linguistic capital refers to the intellectual and social skills associated with being bilingual.

In the present study, the marginalized group examined was Latino/a students. The CCW model was used to interpret the findings of this study, which identified the role of the six capitals in retention and focused on the cultural influences that challenge the deficit model and enfranchise Latino/a students. Consistent with that model, this study sought to obtain input from Latino/as and give them a voice interpreted through the lens of CCW theory.

**Significance**

By using individual interviews and CCW to analyze and interpret them, this study identified the role of cultural influences that enfranchise Latino/a students and enable them to remain from term to term and complete at least one year of community college work, completion of just one year significantly increases the likelihood of their future retention in college. Such findings may be of value to community college administrators, faculty, student services personnel, and public policymakers.

Tinto (2012) established themes similar to those identified in this study that are necessary for students’ retention and success. While acknowledging these themes, it is important to note that the programs described are developed by the institution and, in most cases, are not what students bring as part of their cultural heritage. The role of CCW in retention differs, in that it is a cultural phenomenon that Latino/a students possess. The awareness that CCW brings will enable student services personnel and administrators to develop and provide the infrastructure necessary for admission and student support programs to enroll and retain these students by understanding and reflecting those cultural capitals in college programs. Faculty’s recognition of
these capitals and their role in retention will enable them to design and teach curricula that meet
the students’ academic and cultural needs.

Public policymakers remain concerned about community colleges’ failure to retain
minority students, especially the fastest growing minority group, Latinos. A major reason for
this concern relates to years of research on the reasons Latino/a students fail (a deficit model).
However, identification of these reasons has not altered Latino/a students’ failure rate
significantly. Research cited in this study summarizes the large body of literature that focuses on
the failure rate of Latino/a students in their post-high school education (Cardenas & Kerby,
2012; Fry, 2002; Lopez, 2000). However, limited published research was available at the time of
this study about personal capitals that aid in Latino/a students’ retention in community colleges.
Educational institutions often “…oppress and marginalize while they maintain the potential to
emancipate and enfranchise” (Yosso, 2005, p. 74). Because White culture capital is based on the
accumulation of knowledge that allows the majority culture to remain dominant, White culture
values its own cultural capital as the superior capital. The cultural deficit model of education
reinforces the marginalization of minorities, by focusing on issues preventing academic retention
rather than looking at those capitals promoting academic retention that are possessed by Latino/a
students who complete course work successfully and remain in community college. By
concentrating on cultural capitals possessed by Latino students, this study will assist public
policymakers seeking to emancipate and enfranchise minorities and institutions by funding
instructional, student services and administrative reforms that identify and celebrate cultural
capitals inherent in the Latino/a culture that enhance the probability of continued retention.

By understanding the power and marginalization of minority students within a majority
population, we can understand why it is important to study what those marginalized students
bring with them that facilitates their retention in community college. The study aims to add to that knowledge and to stimulate further research that will add to the existing body of work on CCW and the significance of its capitals that affect Latino/a students’ retention in community colleges. Thus, future researchers can use these results to guide their own work.

Summary of Purpose and Significance

The purpose of this research was to determine whether Latino/a students who remain enrolled in community college for at least three terms of full-time academic course work use the capitals Yosso (2005) identified in her research. This study sought to identify and analyze those factors known as cultural capitals associated with retaining Latino students and the cultural capital wealth they bring with them. The research questions analyzed in this study were: (a) In terms of potential cultural influences, what do Latino students identify as a cultural component of their retention at community college? and (b) To what extent to the cultural factors that Latino students identify as important to their retention show similarities to the cultural capitals as defined by Yosso? Using the lens of community cultural wealth theory to analyze the cultural influences identified through individual interviews I was able to look at existing social capitals and expand upon the meaning of those capitals as those individuals defined them. This study adds to existing literature regarding retention and cultural capital wealth for Latino students at community college.
Chapter II: Literature Review

The purpose of the literature review was to outline existing research on CCW’s role in Latino/a student retention and to identify the gaps in retention research that this paper could help fill. The process began by outlining the databases and search terms used to conduct the review. The chapter concludes with a description of the criteria used to include or exclude material and a definition of terms used in this paper.

Approach to Literature Review

The initial search began by reviewing prior studies related to the dissertation topic. With this review, the writer was able to begin building a basic database of keywords, topics, and links to other possible sources of information. The Google Scholar database (www.Scholar.google.com) identified other articles and terms for research expansion. The Hannon Library at Southern Oregon University (2014) provided access to the Educational Resource Information Center available through the EBSCOhost (www//Ebsco). Although the articles available to review were limited, it nevertheless was useful to find abstracts that looked promising with respect to information that could be located through other databases as noted below. Access to the Oregon State University library yielded more detail on the ERIC database. Other databases used included Psychinfo, also accessed through EBSCO, which yielded educational psychology results, Academic Search Complete, and the Pew Research Center. Additionally the literature review accessed and reviewed multiple federal government databases including the Department of Education, Department of Labor and Statistics, NCES, and the U.S. Census.
Keywords

The purpose of the study was to examine the links between Yosso’s (2005) CCW capitals in Latino/a student retention in a community college. To explore CCW’s effects on retention in community college, the initial keywords used were: Latino/a; academic retention; undergraduates; ethnicity; race; CCW; deficiency model; community college, and aspirational, familial, social, navigational, resistant, and linguistic capitals.

Exclusion and Inclusion Criteria

First, literature that related primarily to grades K-8 was excluded. Research that examined primary ethnic groups not related to the identified study population was outside the study’s scope and consequently disqualified. Additionally disqualified studies were those performed more than 15 years ago. Exceptions to this rule included studies considered of historical and/or scientific importance. Articles from countries in which the report had not been peer-reviewed and translated by a reputable source were excluded.

Definitions

The Office of Management and Budget defines “Hispanic or Latino” as a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race (http://www.census.gov, 2013). According to Dictionary.com (2014), socioeconomic status (SES) is defined as “…an individual or group’s position within a hierarchical social structure. Socioeconomic status depends on a combination of variables, including occupation, education income, wealth, and place of residence.” The Department of Health and Human Services produces a yearly report that defines the minimum wage of a low-income family or one that meets the designation of living in poverty.
For the purposes of this study, retention was characterized as full time Latino/a students who have successfully completed at least three terms at community college leading to a post-secondary qualification. “Successfully completed” means that the student has maintained the minimum GPA to remain in satisfactory academic standing at the institution.

Major Themes

The major themes of the review were: (a) the effect of the deficiency model in educational retention, (b) the role of CCW in academic retention; and (c) Latino/a post-secondary retention. These themes are examined in the following sections.

Effect of the Deficiency Model

The concept of a deficit model is defined as recognition that some groups, particularly minorities, are sometimes “deficient” because their culture and socioeconomic standing are distinct from the majority culture. Because their culture and socioeconomic standing are distinct, members of certain minority groups may not possess all the knowledge and skills that members of the majority culture possess and therefore members of some minority cultures may find it difficult to navigate systems such as public education, higher education, or even certain employment opportunities. This model is frequently used when researchers cite reasons why so many minority students fail to enroll in higher education or fail to be retained in higher education after enrolling.

Understanding the concept of the deficit model is critical when analyzing the literature on why Latino/a students have low retention rates after enrolling in higher education. As Latino/a students’ enrollment in community colleges has increased significantly over the past twenty years, researchers have relied on the paradigm that the deficit model explains why minority students are deficient. The model documents major deficits that prevent minority students from
succeeding, such as parents without a college education, low-income, inability to understand application forms, and lack of family support for schoolwork (Conchas, 2006; Coutinho & Oswald, 2000; Noguera, 2001; Oakes, 2005). Again, this is a model that focuses on factors that detract from student enrollment and retention. While a deficit model is not used as the theoretical framework for this study, it is important to understand and analyze this model as most existing research on retention of minority students relies on this model to explain why Latino/a students are not retained and why their success rate in higher education is so much lower than Whites.

The deficit model adopts the view that minorities are deficient because their culture and socioeconomic standing are not the same as those of the majority culture. An example of this even exists in educational psychology. Educational psychologists who studied the academic performance achievement of White and Non-White students explained the achievement gap between the two groups by concluding that, academically; Non-White students do not perform as well as White students by contending that Non-White students who fail academically do so because of a dysfunctional family culture and a lack of White cultural characteristics (Salkind, 2008).

The deficit model is also helpful in showing the negative effects of socioeconomic deficiencies and their effects on retention. As outlined below, research from multiple sources concurs with the model. Students with lower SES are less likely to obtain a community college education (Fry, 2002; Lopez, 2009). Primarily this is due to the fact that those who meet the SES designation are at a “…distinct disadvantage in respect to basic knowledge about community college education (e.g., costs and application processes), level of family income and support, educational degree expectations and plans, and academic preparation in high school”
Research has shown that 21.4% of Latino/a’s in the US are considered low income, defined by the US federal government (federal poverty income levels, 2014) as living on incomes less than 200% of the federal poverty level (Sims, Fortuny, & Henderson, 2009). When compared to the poverty rate overall for all minority groups, the percentage of Latino/as living below the poverty level is nine percentage points higher than the US poverty rate overall (Macartney, Bishaw, & Fontenot, 2013). Because Latino/a students generally come from low income, first-generation families, they have little or no knowledge of post-secondary opportunities, such as financial aid, access to college information, curriculum deficiencies, academic preparedness, mentoring, and advising; they also tend to have multiple familial commitments (Leon, 2003; Llagas & Snyder, 2003; Suarez-Orozco & Páez, 2002).

The cultural deficit model contends that the failure of students of color to complete their education is due to negative characteristics that are culture bound. Irizarry (2009) summarized it in the following way: society “…blames the victims of institutional oppression for their own victimization by referring to negative stereotypes and assumptions regarding certain groups or communities” (p. 1). Lopez (2000) indicated that the current debates on educational reform have a tendency to state that the achievement gap between White and Latino/a students results from individual deficits, while ignoring the barriers of inequality that these minority students face.

Because the deficit model continues to circulate in research, institutions, and teaching pedagogy (González, Moll & Amanti, 2005), its negative effects can be seen in multiple studies outlined in the following paragraphs. Research has found that there is a disproportionally high number of minority students in non-rigorous academic courses leading to college preparation in comparison to the White population and that this is caused by the
prevalent use of the deficiency model in education which deems students of color unable to complete rigorous academic courses (Conchas, 2006; Coutinho & Oswald, 2000; Noguera, 2001; Oakes, 2005).

The model frames the issue as a student/family dysfunction in which the student/family unit is seen to suffer from “cultural deprivation” (Bourdieu, 1997) because of insufficient exposure to cultural models that are compatible with academic achievement. The cultural capital held by academic institutions is defined largely by the dominant race; because in the case of the US, the current dominant race is White. The capital held by the dominant race is at odds with the cultural capital held by Latinos/as causing conflict. This dissonance between capitals leads to the assumption that, because Latino cultural capital is not the same as White cultural capital, Latino cultural capital is deficient.

González, Stein, and Huq (2012) used contact analysis, a measure of the frequency of particular pre-determined factors that appeared in the study, on data collected from 171 Latino families and determined that students are unlikely to complete a post-secondary education when others, and in particular their educators, consider their ethnicity a barrier. Students who have limited English proficiency and are first-generation immigrants are faced with learning a new language and assimilating into a society that neither speaks their native language nor recognizes their culture fully. Studies have also shown that Latinos born and raised in the US also continue to struggle with their ethnic identity and suffer from social stigma that manifests itself as disapproval on the part of a person or group with cultural characteristics different from those of the majority community (Lopez, 2000; Schneider & Ward, 2003). Ethnic identity also correlated with GPA and confirmed the role of ethnic identity outlined by González et al. (2012).
The deficit model fails to examine potential institutional barriers students confront, such as lack of funding or experiences of segregation based on ability, race, or ethnicity (Irizarry, 2009). Latino/a students have reported that, in comparison to their White counterparts, they are more likely to experience institutional barriers, and that negative school experiences are a major challenge for them (Martinez, DeGarmo, & Eddy, 2004). Martinez et al. (2004) administered a survey to 567 students who identified as Latino/a and which indicated that 50% of those surveyed either had suffered discrimination directly or had witnessed it. Despite some limitations in the study, specifically the random assignment and self-identification of respondents, which may have caused incorrect cultural identification, and the use of high school students, the survey results showed that discrimination towards Latinos remains an issue in the education system.

The issue of discrimination is not limited to K-12 educational systems, but has been documented in post-secondary institutions as well. González, Stein, & Huq (2012) identified the struggles that Latino/a doctoral student’s face with respect to minimal research support for those who wish to study Latino issues. These students also suffer from reports of institutional racism and low academic expectations from faculty. In her personal account, Rosales (2006) described racist comments from staff and students that caused her to feel marginalized.

This feeling of marginalization is also reflected in Storlie, Moreno, and Portman’s study (2013), in which they identified Hispanic students who reported experiencing social exclusion, overwhelmed by academic expectations, and feeling alienated while attending a primarily White college. One of the struggles Latino/a students identified was “…a mismatch between the supportive experiences at home and their negative encounters at college” (Storlie et al. 2013, p
This mismatch contributed to their feelings of rejection on the part of the institution, which in turn, caused some students to leave school.

Clearly, the deficit model has failed to consistently explain why students from the same community that includes those who have the same alleged deficiencies, succeed in school (Haycock, 2001). At the time of this study, the growing literature on CCW has sought to move beyond the existing deficit view of Latino/a student’s educational experience.

**The Role of Community Cultural Wealth in Academic Retention**

This review examined the current research that looks at capitals, rather than the alleged deficiencies, that Latino/a community cultural wealth (CCW) contributes to college retention. Yosso (2005) suggested that Latino/a communities share a cultural capital that consists of items of “wealth”. From this, she developed the CCW theory, which seeks to recognize the role of those capitals as a means for Latino/a students to combat the negativity of the deficit models and assimilist policies that are inconsistent with Latino/a culture. Each of these capitals is described below.

Aspirational capital refers to the ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future, even in the face of real and perceived barriers. This includes the hopes for further education. Research has shown that 82% of Latino/as aged 16-25 agreed that a college degree is important to succeed in life (Pew, 2013). Fry (2002) indicated that more than 10% of the 1.2 million Latino/a high school graduates enrolled in post-secondary education, and 42% enrolled in community colleges. Fry attributed this to multiple characteristics found only in the community college, including lower tuition, increased degree programs focused on part-time attendance, accommodations for students who work full-time, such as evening classes, and proximity to
community. The Pew Hispanic Center (2013) reported that 77% of Latino/as aged 16-25 stated that their parents believe that college is the most important step after high school.

The role of familial capital (the cultural knowledge centered on the family) has been shown to be one of the key components for academic success through retention. Ong, Phinney, and Dennis (2006) used a longitudinal survey model to examine the association between socioeconomic hierarchy and educational achievement. The researchers hypothesized that achievement outcomes are influenced by family interdependence, parental support, and ethnic identity. The results confirmed their hypothesis that familial capital was related positively to academic achievement. The study concentrated on a four-year university in a diverse college and suggested the possibility that family interdependence may have been replaced by peer interdependence, as those peers were easily accessible to the students. The study did not take into account campus services that could be available to students in a highly diverse institution. The study remains interesting, as it did demonstrate those positive capitals that family can contribute to a student’s retention and graduation.

Social capital refers to the “networks of people and community resources” (Yosso, 2005, p. 45) that Latino/a students have, and research has been performed to establish a link between academically successful students and social capital. Gloria, Castellanos, Lopez, and Rosales (2005) conducted a quantitative study to examine the role of social support for Latino/a college students. The study found clearly that maintaining familial and social ties was correlated positively with retention. The study also showed that students who were able to create new networks and/or maintain old networks all remained in college, thus confirming the importance of social capital. While confirming the role of support as part of CCW, the Gloria et al. study focused primarily on female university students. This differs from the sample population of
community college students in the present study, but the current study provided qualitative information about the importance of social and family capital.

In looking at linguistic capital (the intellectual and social skills gained by being bilingual), Monkman, Ronald, and Théramène (2005) conducted a qualitative phenomenological study that examined linguistic capital and the use of language as a negotiating dynamic to teach a second language. The study found that those Latinos who spoke Spanish and whose teachers assigned social and educational value to their social capital were academically more successful than students who learned English by rote.

Oreopeza, Varhese, and Kanno (2010) examined navigational capital, the skills used to maneuver through institutions not designed for students of color; the researchers conducted a qualitative study to identify the different practices that students used to navigate educational paths. Their combined use of linguistic and social capital was found to be most effective in establishing tools to navigate into and through the educational system. The study was limited to second language students in one institution, which makes it difficult to generalize the findings to other students who may have different experiences or social networks.

Luna and Martinez (2013) used the CCW model to interpret findings from their study that used four of the capitals Yosso (2005) outlined: aspirational, familial, social, and navigational. The study used qualitative focus group interviews conducted at a public university in a southwestern metropolitan city and was part of a larger study that “…examined educational school dropout prevention programs and the educational experiences of Latino students in high schools and universities” (para. 11). Their findings showed that Latino/a students bring knowledge, skills, and abilities to the educational setting that the educational system undervalues
or fails to recognize. The study also outlined ways in which institutions can build upon these skills to create policies and programs to increase Latino/a students’ academic success.

Itishani (2003) found that students who received post-secondary information only from high school had significantly reduced knowledge about attending college than did students who received it from multiple sources. This deficit is one that 22% of Latino first-generation students face (NCES, 2005). Conversely, Rivera’s quantitative study (2014) used survey data collected from 124 college eligible Latino/a students and found that their likelihood of submitting a college application was based on a combination of peer, high school, and social influences. Despite the limitations of this study, which was constrained by samples drawn from within the same campus programs, it still shows the critical role of community in social capital for first-generation students. Lopez (2000) countered the deficit model paradigm by insisting that, “Community involvement must be an integral part of identifying and finding solutions” (p. 56).

When these issues are examined and combined, it can be seen that a low education retention rate is caused not only by the lack of a college-going culture within the family, but also by multiple socioeconomic factors that are inherent in US society. Despite these barriers, the CCW model shows that Latino/a students are able to access capitals that can lead to academic retention.

**Latino/a Post-Secondary Retention**

Post-secondary retention for the purpose of this study was defined as Latino/a students who successfully completed at least three terms of full time education at community college leading to a post-secondary qualification. Successful completion of a term required that they maintained the minimum GPA to remain in satisfactory academic standing at the institution. The Pew Institute (2013) reported that the college completion rate for Hispanics in 2013 was 42%
that of the White rate. In a longitudinal study that followed Latino/a college students for three years, the NCES (2012) identified that 39% of students who started at an institution that offered certificates or degrees that generally take fewer than four years to complete, were no longer enrolled at that institution and had received no degree. By comparison, students who enrolled at a traditional four-year baccalaureate awarding school had only an 18% dropout rate. Latino/a students are “…at a distinct disadvantage in respect to basic knowledge about post-secondary education (e.g., costs and application processes), level of family income and support, educational degree expectations and plans, and academic preparation in high school” (Pascarella, Pierson, Wolniak, & Terenzini, 2004, pp. 249-250). Fry (2002) and Lopez (2009) have shown that students with a lower SES are less likely to complete a post-secondary education, and the Latino population accounts for 30% of the entire population in the US that meets the SES designation of low income (Sims, Fortuny, & Henderson, 2009).

The Pew Hispanic Center (2013) reported that Latino/as who attend college experience different academic challenges. They are less likely to complete a bachelor’s degree because of “enrollment in less selective institutions and they have different experiences” (Fry, 2000, p.vi). Tinto (1987, 1993) suggested that assimilation into campus and its multiple academic and social requisites represent predictors of continued retention. However, it is difficult to assimilate when a student is from a different culture and has experiences that differ from those of the dominant culture. Assimilation is difficult through extracurricular social activities such as on-campus housing when Latino/a students have increased familial financial responsibilities and are therefore more likely to live with family rather than in campus housing (Fry, 2002).

Fry (2002) suggested that it is important to recognize the issues that Latinos face and that significant outcomes could be achieved with specific policy initiatives that target Latino students.
who attend college. Fry went on to say that, educators need to recognize the role that these issues play in resilience, and they should not simply be seen as a negative barrier. Luna and Martinez (2013) suggested that the Pew report lacks the fact that research shows increased racial bias on college campuses.

The role of parental involvement in students’ retention in community colleges is a form of social capital, but to understand the way in which it exerts positive effects on Latino/a college students, it is important to interpret parental involvement in the contexts of Latino culture, which will differ from the dominant White cultural expectations. A 2005 qualitative study by Perna and Titus found that the institutional expectations of Latino/a parental involvement, when seen from a White perspective, are considered to be deficient. Because the Latino/a culture is one that defers to educators, which is often interpreted as the parents’ lack of interest in their child’s education. Perna and Titus argued that when seen in the cultural context, this is not the case, as parental involvement focused more on discussing education at home versus at school, and the study showed an increase in college enrollment when parents and the student discussed education at home. The study, which was conducted in high schools in a rural community, could be replicated in a post-secondary institution with a retrospective examination of the retention of those same students.

In summary, this section reviewed Latino/a enrollment and increases in attendance of this demographic that could be attributed to a number of factors related to retention. Many of the difficulties Latino/as face in post-secondary education retention are caused by an expectation that they will assimilate into a culture that is often at odds with their own cultural schema.
Implications of the Literature

Prior literature and research has focused on the experiences of high school students or those of students in post-secondary, particularly four-year institutions. At the time of this study, there was limited research on the role of CCW in the community college system. As the number of Latino/a students who are attempting higher education increases, it is important to examine the role CCW plays in their academic success, so that policy and curricula can be reviewed based on the recognition of the cultural capitals that these students bring with them to the institution.

The necessity to alter educational paradigms across the spectrum to incorporate these capitals is vital to continue to build and expand retention within the Latino/a college-going community. Reviewing these capitals with reference to the CCW model adds to the existing research and guides academic institutions as they work to improve inclusion and retention.

Summary Review of Literature

The literature review conducted at the time of this study documented that the conversation about the retention of Latino/a students is moving away from the deficit model that focuses on their educational deficiencies and towards a CCW model. This model identifies and celebrates the cultural capitals that Latino/a students bring with them, and on which the institution can capitalize to enhance the academic retention and ultimately, the post-secondary qualification for these students.
Chapter III: Design of the Study

There has been extensive research on the reasons that Latino/a students fail in academic achievement in community colleges (e.g., Cardenas & Kerby, 2012; Fry, 2002; Lopez, 2000). However, when this study was conducted, the literature review was unable to identify significant research about the reasons why substantial numbers of Latino/a students who enroll in community colleges are able to be retained and do complete a post-secondary education. As mentioned earlier, the NCES (2012) found that 39% of Latino students who start at two-year institutions did not continue at the institution; however, 61% do continue with their education. Multiple studies outlined in the literature review identified reasons why a significant proportion of Latino/a students do not remain in community colleges after their initial enrollment (e.g., American Council on Education, 2011; Caberra & Padilla, 2004; Darder & Torres, 2014; Tinto, 1993). However, these studies do not address why 61% of Latinos/as do remain in community college, and continue their education successfully. Recognition of this discrepancy led to the two research questions for this study. To address these issues at community colleges, this study looked at the cultural capitals Latino/a students rely on in order to be successful for at least their first year in a community college.

The community cultural wealth model (CCW) seeks to show that Latino students bring with them a wealth of capitals that Yosso has defined as: aspirational, familial, social, navigational, resistant, and linguistic. The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine whether Latino/a students who remain enrolled in community colleges use the cultural capitals Yosso (2005) identified to retain in post-secondary education. Thus, this study sought to understand what CCW factors Latino/a student’s identify and self-report as enabling them to be
successful in their first year in a community colleges and to see if the factors they self-report align with the capitals Yosso identified in her research...

This study is a phenomenological qualitative study that relied upon John Crewsell’s book Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design (2012). A phenomenological study describes the common meaning of several individuals through relying on their descriptions of their lived experiences. Multiple Latino/a community college students were interviewed using semi-structured questions derived from the two research questions and framed to determine the cultural factors that influenced their community college retention and if those factors bore a similarity to the CCW capitals Yosso (2005) identified. The remainder of this chapter reviews the research questions, position, philosophical approach, guiding theoretical perspectives, data sources, analysis, and limitations noted in this study.

**Research Questions**

The study addressed the following research questions: RQ 1, In terms of potential cultural influences, what do Latino students identify as a cultural component of their retention at community college? And RQ 2, To what extent do the cultural factors that Latino students identify as important to their retention show similarities to the cultural capitals as defined by Yosso?

As presented earlier, as a starting point for research development and eventual coding, this study referenced Luna and Martinez’ (2013) study, which used the CCW model to interpret their findings according to four of the capitals Yosso (2005) outlined: aspirational, familial, social, and navigational. The purpose of RQ 1 was to identify, through interviews with Latino/a students, the cultural influences that students indicated were integral to their retention at community college. The questions sought to have the students identify what they felt was
important to discuss, rather than myself pre-determining the importance of the factors involved. Semi-structured, open-ended interviews with students who identified as Latino/a were able to tell their own personal stories which allowed me to identify themes. To address question one I looked for repeating words or phrases in order to develop themes.

The second research question sought to compare the cultural factors identified by subjects during the interviews with the capitals described by Yosso (2005). The comparison between themes and known capitals was designed to determine whether any similarities existed between the themes identified in this study and those Yosso identified in her theoretical framework. The study remained open to the possibility that other themes might emerge that did not fit within the confines of the established capitals.

Positionality

As a person who holds Resident Alien status in the USA, I bring to the study a perspective of my own community college experience that had to be re-adjusted to the issues of an educational system that differs drastically from that of my native country. My background has the potential of introducing bias into my interpretation of the participants’ responses in this study because my experience differs from theirs. I bring a desire to learn and to influence college policy towards minorities. As a White female, I acknowledge that I am a member of the dominant culture, and reviewing the study through a critical lens, I recognize that my values, background, and knowledge are primarily those of a White female. To guard against this potential bias, and protect the integrity of the data, I took specific steps to ensure the validity and reliability of the study, which are reviewed later in this chapter.
Philosophical Approach

I believe that there are many contexts and knowledge bases that are unique to each student despite a shared experience. The use of a phenomenological inquiry assumes that individual practices have elements of a shared experience (Patton, 2002). Through the use of individual interviews, this study sought to discover those contexts, knowledge, and experiences that students bring to the educational institution. In looking for a philosophical approach, that meets this belief, interpretive/constructivist epistemology was found to be most consistent with this goal. Interpretivism is based on the premise that reality is a socially constructed concept and that as such there is no single reality but rather various interpretations of separate events (Merriam, 2009). Constructivism seeks to “Describe, understand, interpret…Multiple realities, context-bound” (Merriam, 2009, p.11). Interpretative/constructivist is a philosophical view that seeks to understand the nature of knowledge or how we make meaning of our world and situations. Preliminary work on what is now known as constructivism was begun by Lev Vygotsky (Wertsch, 1985) who saw human development through the interactions with society and between people. Jean Piaget (1950) formalized this work to focus on how we make meaning through experiences and ideas.

Using an interpretive/constructivist epistemology as an approach to understanding the role of community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) enabled me to demonstrate the multiple realities and contexts of Latino/a students’ experiences. These experiences are not based upon one single truth but rather are a series of events and experiences unique to each student, yet bounded by a single culture. The use of open-ended interviews as part of this study allowed me to interpret the experiences and create meanings of the responses, leading to a richer data set. The use of multiple sites and subjects gave the study a wider range of reporting experiences
while still being bound by the similar contexts. Patton (2002) said, “We can only know what we experience by attending to perceptions and meanings” (p.105). In using a phenomenological study I reviewed and controlled her own perceptions and developed meaning from the interview responses to interpret the role of CCW capitals or the in-depth study of the role of CCW in college retention for Latino/a students.

In using this framework, and by giving minorities a voice, I sought to interpret responses of Latino/a students based on concrete examples of cultural wealth that lead to community college retention. The responses received and noted in this study demonstrate that those voices are both strong and important in the advancement of society and our educational institutions.

Guiding Theoretical Perspectives

As mentioned, the philosophical approach that guided this study was primarily, interpretive/constructivist epistemology which seeks to “describe, understand, interpret...multiple realities, context-bound” (Merriam, 2009, p. 11). However, the theoretical perspective that drove this study is based upon the community cultural wealth theory (CCW). Yosso’s CCW theory (2005) derives its foundations within Critical Race theory (CRT). CRT reviews and challenges the dominant culture by studying the intercentricity, defined as the examination of race, class and national origin and how the combination manifests itself in different settings of race and racism (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).

Yosso (2005) employed CCW as a consistent push to reframe culture as a resource that minority population’s use, and therefore reframed alternative cultures not as a detriment, but a strength. In reframing the prior conversations of culture as a deficit, Yosso (2005) reflected upon those social systems that support Latino/a culture and knowledge by identifying the six active and often overlapping cultural capitals. Yosso’s study suggested six capitals within the
CCW model, aspirational, familial, social, navigational, resistant and linguistic. Aspirational capital refers to the “ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future, even in the face of real and perceived barriers. This resiliency is evidenced in those who “allow themselves and their children to dream of possibilities beyond their present circumstances” (pp.77-78). Familial capital as defined by Yosso is a “cultural knowledge nurtured around family (kin) that carry a sense of community history, memory and cultural intuition” (p. 79). Yosso’s social capital refers to the “networks of people and community resources” (p. 79) that Latino students have. Navigational capital refers to those skills used by Latinos to maneuver through institutions not designed for students of color. Resistant capital shows how skills and knowledge that are created through oppositional behavior towards inequalities represent an asset in obtaining equality. Linguistic capital refers to the intellectual and social skills gained through being bi-lingual.

Data Sources and Description

The following section outlines the data sources and descriptions used to answer the following research questions (a) In terms of potential cultural influences, what do Latino students identify as a cultural component of their retention at community college? (b) To what extent to the cultural factors that Latino students identify as important to their retention show similarities to the cultural capitals as defined by Yosso?

The unit of analysis was Latino/a students, and the data source for this study was the semi-structured individual interviews with Latino/a students at two rural community colleges in Oregon. A qualitative interview was designed to examine the role of CCW in the retention of Latino/a students at these colleges. A phenomenological research study focuses on uncovering and interpreting a common experience. In this case, this study focused on the role of cultural wealth on retention in Latino/a community college students.
The study did not seek to control or quantify the event: therefore, the use of a phenomenological study model allowed me to ask and interpret what the interview subjects identified as a cultural component to their college retention and if those identified components have similarities to CCW. Because interpretive/constructivist philosophy seeks to interpret the various contexts and experiences of the individual, the interview questions were semi-structured to allow participants to discuss their culture and beliefs in their own words.

Selection of Sites

I began by locating demographic information regarding Latino populations as a whole in the state and narrowing this down to student populations. These data were found in a variety of sources, including the Post-Secondary Data system (NCES, 2012), US Census data (US Census 2012), and the Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC, 2005). Using information gained from these sources, the study identified that there was a sufficient population of Latinos, and in particular, Latino/a students, to make the study feasible. Among a possible 17 community colleges in Oregon, I was interested particularly in rural colleges that had a demographic of minority students who were potentially available to participate in the study. This choice was informed by the demographic growth of Latino populations within the rural community and the fact that the majority of community colleges in Oregon are located in rural areas. Based on the information above, the final locations chosen were representative of minority attendance and elicited data that identified the way in which the CCW model might be used to identify cultural capitals that influence student retention. Permission to collect data was given by the Vice President of Student Services at CC1 and the President of CC2. Both provided the names of specific campus leaders to contact, which was
accomplished via email. Initially, the study intended to focus on one college, designated community college one (CC1), but an insufficient number of students were recruited. A subsequent community college (CC2) with characteristics similar to those at the initial project site was added to the study, and data were collected at both sites. After a review of the demographic information, these two institutions were chosen based on availability to myself and the appropriate demographics.

**Identification of Participants**

In accordance with the Oregon State University Institutional Review Board (IRB), a consent form was sent to the Vice President of Student Services at CC1 and the President of CC2 (See Appendix A). The study used purposeful non-probability sampling, as it did not seek to generalize the results (Creswell, 2012). In using a purposeful sample of only specific students, as outlined below, the data generated detailed information about their experiences related to the investigation of the influence of CCW and the capitals contained therein on the retention of Latino/a community college students. Participants were recruited from the two community colleges, which were in two different counties in Oregon.

The study used homogenous sampling, which allows for an in-depth study of a particular group; in this study, the particular group was Latino/a college students who were required to be a member of a campus club that serves minority populations. The choice to use membership in a minority club as a criterion for inclusion was based on Dustin’s (2006) study that found a positive correlation between students who were members of such a club and their persistence in a community college setting. Both institutions hosted clubs designed specifically for minority population students. CC1 hosted a club specifically for Latino/a students, while CC2 hosted a
club that served multi-ethnic minority students. Membership of these clubs represented access to the CCW capitals of social and navigational that are reviewed in this study. Further, they contained a greater number of the students who met the study criteria than did other clubs on those campuses. Participants also had to be in good academic standing, and have completed at least three terms of full-time enrollment in post-secondary education. Participants enrolled in developmental education classes were excluded. Participants had to be at least 18 years or older at the time of the study.

Once institutional permission was granted, a letter requesting assistance was sent to contacts who acted as local informants at the host institutions (See Appendix B). The host college identified potential participants through their databases and they were contacted via institutional student email with a letter I prepared that outlined the study and subject requirements and requested their participation (See Appendix C). Potential participants also received an Informed Consent (See Appendix D) that described the goals of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, and the steps taken to ensure confidentiality.

To protect confidentiality, the campus informant scheduled appointments using the coding CC1/1 for Community College 1/participant 1 or CC2/1 for Community College 2/participant 1, and so forth. The informants kept the participants’ contact information, which was destroyed after analysis was completed.

To retain strict confidentiality for the participants, the emails were sent and received by local informants at the two colleges; in this case, a student at the first college and staff member at the second institution, who were the president and faculty coordinators of a minority population club, respectively; both were compensated with a gift card. The same informants also scheduled
the interviews. Student participants responded to the local informants by email or phone and indicated that they were willing to participate in the study. The informants screened the students upon application for relevant demographic and academic information to establish the participants’ veracity and ensure accurate data collection. Upon meeting the relevant criteria for inclusion, the local informants scheduled interviews with the myself. To protect their confidentiality during data collection and transcription, participants were assigned a predetermined alphanumeric ID code. The code was designated CC1 or CC2 to indicate the college, and was followed by the subject interview number, for example: CC1/1; this continued in sequence as interviews were scheduled.

In order to be involved in the study Latino/a subjects were required to meet three criteria outlined below. Subjects must be full time students holding good academic standing as defined by the host institution, had completed at least three terms of continuous enrollment at the institution, and be a member of a club that served minority populations.

Because the drop-out rates for students who are involved in full-time developmental education is so high, these students were excluded from this study. There are mixed results with respect to retention and success on the part of students who are enrolled extensively in developmental education. Achieving the Dream (2015) noted that nearly two-thirds of all community college students test into math and/or writing developmental classes and that 50% of those students score into at least one of the subjects. Of these students, 72% did not graduate within eight years. In addition, Crews and Aragon (2007) showed that students who began with a developmental writing course initially completed more credit hours than did students who did not take those courses. However, over a three-year period, there was no significant difference between degree/certificate completion and initial participation in developmental writing classes.
Multiple studies have shown that the lower the scores entering freshman have in math and reading, and the greater number of developmental education courses they are required to take, the lower their retention rate (Bailey, Jeong, & Cho, 2010). Knowing that there is a high probability that students enrolled full-time in developmental education for an extended period have a greater probability of dropping-out prompted the decision to exclude such students from the study. Instead, students were selected who had finished a year of college and had been successful in some transfer/career education courses. In examining students who have completed the courses required, research has shown that these students are more likely to be retained and graduate.

Data Collection

Before the participants were interviewed formally, the questions were verified for cultural sensitivity and order by two non-participants who met the study criteria. The interviews with the test participants contained the same questions as those with the final participants and followed the same format. Further, the questions were altered minimally and the changes did not affect their context or purpose. Those test interviews are not recorded in this paper but it is of note that they elicited similar responses as the actual interviews.

Participant interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed over a period of four weeks at the two sites. All participants met the screening criteria required for inclusion and all were offered the choice to decline being interviewed via audio-recording. None declined, and all interviews proceeded accordingly. I met individually with each participant at the host institutions. At CC1, two interviews were conducted in a small conference room in which there was minimal noise from outside sources to reduce distraction. Interviews at CC2 were conducted in a small, quiet classroom. I created a more personal interview setting by moving
furniture so that it resembled an office more than a classroom. Beverages and snacks were available for the participants in the interview rooms, but they received no compensation.

Participating students received a consent form prior to the interview that contained information regarding recording the interview and confidentiality. When they arrived for the interview, they were given the same consent form and were asked to read it before the interview commenced. Participants were advised that the interview would be audio-recorded for transcription purposes and that information regarding their identity would be kept confidential. Information was kept on an encoded thumb drive in a locked location when not in use. Each subject was asked if s/he was ready to begin and upon indicating that they were, audio-recording began.

Each interview began the same way by asking whether the interviewee had read the consent form and if s/he agreed to its terms. None of the participants declined consent and the interviews proceeded accordingly. Field notes were written during the interview to record any insights or comments the participants or I made.

In keeping with the semi-structured, open-ended format, each student was asked the same set of questions with variations if the I required follow up or pursued the response more deeply for clarification or additional information. In some cases, the question was restated to help the student understand if a comprehension issue arose.

At the end of the interview, each participant had the opportunity to make comments or express views that they personally felt were important to the process and the I asked their permission to terminate the interview. I then told the participants about CCW capitals, and explained that this was not discussed prior to the interview to avoid
response bias on their part. I requested permission to contact them if needed for member checking purposes and thanked them for their participation.

The initial plan was to use a transcription software program. While that would have been effective in managing the data, it has been shown to alter the process of transcription and potentially, its definition (Mondada, 2007). Therefore, I decided to transcribe the audio tapes using a protocol adapted from McLellan, MacQueen, and Neidig (2003). The formatting was standardized to include information on the participants’ alpha numeric ID, location (CC1/CC2), and date. After reviewing each recording three times, I opted to use a smooth verbatim method of transcription. Specific words, such as “um”, “ah”, and stutters were not transcribed. Occasionally, if a student laughed after a phrase, it was noted. In addition, when a person appeared to be having trouble articulating, the stutter was noted as an illustration of emotion rather than a speech deficit. Any information that might allow a student to be identified was marked “Redacted”, with a general description of what was noted in parentheses thereafter, for example “Redacted (child’s name)”. Potential identifying information included names of family members, friends, faculty, or states. Unintelligible words were marked as (inaudible segment). Pauses in the statements were indicated with ellipses.

**Saturation**

A phenomenological study of a heterogeneous group may “vary in size from 3 to 4 individuals to 10-15” (Merriam, 2012, p.78). To ensure that the study was able to be completed up to 30 interviews were authorized, and eight interviews, in addition to the two test interviews, were conducted for an average period of 50 minutes. This was in keeping with recommendations from literature. Based on repeated themes, responses,
and phrases used by respondents no new information was uncovered and sampling was completed after eight interviews. Saturation occurs when no new insights, themes, or data are identified (Bowen, 2008; Creswell, 2012; Merriam, 2009). In using field notes and transcriptions over the course of multiple interviews, I was able to review the data collected and continue to gather new data to determine saturation.

Central Interview Questions

As outlined above, the CCW model (Yosso, 2005) notes that the experiences Latinos bring from their own culture are rich sources of support and knowledge. Recognizing that each of the answers the student provided related to his/her own reality, interview questions were designed to explore those experiences and realities.

The questions were formatted to elicit information about self-identified cultural factors that were instrumental in college retention for Latino/a students. I then used those answers to look for similarities that could be described as cultural capitals once the information was coded and developed into major themes. The questions were based on Luna and Martinez’ (2013) study, “A qualitative study using community cultural wealth to understand the educational experiences of Latino college students.” However, there were several distinct differences between the original study and this one. The original study used focus groups composed of individuals who were attending a university, while this study relied upon individual interviews and focused on students who were attending a rural community college. Their study defined success as “…students who graduated from high school and were enrolled full time in a four-year institution” (para. 11). This study looked at retention in a community college for three academic quarters among students in good academic standing. Both studies explored CCW with respect to higher education outcomes and, as such, it was deemed appropriate to use the original
questions as a basis for the questions used in this study. I contacted both of the authors and Luna was generous enough to share the questions used in the original study.

The participants for this study were asked eight open-ended questions. The questions were adjusted based on prior literature about cultural capitals and retention (Arellano & Padilla, 1999; Gandara, 1995; Yosso, 2005) and subsequently through the testing phase of the study. The questions were designed to elicit answers about those factors that students identified as key to their retention in a community college.

1. Tell me what, in your culture, motivated you to attend college?
2. Tell me what obstacles you had to overcome to attend college?
3. Tell me your family’s role in your decision to attend college?
4. Is there anything that your family could have done to support you more in your education?
5. How did your community support your educational goals?
6. Tell me what other aspects of your culture helped you continue in college?
7. How does the college show they value your culture?
8. What elements of your culture would you include to design an effective retention program for Latino/a students?

**Strategies to Protect Human Participants**

The principal investigator and the I completed CITI training and certification.

Data were gathered by the myself using an interview protocol that included the demographic information required for the study and a description of the research project and purpose. According to Oregon State University’s guidelines, a human subject is defined as, “A living individual about whom an investigator conducting research obtains:
data through interactions with the individual” (http://research.oregonstate.edu, 2015). The review process continues to state that interaction is defined as “…communication or interpersonal contact between investigator and subject. The interaction may be as remote as an anonymous online survey.” Consistent with these guidelines, all data collected were kept anonymous in the report. The host institution kept a secured master list of names in the event I needed to contact the participants for follow up. The study followed all procedures outlined by the Oregon State University IRB.

Analyses

The qualitative research type for this study was phenomenological analysis which seeks to search for the “essence of basic structure of a phenomenon” (Merriam, 2009, p. 199). The research questions asked in this study were: (a) In terms of potential cultural influences, what do Latino students identify as a cultural component of their retention at community college? and (b) To what extent to the cultural factors that Latino students identify as important to their retention show similarities to the cultural capitals as defined by Yosso?

After transcription was complete, the audio tapes were reviewed three times to verify the accuracy of the transcription. Transcripts then were downloaded into Nvivo 11 starter for Windows software package (QSR International, 2016) for coding purposes. The goal of coding to themes was to answer the research questions proposed.

The questions were exploratory “what” type questions in order to explore the phenomena of retention and community cultural wealth. Analysis began by reading the transcripts repeatedly in order to isolate the phenomenon under investigation. The review of the transcripts and initial marking was performed to achieve this goal.
Steps in the Analysis

Analysis was based on the processes outlined by Creswell (2012), who described six steps in the analysis of qualitative data: (a) Collect data; (b) Transcribe audio recordings; (c) Review transcripts; (d) Conduct initial coding for themes; (e) Conduct secondary coding, and (f) Conduct final coding. The details of these steps are outlined below.

Data collection. Data collection was conducted at the two community college study sites, during which participants were interviewed and audio recorded over the course of four weeks. Field notes were taken for verification and added reliability. During the interview process subjects self-disclosed their status as a traditional or non-traditional students through their responses to the questions. Interview subjects consisted of six Latina subjects of which three were traditional age students defined as students aged between 18-24 years of age (NCES, 2015) and two Latino students both of whom were non-traditional students.

Transcription of interview audio-recordings. I decided to transcribe the audio tapes according to a transcription protocol adapted from research by McLellan, MacQueen, and Neidig (2003). After reviewing each recording three times, I used a smooth verbatim method of transcription that omitted certain superfluous utterances. On occasion, expressions of emotion were retained. Any information that might have identified a participant was redacted in the transcript, and pauses were marked.

Transcript review. Analysis began by reading the transcripts repeatedly to identify and note recurring phrases or words to answer RQ 1, In terms of potential cultural influences, what do Latino students identify as a cultural component of their retention at community college?

Primary level coding. Transcripts were downloaded into Nvivo and coded initially according to the specific question asked during the interview; this allowed me to review all
responses to the same questions and to look for repeating words or phrases. This was matched with the transcripts for veracity, and the responses were then coded into domains to identify patterns that included the cultural influences students addressed during the interviews. The domains were goals, support, and barriers. Themes that did not fit these domains were examined to look for recurring topics that could generate new themes or outliers.

**Secondary level coding.** The domains were then reviewed for their similarity to the themes identified in the literature. Deconstructing the domains using the themes identified in the literature to interpret and assign them to specific known themes in CCW addressed RQ2, to what extent do the cultural factors Latino/a student identify as important to their retentions show similarities to the cultural capitals Yosso defined?

**Final coding.** The results were reviewed based on the prior level of coding to determine whether the cultural factors identified first through the domain coding were associated subsequently with specific known capitals. These were then reviewed to determine if any new themes or outliers that did not fit the coding were generated and therefore should be coded as subsets of the domains.

The results of this analysis, together with the responses to the research questions, are provided in the subsequent chapter.

**Strategies to Ensure Reliability**

Comparing the literature with the findings was integral to making further recommendations for research and development of the role that CCW plays in Latino/a student college retention. This provided a way to ensure the findings’ reliability, as well as search for potential new themes that might emerge. In addition, part of the individual interview process included member-checking using narrative accuracy to reflect and summarize the participants’
interviews. Triangulation was adopted to “corroborate evidence from different individuals, types of data” (Creswell, 2012, p. 259) using interviews and field notes with both the test participants and the actual respondent subjects.

The test participants answered the questions during a “full” interview protocol, which included field notes and the answers the test participants gave. Multiple members of an educational institution with both faculty and staff who self-identify as Latino/a checked the interview questions for cultural understanding; further, members of the graduate committee who identify as Latino/a also were included in the process. The consistency in the questions asked, and the use of an emic approach, an analysis of the phenomena as perceived by myself (Webster, 2017), to note and chart responses enhanced the research process.

**Respondent Validation**

Member checking was used to ensure respondent validation. This method has been identified as appropriate for qualitative research studies (Merriam, 2009). In this study I sought clarification during the interview process through paraphrasing and summarization of responses from the participants. Participants also were offered the opportunity to review the finished transcripts and to add to the audio interview anything they felt was important to the study. The participants checked the transcripts for accuracy, and requested only minor changes in the sentence structure. They identified no further potential themes. Participants also were given the option to contact myself via college email or via the informants at the host institutions. I did not receive any follow up contact after member checking.

To ensure reliability, the study created an audit trail that reviewed data collection, decision-making criteria, category construction, and any modifications that took place
during collection and analysis. Field notes and debriefing were used to enhance the reliability of the analysis and subsequent findings. This provided an understanding of CCW and its role in retention through the data collected during the interviews. Audio recordings, transcripts, and field notes were retained in a secure location and available for review upon request.

Limitations

This methodology was able to address only a small sample of the population and thus was able to give a “voice” to only a few students. There may be alternative experiences that are missing because of the limited sample size. Because all of the institutions were in a single state, the findings may not be generalized to other locations. Researcher bias was controlled whenever possible, but any qualitative research has the distinct risk of research bias.

Summary of Design of the Study

The design of this phenomenological qualitative study sought to answer the research questions: (a) In terms of potential cultural influences, what do Latino students identify as a cultural component of their retention at community college? and (b) To what extent do the cultural factors that Latino students identify as important to their retention show similarities to the cultural capitals as defined by Yosso?

The study was guided by an interpretive/constructivist philosophy that sought to interpret the experiences and meanings found during the interview process. Yosso’s (2005) theory of CCW that the capitals it contains are used by persons of color and in particular, Latino/as, to be successful in a majority White community. The CCW theoretical framework identifies the subject’s beliefs and strengths that lie within a model that is culturally relevant and that
recognizes that the pathway to retention for Latino/a students follows non-traditional models of knowledge.

The study used a semi-structured interview process that investigated the self-identified elements of Latino culture that aided in retention and which were outlined by the participants and their possible relationship to the CCW capitals of aspirational, familial, social, navigational, resistant, and linguistic capitals (Yosso 2005). Using a phenomenological approach allowed me to interpret and construct common meaning of the lived experiences of Latino/a students with respect to retention at two rural community colleges in Oregon.

The use of audio transcription allowed the study to look at existing themes of CCW while simultaneously looking for any new or emerging themes. The use of a qualitative study allowed me to obtain detailed information in interviews with open-ended questions that enabled the participants to share their stories and personal success in their own words.
Chapter IV: Results

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to examine the role of cultural capitals identified by Yosso (2005) in the retention of Latino students at community college. The community cultural wealth model (CCW) seeks to show that Latino students bring with them a wealth of capitals, aspirational, familial, social, navigational, resistant, and linguistic, which help them to be successful in post-secondary education. This chapter provides information on the theoretical framework used in this study, community cultural wealth, data collection sites, interview descriptions, an overview of the analysis and the results of the data collected. The study addressed two research questions: (a) In terms of potential cultural influences, what do Latino students identify as a cultural component of their retention at community college? and (b) To what extent do the cultural factors that Latino students identify as important to their retention show similarities to the cultural capitals as defined by Yosso?

Overview

This chapter presents the results of the coded analysis of transcripts of the responses to the interview questions. Data collection took place over four weeks at two community colleges in Oregon. The colleges contained similar demographics and generated sufficient subjects for interview and data collection. The determining factor of using the two colleges in rural Oregon was based upon the high numbers of Latino populations in those areas.

Using questions based on the Luna and Martinez (2013) study as a guide to create interview questions and using an interpretive/constructivist approach to interpret themes, the interview questions asked the subject to describe what they felt was important to discuss, rather than myself pre-determining the importance of the factors involved. In using this type of interview, students who identified as Latino/a told their own personal stories, which allowed me
to code the questions and subthemes. The findings revealed that Latino/a culture is instrumental in retention at community college, in that all of Yosso’s (2005) cultural capitals were identified through this process. The findings did not identify additional cultural capitals or themes than those Yosso identified previously. However, it demonstrated that there are deficits in those capitals that potentially could reduce their efficacy. The following chapter addresses the results for each of the research questions. The overarching theme of cultural capitals and their role in helping students remain in a community college generated multiple thematic responses that demonstrated a correlation between cultural capitals and retention (Wells, 2008).

**Description of Participants**

In order to be involved in the study Latino/a subjects were full time students holding good academic standing as defined by the host institution, had completed at least three terms of continuous enrollment at the institution, and be a member of a club that served minority populations. Interview subjects consisted of six Latina subjects of which three were traditional age students, defined as students aged between 18-24 years of age (NCES, 2015), and two Latino students both of whom were non-traditional students. For the purposes of the paper the participants have been identified using pseudonyms when reporting responses.

**Research Question One**

The question asked: In terms of potential cultural influences, what do Latino students identify as a cultural component of their retention at community college? The first research question sought to identify, through interviews with Latino/a students, the cultural influences were integral to their retention at community college. Phenomenological analysis calls for an “emphasis on experience and interpretation” (Merriam, 2009, p.25). In interpreting what subjects identified as a cultural components the answers to the interview questions were coded
into what the subject identified as their experience and interpretation of retention at a community college. This was done by highlighting repetitive words or phrases for significance. Based on this I developed clusters of meaning (Creswell, 2012) using the statements considered meaningful to create the themes. This led to three distinct themes: goals, support, and barriers.

An example of responses to the theme of goals that were identified by the subjects included a need for higher education, an example of support that was identified by the subjects included support from family and community and finally, an example of barriers identified by the subjects were cultural and educational barriers. Examples related to each of the major themes for question one are discussed in detail below.

In order to determine the goals I used the interview questions to review repetitive phrases/words and to interpret responses to look for themes. Those questions and themes are noted in Figure 4.1.

**Goals**

During the course of analysis, Latino/a students identified that they aspired to levels of education not achieved by their parents. The motivating factors for this were a combination of family pride and a desire for a better lifestyle that that found by their parents. To achieve these goals subjects identified support for their aspirations was achieved through the support of community and family. This community and family support also contained navigational skills that helped students navigate through a White culture system so different from their own Latino/a culture.

Subjects made a variety of aspirational statements related to seeking an education, and viewed it as something their families had not had the opportunity to achieve. Over 80% of the respondents indicated that their parents had less than a high school education, because they had
to leave school to provide for their families. Subjects stated that although their interactions with family members sometimes included conflict, they were nevertheless supportive of education overall.

The skills that these students learned from family members with respect to work ethic and determination were particularly prevalent, and accounted for the largest percentage of reports regarding this theme. The importance of family was referenced consistently throughout the questions, demonstrating its embedded importance in the lives of community college students who identify as Latino/a.

Eliana: Family plays a big role, I know a lot of Latinos, they know the struggles that their parents face…get a higher education so, that’s mainly it, my family.
Isabella: I just want to set a good example for my youngest siblings and my cousins because ultimately I’m going to be the first to get a college education…I want them to see the importance of an education and how far it can take you.
Marco: She (mother) wanted me to have a great life, she definitely believed in education.
Marianna: I’m the only one going right now, a lot of them (family) are really proud.
Hector: It had a lot to do with my mother, she told me about her past and where she came from.

Support

The theme of community as a support to achieve goals was identified and took several elements. Subjects identified community in differing ways: friends, culture, and peers. This theme of support through community towards educational goals was varied dependent upon age, gender, and traditional versus non-traditional students. Subjects did not identify large networks
of support in their goals. While support was identified by subjects it was seen to be only
minimal and not extensive beyond immediate family or peers.

Traditional college student participants stated that their community was within the
institution, rather than in external entities. Conversely, non-traditional students were more likely
to identify external sources of community, such as friends, family, religion, and co-workers.
Students who self-identified as in recovery from substance abuse identified support from entities
such as Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous.

Eliana: We are especially hard workers…I feel it (education) is something we value a lot
so we are hard workers; we sacrifice a lot just to do certain things. My friends…we push
each other to succeed.

Isabella: We have a saying “ganas” which means we have the want to do it, to have the
“ganas” to go to school. I want to do it because it’s something inside that I have to go to
school.

Hector: My community is here (college) they are always here to help me out with
something I need.

Ana: They (sobriety support programs/Church) supported me, they really did, they were
all on board when I started school. They agreed it was a way for me to move up in the
world.

Bianca: They told us...“Get a career, get a career, you don’t want to spend all your life
working like us, you don’t want to be working in the fields, you don’t want to be in the
sun all the time, you want to be in the shade.”
Barriers

Although family was identified as a support system and a driving force to achieve a higher education, it also was identified as a barrier in some cases. The theme of familial opposition as a barrier was shown through described family arguments and conflicts regarding work and higher education.

Eliana: For me to be going to school full time and trying to find a full time job too it’s very difficult to balance that all. We have to pick which one is better.

Isabella: My dad didn’t really want me to go to school, he said it was more important to get a job after high school…But since I was little I wanted to be a teacher.

Marco: She was almost against school because she knew that at the time I needed a job and what I had told her was “I can’t live the rest of my life, I can’t be a general laborer making $10 an hour working my butt off for the rest of my life so I need an education.”

Gabriella: I worked for the summer and was saving up money…they were my bank, my parents, I didn’t know anything about that either, because they didn’t know anything about that either, didn’t know about the checks or anything… my mom said, “Well ok we’ll just do that, cash it in and we’ll save it for you.” Anyway, we had a big fallout because at the end when I needed the money to pay for classes all that was left was $250.

Respondents reported frequently that family members often did not understand many of the challenges they faced, such as the time needed to attend classes, study, and meet the requirements for graduation. There was dissonance within the family, who commented on, or resented, the time spent studying and attending college, yet simultaneously wanted the respondent to obtain a college education.
Eliana: I couldn’t ask for help on the homework, they didn’t speak much English so I had to do everything on my own.

Isabella: My parents never went to college; they just don’t understand the schedule. They’re like “I don’t understand why you’re not home to look after your brothers.”

Gabriella: I wish my mom could have been on me a little bit more and maybe finished (High) school.

Bianca: I can’t ask them for help because how am I going to ask them and tell them, this, this and this? They really don’t know how to speak English or read English so it’s hard.

A theme of subjugation as a barrier was seen and that appeared to emerge as a response to multiple instances in which educational professionals questioned Latino/a’s ability to pursue higher education. Subjects identified that being bilingual presented barriers and influenced educators’ reactions to them.

Eliana: There was no reason for them to pull me out of class just to tell me I won’t ever make it to college… In some way it’s a stereotype to where Latinos, Mexicans are like lazy. But for me I want to achieve something, I want to go for it.

Isabella: The teachers found it hard, they didn’t understand why we would have a hard time sometimes…we were not looked at as educated smart people it was more “You’re just workers, you’re just Mexicans, you shouldn’t even be here” kind of thing.

Marianna: I was embarrassed to raise my hand and say “What is this, what are you talking about?”… I would ask the teacher “I don’t understand” and they would just look at me like “Are you stupid?”

Hector: When people see them (Latino/as) they don’t see them as providing anything for America, a lot of Hispanics still work, not everyone is a drug dealer or murderer.
Research Question Two

To what extent do the cultural factors that Latino/a students identify as important to their retention show similarities to the cultural capitals Yosso defined? The research question sought to identify if the cultural factors subjects described showed any similarity to those identified by Yosso (2005). Arguably, the subjects would not be aware of the theory and were not advised of it until after the interview was ended. It was therefore hoped that the subjects would respond with their reality of culture and its role in retention rather than immediately start to identify CCW capitals. This enabled me to interpret those themes identified in RQ. 1 in relation to CCW capitals without overt answers from respondents. The cultural factors participants identified showed strong, if not identical, similarities to the capitals Yosso identified. In order to determine these similarities I used the themes of goals, support, and barriers to group responses and then to take those responses and place them into capitals (Figure 4.2). In order to determine which capitals were used, I referred to Yosso’s (2005) definition and looked for similarities in subject responses that could be interpreted to meet those definitions.

The coding established that there were similarities between the responses the participants gave that could be directly attributed to the cultural capitals identified in CCW. Subjects were able to clearly articulate cultural factors that could be inductively assigned to the capitals. In order to demonstrate these similarities I deconstructed the answers to RQ 1, as outlined above and created domains that reflected the similarities between the reported responses and the cultural capitals outlined by Yosso (2005).
Aspirational Capital

Yosso (2005) identified aspirational capital as demonstrating the ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future, even in the face of real and perceived barriers. These responses illustrate that subjects could see past barriers to a future through higher education. In looking at barriers that subjects identified, the following answers related to maintaining hopes and dreams.

Marco: It was not succeeding, it was not being at the level I need to be, it was not being, it was finally saying, I, I needed to do something in my life to make a difference and education was going to be that change. I feel like I’m making a difference in society.

Marianna: I’m a very tenacious person, my culture is helping me look back and think.

Hector: I know you have a dream of what you want to become and college is like, it’s not the ultimate answer, but it’s the first step of where you want to go.

Familial Capital

Tied in with the aspirational wealth was the familial capital, the cultural knowledge centered on the family. The theme of goals guided this coding of responses to the familial capital. Subjects identified that the cultural knowledge through familial experiences had caused them to aspire to a different life.

Eliana: My dad, he didn’t even finish high school. My mom only finished middle school because her high school was in the next town over and she didn’t have any transportation to go over there…I know the places they work in now, that it’s not good.

Isabella: My mom and dad didn’t graduate elementary or high school, it’s important for us to do that because in this country it’s valuable and it’s something that really will take us far.
Marco: My mother, she, she was strong, she was very strong. She wanted us to have a
great life. She definitely understood, she believed in education.

Ana: My mom’s side they come from practically nothing and they’ve all told me “You
have to strive to get whatever you want and you have to work hard to get what you
want.”

Bianca: It taught me to be responsible, to keep going forward, just because I come from
a poor family doesn’t mean I can’t succeed in life.

Social Capital

In identifying subject matter that was similar to social capital “networks of people and
community resources” (Yosso, 2005, p. 45). The theme of support was used to determine
responses that would fit this theme. Subject responses that helped guide the theme and the
eventually coding into the capital are outlined below. This capital was the least reported by
respondents in terms of what was identified as a social capital by respondents. This result could
be related to traditional versus non-traditional students in which the non-traditional students
tended to have formed greater support systems prior to attending higher education.

Eliana: Sometimes if I kind of slack off because I have so much to do that sometimes I
am calm and I won’t do anything they will call and say “No way—you need to do this
and spend time or you’ll fail.”

Hector: My friends said keep going, they want to do college but they have so many
things going on. They said, “I can’t wait for you to teach my kids.”

Ana: It was one of my friends. He said he didn’t finish school and he regretted every
minute of not doing it.
Navigational Capital

As has been documented elsewhere on the paper the White dominance within the educational system makes attending and continuing through college an issue for many Latino/a students. However, Latino/a students do manage to remain in college, and it is believed this is primarily through navigational capital which refers to those skills used by Latinos to maneuver through institutions not designed for students of color. Using the theme of barriers I reviewed subject responses that appeared to fit the navigational capital. Analysis found that this theme was identified by subjects.

Eliana: Something I learned from our culture that we are very hard working and we have to persevere through the good and the bad.

Isabella: I had no one to talk to about college or anything…I had to do my own research, it started from there, I wanted to have a goal. I went to the library and saw a flyer about (Latino college enrollment classes) program and thought “I’m going to do it” ‘cos it said something about how you get free credits and learn more about college and make a decision.

Ana: I didn’t have any money to begin with, but as soon as I started researching scholarships and finding ways to save money I started applying for them, reaching for opportunities, like if there was an opportunity for a scholarship or these, like some odd jobs, to at least get a little cash then that’s what I’d do.

Resistant Capital

The issues that create a resistance to failure occur through resistant capital. This shows itself through skills and knowledge that form through oppositional behavior towards inequalities and represent an asset in obtaining equality. In coding this using the theme of
barriers the responses were interpreted based on reports of stereotyping or were seen as seen as academically deficient. Since family is a strong component of the Latino culture in some cases, the family responsibilities were deemed secondary to the academic goals and were opposed by the academic institution.

Eliana: I wanted to go to Mexico to see my Aunt because she was ill at the time, the counselor, he said “If you leave you won’t graduate at all”…I was gone a month and came back and graduated with more credits than I needed.

Marianna: I wasn’t going to let people tell me something like “I can’t move on or…” I was the kind of person I don’t care; you know? Do your thing, I’m doing my thing.

**Linguistic Capital**

While subjects identified that being bi-lingual can sometimes be a signal for subjugation and a barrier they did identify several times that it was an asset. Linguistic capital refers to the intellectual and social skills that are gained through being bi-lingual and was interpreted through the responses coded to the theme barriers.

Eliana: They just can’t believe that somebody that’s bilingual can pick up some of the stuff. And from what I’ve seen it’s like “Yea I know Spanish, yea I know English, yea I understand exactly what you’re saying.”

Isabella: “Wait a minute you can read, you can talk you can figure out in Spanish and English?” and I say “Yea.”

Hector: Here students are coming in and they don’t speak any English or little bit of English. But for us, its, we, I interpret, I translate if they need some understanding it’s also helps me at my job.
Bianca: It’s helped me a lot but at the same time it’s hard. Because to me, it can be very useful, I mean you can help other people and help your whole family, you know the ones that don’t know how to speak it, you can help them translate. But sometimes it gets harder because, especially, you, at a young age, you learn how to speak to family, the Spanish language and then English so at times it gets hard to get to the point, its impressive how you learn, but you are trying to, you know, cope with both languages at the same time, about when to use them or when not to use them.

**Defecits**

The subset of deficits was also seen in the navigational capital when respondents discussed their ability to understand and negotiate financial aid processes. Respondents reported that they did not understand the difference between loans, grants, and scholarships, and that families were often reluctant to include personal information on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), as they did not understand the process.

The subjects also identified that a lack of knowledge issues regarding family knowledge in navigating and understanding college applications, rigor, and time spent on academic responsibilities were barriers to retention. I was unable to take these issues and locate a similar CCW capital into which they would fit. As such, the study showed that these two items were barriers that potentially influenced the efficacy found in the capitals.

**Summary of the Results**

The purpose of this chapter was to present the results of the analysis of the interview transcription data collected for this study. A qualitative semi-structured interview process was performed as part of a phenomenological study, over a four-week period with eight subjects.
Data were analyzed using an interpretive/constructivist philosophy and built on the processes outlined by Creswell (2014). The analysis showed that both research questions were able to be answered. RQ 1 asked: In terms of potential cultural influences, what do Latino students identify as a cultural component of their retention at community college? Using the analysis I was able to identify significant phrases and words and to code them appropriately into one of three themes: goals, support, barrier(s). RQ 2 asked: To what extent do the cultural factors that Latino students identify as important to their retention show similarities to the cultural capitals as defined by Yosso? Taking the three themes found in RQ 1, I interpreted those themes based on definitions provided by Yosso (2005) and placed the themes into the capitals. Based on analysis performed the responses that subjects gave were able to be compared to the original capitals outlined by Yosso (2005). The findings did not produce any additional cultural capitals beyond those previously identified by Yosso and no significant additional themes beyond those previously identified by Yosso emerged that might account for additional cultural factors that Latino students identify as important to their retention. It is significant that despite the subjects reported responses showing similarities to Yosso’s capitals it also showed that there were deficits within those themes that had an important interaction with the capitals.
Chapter V: Discussion

The preceding chapters outlined the purpose and significance of the role of CCW in the retention of Latino/a students in community college. This chapter summarizes the study, discusses the major findings, the limitations of the study, recommendations for future investigations, and implications for policies and procedures to retain community college students who identify as Latino/a.

Summary of the Study

The educational system has long been a victim of the deficit model (e.g., Conchas, 2006; Coutinho & Oswald, 2000; Noguera, 2001; Oakes, 2005. This model is based on the premise that a significant number of minority students are not successful because their cultural background is distinct from that of the dominant majority. In other words their cultural heritage does not equip many minority students to be successful in higher education. Relying on this model, higher education has failed to celebrate the strengths of Latino/a culture and the strengths of that culture that can be used in the retention and education success of Latino students.

Based on critical race theory (CRT) Yosso (2005) proposed and later developed the community cultural wealth (CCW) theory that identifies that Latino communities share a cultural capital and that these capitals can be viewed as items of ‘wealth’. There are six capitals that Yosso has identified: aspirational, familial, social, navigational, resistant, and linguistic. Using a semi-structured interview process, I addressed the following research questions: (a) In terms of potential cultural influences, what do Latino students identify as a cultural component of their retention at community college? (b) To what extent do the cultural factors that Latino students identify as important to their retention show similarities to the cultural capitals as defined by Yosso?
Interviews took place over four weeks at two rural community colleges in Oregon. Saturation was reached at eight interviews with two practice interviews taking place prior to the initial interviews. Those test interviews are not recorded in this paper but followed the same format as the actual interviews. It is of note that, although those responses are not recorded in this paper, they elicited the similar responses as the actual interviews. The transcripts were reviewed using recommendations outlined in Creswell (2014) who describes six steps in analyzing qualitative data: (a) Collect data; (b), Transcription of audio recordings, (c) Review of transcription, (d) Initial coding for themes, (e) Secondary coding of themes, and (f) Final coding. Member checking and field notes were used for validation purposes. Analysis of the data showed that Latino students self-identified themes similar to those outlined by Yosso (2005) and that within those themes there was an interplay of deficits that were an unexpected product of the analysis. A discussion of these findings and conclusions are presented in the following sections.

Discussion of the Major Findings

The following section outlines the results pertaining to each research question. The discussion is based on the current literature and theory presented in earlier chapters, and is designed to advance the current research on CCW and its effect on retention among Latino/a students.

Responses Identified

Research Question 1 asked participants to indicate the way in which their culture influenced their retention in a community college. In the interviews, subject responses were able to be categorized into goals, support, and barriers. Using these categories (themes) the study found that the themes of goals and support showed that subjects overwhelmingly identified family as a primary reason for attending an institute of higher education, and as a primary
motivation for their retention and subsequent completion of a degree which has also been reported in prior studies (Cavazos-Vela, Lerma, Lenz, Hinojsa, Hernandez-Duque, Gonzalez, 2014; Sandoval-Lucero & Klingsmith, 2014).

The skills that these students learned from family members with respect to work ethic and determination were particularly prevalent, and accounted for the largest percentage of reports regarding this theme. The importance of family has been referred in prior studies (Nichols & Islas, 2015) and was referenced consistently throughout the questions, demonstrating its embedded importance in the lives of community college students who identify as Latino/a.

In terms of support from outside entities, this study did not find that the participants had high levels of networks, and identified minimal support with respect to the support theme. This support was minimal in that it was supplied through a relatively small number of people and interactions. Interestingly, participants did state higher levels of communities who served as a support system associated with sobriety when compared with participants who were not in recovery.

Olmeda (2003) reported that Latino immigrants believe in the efficacy of higher education as a means of upward mobility and pass these beliefs on to their children and this belief was clearly seen in the interview response. Subjects made a variety of aspirational statements related to seeking an education, and viewed it as something their families had not had the opportunity to achieve. Over 80% of the respondents indicated that their parents had less than a high school education because they had to leave school to provide for their families.

The responses for the identified coding domain of barriers sometimes comingled with support. In other words, while family were supportive they could also be a barrier. Respondents stated that although their interactions with family members sometimes included conflict, they
were nevertheless supportive of education overall. All participants reported family histories that referred to cultural history and in particular their parent’s history, in moving and adjusting to life in the US. This family history meant that many of the subjects were first generation college students and that the family members were unaware of the rigors of academics. These conflicts are in keeping with the study performed by Vasquez-Salgado, Greenfield and Burgos-Cienfuegos (2015).

Ziskin, Fischer, Torres, Pelliocciotti, and Player-Sanders (2014) reviewed the role of student experience with funding post-secondary education and their findings are consistent with the findings of this study and participant responses to the domain of barriers in college navigation. While the lack of knowledge in terms of understanding systems and finances was a barrier, the effect of this appears to be that subjects identified multiple examples of participants who used determination and hard work to access and continue to access both external and internal sources of navigation to retain in college.

Despite multiple examples in which the deficit model affected the subject’s lives, the interviewees used those negative experiences to motivate them to complete college and reduce the education gap. This motivation to achieve has also been reported in recent studies (Espino 2016, Chuan-Ru Chen and Rhoads, 2016).

Research Question 2 asked whether the themes that participants identified during the interviews were similar to Yosso’s (2005) six cultural capital themes. Interview responses were taken from the RQ1 domains and coded to Yosso’s existing themes; this coding permitted the responses to be grouped together in case additional themes emerged. No new capitals emerged. However, the use of word search and the creation of subsets showed that there were consistent deficits in those capitals. In many instances, the capitals crossed and shared the traits Yosso
described. The subtleties inherent in any interview/transcription process are difficult to measure precisely, especially as the questions did not address themes directly. It was important for the study, and for future investigations, that students were not influenced by response bias, which might have occurred had the questions been more direct. When the themes were coded, it is significant to note that the responses showed that all of the capitals largely were intact. An unexpected effect of the coding was that it showed that, although the capitals were assets in Latino/a students retention at community college, they also included deficits that were potential barriers and which, if addressed, could lead further to increasing the strength of the capitals and their positive influence on future students and educational retention overall.

The barriers faced by Latino/a students are numerous and have been outlined elsewhere on this paper, in order to achieve students arguably need motivation both external and internal. In keeping with this argument the role of motivation in terms of aspirational and resistant capitals was consistent with data outlined earlier that indicated that Latino/a’s in the 16-25 demographic range stated that a college degree is important (Pew Social and Demographic Trends, 2009).

Family was identified repeatedly as an asset to the other capitals, but also was identified as a barrier. Participants commented that their parents lack of knowledge had caused, and to some extent, continued to cause some tension within the family. While participants reported that family members were supportive of education, participants also noted that family also caused potential additional barriers that respondents had to face.

Family was also identified as a deficit subset that did not meet the CCW capitals and was deemed a barrier. Respondents reported frequently that family members often did not understand many of the challenges they faced, such as the time needed to attend classes, study,
and meet the requirements for graduation. The perception of support from families is, in part, explained by Chrispeels and Rivero (2001). The researchers found that there is a mismatch between the educational institutions definition of good parent involvement and the familial definition. Zarate (2007) explained that Latino parents have different beliefs regarding their role in the education of their child based on cultural behaviors, beliefs, and interactions. In Zarate’s study, Latino parents prioritized life education (monitoring their student lives and morals) versus academic involvement. Latino parents felt that prioritizing life education led to a better classroom experience and increased academic success. For first-generation college students who are often second or third generation immigrants, this leads to a dissonance as arguably institutions of higher education tend to place academic success before life education. There was also dissonance within the family, who commented on, or resented, the time spent studying and attending college, yet simultaneously wanted the respondent to obtain a college education.

As outlined in prior studies the role of family and its interdependence is important in the retention of students in post-econdary education. Yosso (2005) identifies family as a cultural wealth shared by Latino/a students. This study found that despite family conflict regarding the logistics of college attendance, as outlined above, family remained a strong cultural wealth that students used in retaining in college.

The subset of deficits also was seen in the navigational capital with regard to financial aid and family support. Respondents reported a lack of knowledge involving their ability to understand and negotiate financial aid processes. Low income students will require financial aid in some form to attend school and respondents reported that that they did not understand the differences between loans, grants, and scholarships leading to uncertainty for the future. This is
in keeping with the Ziskin et al., (2014) study that discusses the understanding and perceptions of first generation students.

Similar results from the Luna and Martinez (2013) were found with regard to support through social interactions. Social capital was difficult to identify with respect as to what participants chose to identify as community. However, the use of peers, clubs, and minimal outside entities was present and appeared to transfer with the subject from external to internal institutional entities. Social capital also appeared to vary depending on the respondents’ age.

Interview responses appeared to vary among traditional and non-traditional college students. Traditional college students are defined as those who attend college immediately after high school graduation, while non-traditional students are those who defer higher education by one year or more (NCES, 2016). Traditional college student participants stated that their community was within the institution, rather than in external entities. The role of social media in creating this community was mentioned by traditional college students. Gray, Vitak, Easton, & Ellison (2013) also found a positive correlation between the number of social media friends from the institution and collaborative interactions with those people, which is also seen in prior studies (Baker, 2013, Casstevens, Waites & Outlaw, 2011). Conversely, non-traditional students were more likely to identify external sources of community, such as friends, family, religion, and co-workers, which is also seen in prior studies (Baker, 2013, Casstevens, Waites & Outlaw, 2011). Students who self-identified as in recovery from substance abuse identified support from entities such as Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous.

In many cases, participants comingled support and resistance capitals. They commented that prior educational entities were instrumental in creating resistant capital. They also cited several examples of situations that demonstrated the importance of understanding that a deficit
model is significant in explaining why many minority students are unsuccessful in higher education. Several participants talked about being told directly that they were not expected to succeed. Sometimes these comments were subtle, such as classes in which they should or should not enroll, or the fact that they did not need to purchase expensive supplemental texts or school supplies. Some participants were in recovery from substance abuse and told stories about losing their cultural identity and engaging in using drugs and alcohol to alleviate cultural identity confusion and to find a unique identity before returning to their Latino/a culture.

Suprisingly, linguistic capital was referred to only 16 times by interview respondents making it the least mentioned capital. This warrents further study, as it suggests that language may not have the strong negative effect on assimilation reported previously in the deficit model. This finding conforms to a study conducted by the Pew Research Center (2016), which indicated that, while speaking Spanish is integral to the Latino/a culture, 71% of Spanish speaking Latino/a adults stated that it is not essential to speak Spanish to be considered Latino/a. This study showed that, while bilingual participants find it useful to speak Spanish, they do not consider it vital to their success. Instead, they viewed their language skills as a way to help others (social capital) rather than as an intellectual skill. This study supported those findings.

Limitations, Recommendations, and Implications

The following section outlines the limitations of this study. It also includes recommendations for future research and implications for institutional retention practice.

Limitations

The intent of this study was to explore the role of CCW on the retention of Latino/a students in a community college setting. The literature was reviewed; a selection of eligible participants who met study criteria was interviewed and audio-recorded, and data analysis took
place using initial coding to identify themes, followed by secondary coding of the themes found, which led to a final coding. Despite the richness of the data, it was not possible to provide each response recorded in this study. As such, this qualitative study is limited and these limitations are addressed in the following sections.

**Limited sample.** This study collected data during eight interviews at two community colleges, which produced only a small dataset.

**Sample size.** A qualitative design phenomenological design was utilized for this study, as it sought to interpret the data from the perspective of interpretive/constructivist epistemology that seeks to “Describe, understand, interpret… Multiple realities, context-bound” (Merriam 2009, p.11). The study sought to understand CCW and its context in the retention of Latino/a students in a community college setting. As such, the study sought understanding rather than the ability to generalize the findings widely.

**Site selection.** The study was specific to two community colleges in Oregon with similar student demographics. The results may have differed if colleges of different sizes throughout Oregon were compared. The same would hold true for colleges in different states.

**Limitations of the instrument.** The questions asked in this study were semi-structured in nature and comprised of eight questions designed to elicit personal responses from the participants. It is possible that a more structured set of questions would lead to a more definitive set of similarities between the capitals or different themes entirely.

**Limitations of the design.**

The use of a constructivist approach allows meaning to be found through the shared experiences of the respondents but it is unable to be compared or generalized to other communities or cultures. The use of a survey with a comparative analysis would allow
comparisons to be made between ethnicities, peers, geographical distances and a variety of other communities. This could lead to a data set that could potentially be quantified.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

This study showed similarities in participants’ self-reports of cultural capitals in the role of retention to those Yosso (2005) identified. The limitations described above can be resolved through additional studies and replication of this study at more locations.

Additionally a longitudinal study to determine if the capitals remain in place could be performed extending from community college through to the four-year college and beyond. The value this could potentially bring would be invaluable for institutional academic and support design for a broad spectrum of academic levels.

It would be of benefit to compare the cultural capitals that Latino/a students bring with those of other minority populations. An extension of this could also be differences between gender’s or traditional versus non-traditional students.

In theory, the study also could be performed in the K-12 school system to identify those same capitals used by younger students in education, with the potential goal of eliminating the deficit model by identifying and celebrating these capitals at an earlier point in a student’s academic life.

A quantitative study using a Likert type scale also could be used to expand the research to multiple entities and increase the number of participants, which a qualitative study is unable to do. Ultimately, this would increase the ability to generalize the results, and allow verification of the current study.
Implications for Institutional Retention Practice

The findings of this study are significant to community colleges that wish to increase their retention of Latino students. By extension, this also potentially affects policy and institutional andragogy. In understanding the obstacles Latino/a students face in the college environment, both internally and externally, we can begin to appreciate and understand the cultural capitals they possess. By addressing the deficits found in the capitals, we can begin to adjust our presentation of college information to families and thus improve the retention of Latino/a students, by understanding the capitals and the way to address the deficits that may be present in them.

In a time of increasing educational budgetary constraints, it is not only our professional duty, but also our moral responsibility, to continue to serve students in a way that leads to their retention and graduation. In identifying and understanding the role of CCW in retention of Latino/a students, we can not only leverage those capitals that students bring with them, but also design better programs that use those capitals in the classroom and in the administration of the college.

Consistent with the use of reflective assessment as a key component of CRT, upon which CCW is based, it is important to learn what accounts for student success and through that learning, make appropriate changes. These changes should occur in the classroom, and in the processes and programs used on our campuses that enhance success for all students.

Summary of the Major Finding

The analysis of the transcript data was significant in that it revealed that the capitals that Latino community college students identify align with those previously identified by Yosso’s (2005) community cultural wealth model. In coding the data, I also found statements that
indicated deficits within the capitals, and these deficits were identified and created as subsets of the capitals. Although the capitals help Latino students remain in community college, the deficits within those capitals are also creating barriers. The interplay of the capitals and the deficits that are subsets of those capitals indicate that, at least for the respondents of this study, the deficits detract from the capitals helping students remain in a community college setting. However, the deficits found within the capitals in this study should not be considered part of the traditional deficit model. The traditional deficit model contends that non-White students who fail academically fail due to a dysfunctional family culture and a lack of White cultural characteristics (Salkind, 2008). The results of this study showed that the deficits within the capitals are not culture bound, they do not reflect Latino beliefs or customs but are rather informed by a lack of knowledge that a multiple array of stakeholders should be providing. It is not the culture that is deficient but the structures within the colleges themselves and the structures that support these students. While the study from the Pew Hispanic Center (2013) identified that Latino’s experience different academic challenges, this study documents that those same Latino’s are accessing elements of their own culture to navigate and remain in community colleges. They are doing this despite the lack of recognition from educational institutions of those capitals bought by Latino students. Interviewees were asked how educational institutions could help retain Latino students and overwhelmingly the respondents identified the role of social and aspirational capital in retention programs.
Conclusions

In 1964, Malcolm X recognized that education is the path to greater prosperity and security for the disenfranchised. If we as educators believe in that path, we are obliged to understand how to make it available for all students. To do so, we must accept and understand that diversity brings with it elements that create change and enhance retention that leads to greater academic success. Recognizing that the Latino population brings with it a “wealth” of capitals and the role that those play in retention, will lead to a shared vision of education for all peoples, regardless of race or social standing.

Although this study focused on Latino/a community college students, it does advance our understanding of the role of culture as a whole, and in particular, cultural capitals and their role in the retention of Latino/a community college students. Each culture has specific schema’s and rituals which can and should be noted by institutions of higher education. As our Nation becomes ever more diverse the need for further study into integrating diverse cultural wealth will be needed in order to create and sustain the educational and economic strength of our communities.

The increase in the Latino population in the US is predicted to tip the balance to a majority-minority nation. The US continues to become an even more diverse nation and it behooves us to understand that diversity in order to increase the retention and ultimate success of all of our citizens. This study demonstrated that the role of cultural capitals is significant in the retention of Latinos/as in community colleges, as the participants indicated. These capitals are identical to those identified by Yosso (2005), and align closely with both the CCW model and by extension, CRT, its parent model. CRT is a social justice theory that works for the emancipation potential of education (Yosso, 2005) and CCW shows that social justice can be achieved by
accessing and using the student’s dominant culture. However, we can only truly achieve this goal if educators address the structural deficits in the capitals that detract from Latino student success by providing information and support mechanisms that address those barriers.
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<th>Interview Question</th>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Domains</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Tell me what, in your culture, motivated you to attend college?</td>
<td>Better educational and employment opportunities</td>
<td>Goals</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Family pride/expectations</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Tell me what obstacles you had to overcome to attend college?</td>
<td>First generation</td>
<td>Barrier</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Stereotypes.</td>
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<td>Deficiency beliefs</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Language</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Finances</td>
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<td>3. Tell me your family’s role in your decision to attend college?</td>
<td>Encouragement</td>
<td>Goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Family aspirations</td>
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<td>4. Is there anything that your family could have done to support you more in your education?</td>
<td>Understood the system</td>
<td>Barrier</td>
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<td>5. How did your community support your educational goals?</td>
<td>Encouragement</td>
<td>Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personal stories</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Tell me what other aspects of your culture helped you continue in college?</td>
<td>&quot;Ganas&quot;</td>
<td>Goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Work ethic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. How does the college show they value your culture?</td>
<td>Demonstrative support through art, clubs, designated space</td>
<td>Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. What elements of your culture would you include to design an effective retention program for Latino/a students?</td>
<td>Mentors from the Latino community</td>
<td>Support</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Increased Latino programs</td>
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*Figure 4.1. Coding Structure for Research Question 1:*
Figure 4.2. Coding Structure for Research Question 2:
Appendix A

A Consent Request for College Administrators

Dear (President/Vice President),

I am a doctoral student at Oregon State University in the Community College Leadership Program. My dissertation focuses on the role of Community Cultural Wealth in the retention rate of Latino/a students. The study will take place at a community college in Oregon; your college has been identified as an appropriate site for this research.

With your approval, I will conduct interviews with up to 30 self-identified Latino/a students. The interviews will focus on what Latino students consider to be of importance in their retention at the community college level. I am seeking full-time students who have been enrolled for at least one year, belong to a minority population campus club, have maintained satisfactory academic progress during that time, and are not enrolled in developmental education classes. I am asking your permission to approach administrators and faculty members on your campus to identify appropriate participants for these interviews.

I am conducting this research under the supervision of Dr. Earl “Joe” Johnson, my major professor at Oregon State University. There are no foreseeable risks associated with participation in this study. Participants will be informed that their participation in the study is entirely voluntary, and that they may discontinue their participation at any time. The name of the college and of the participants will remain confidential.

If you have any questions about this research, I would be happy to answer them. Please let me know either by email or telephone if you are willing to have your college participate in this study.

Thank you for your time and for considering this request.
Appendix B

Contact Information for Local Informant

Dear (insert name):

I am a doctoral student at Oregon State University in the Community College Leadership Program. My dissertation focuses on the role of Community Cultural Wealth in the retention rate of Latino/a students. The study will take place at a community college in Oregon; your college has been identified as an appropriate site for this research.

I am currently trying to identify appropriate students to participate in interviews. I am seeking self-identified Latino/a students who are full-time, have completed at least a year of continuous enrollment, belong to a minority population campus club, are in academic good standing, and are not enrolled in developmental education classes. President XXXX has agreed to let me recruit participants at your institution. I am contacting you to see whether you can help me identify students who fit the criteria for this study. Students will be asked a series of open-ended questions about their retention in community college. The questions are designed to collect their views on those factors that they see as important to their retention at this institution.

I am conducting this research under the supervision of Dr. Earl “Joe” Johnson, my major professor at Oregon State University. There are no foreseeable risks associated with participation in this study. Participants will be informed that their participation in the study is voluntary, and that they may discontinue their participation at any time. The name of the college and of the participants will remain confidential.

If you have suggestions about which student members I might contact with regard to participation in this study, I would appreciate you letting me know. I hope you can provide me with contact information for up to 15 students. If you have any questions about this research, I would be happy to answer them. You can contact me either by email or phone. My contact information is shown below.

Thank you for your time and for considering this request,
Appendix C

Recruitment Letter for Participants

The Role of Community Cultural Wealth in the Retention of Latino/a Students in the Community College Setting

Dear (insert student member name):

I am a doctoral student at Oregon State University in the Community College Leadership Program. My dissertation focuses on the role of Community Cultural Wealth on the retention rate of Latino/a students. President XXXXXXX (Vice President XXXXXXX) has consented to allow me to recruit students to participate in this research on your campus. I am seeking to conduct confidential interviews with students who identify as Latino/a to collect your views on those factors that you see as important to your retention at this institution. You have been identified as a good source of information for this research and I hope that you will agree to participate.

To participate in this research, you must be a self-identified Latino/a student, a member of any minority population club on campus, registered as a full-time student, have completed at least a year of continuous enrollment, and be in academic good standing. If these criteria apply to you, I would like to invite you to participate in the study.

This study asks that you participate in a confidential, face-to-face, audio-recorded interview. Audio-recording of the interview is required for participation in the study. During the interview, you will be asked a series of open-ended questions about your personal retention in community college. The questions are designed to collect your views on those factors that you see as important to your retention. Depending on the length of your responses, the interview will take approximately 40–60 minutes. The recording will be transcribed by a professional transcription service at a later time.

I am conducting this study under the supervision of Dr. Earl “Joe” Johnson, my major professor at Oregon State University. There are no foreseeable risks associated with participation in this study. Your participation in the interview is entirely voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study at any time.

I would be happy to answer any questions that you might have about the study or the interview process. Please email XXXXXXXXX to participate in an interview. An Informed Consent Form is attached for your convenience.

Thank you for your time and for considering this request.

Best regards,
Appendix D

Consent Form

Introduction: This study will examine the role of Community Cultural Wealth on the retention of Latino/a students in a community college setting.

Procedures: This study asks that you participate in a confidential, face-to-face, audio-recorded interview. Audio-recording of the interview is required for participation in the study. During the interview, you will be asked a series of open-ended questions about your personal retention in community college. The questions are designed to collect your views on those factors that you see as important to your retention at this institution. Depending on the length of your responses, the interview will take approximately 40–60 minutes. The recording will be transcribed by a professional transcription service at a later time.

Risks/Discomforts: There is a potential risk that when students are asked what obstacles they have had to overcome that they could identify documentation status to the interviewer. As these interviews will be audio-recorded, this could lead to a breach of confidentiality.

Benefits: There are no direct benefits for participants. However, it is hoped that through your participation, researchers will learn more about the role of Community Cultural Wealth in retaining Latino/a students in the community college setting.

Confidentiality: The answers you provide will be kept confidential, and your name and identity will not be connected to the interview transcript. However, security and confidentiality of information collected and stored on paper, or through electronic means, cannot be guaranteed. There is the possibility that information collected and stored can be intercepted, corrupted, lost, destroyed, arrive late or incomplete, or contain viruses.

Compensation: There is no direct compensation.

Participation: Participation in this research study is completely voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any time or refuse to participate entirely without jeopardy to you or your institution.

Questions about the Research: If you have questions regarding this study, you may contact Jane Reeder, student researcher, at XXXXX, or via email at reederja@onid.oregonstate.edu.

Questions about Your Rights as a Research Participant: If you have questions you do not feel comfortable asking the student researcher, you may contact Dr. Earl “Joe” Johnson, Major Professor and Principal Investigator, at joe.johnson@oregonstate.edu; or if you have questions about your rights or welfare as a participant, please contact the Oregon State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) Office, at (541) 737-8008 or by email at
IRB@oregonstate.edu.

Verbal consent of understanding will be noted in writing before the interview begins.

Date: _________________________________