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Resiliency of Latino High School Students: The Impact of External and Internal Factors

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Resiliency of Latino High School Students:

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by

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ABSTRACT

Resiliency of Latino High School Students:

The Impact of External and Internal Factors

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This study investigated factors promoting academic resiliency within Latino students at an urban high school in the Los Angeles area. The criteria of "on-track" to graduate served as the operational definition of academic resilience. A total of 92 students completed the survey. Of these, 57 were on-track to graduate and 35 students were "not on-track" to graduate. The *California Healthy Kids Survey: Resiliency & Youth Development Module* (WestEd, 2008a) was the instrument employed to obtain quantitative data using three external protective factors (caring relationships, high expectations, and meaningful participation) and three internal protective factors (social competence, autonomy and sense of self, and sense of meaning and purpose). An additional demographic section was also included.

A *t*-test for independent samples indicated a significant mean difference between Latino students on-track to graduate and not on-track to graduate for two of the protective factors: participants on-track to graduate reported a stronger sense of meaning and purpose and higher expectations than did Latino students not on-track to graduate. A

Pearson Correlation matrix showed that each of the three primary relationship pairings was significantly correlated. A chi-square test determined that gender and on-track to graduate were found to be independent of each other, as were various Latino origins and academic resiliency. The findings revealed no significant difference between academic resiliency and household composition, languages spoken, or maternal/paternal educational level. Furthermore, Latino participants born in another country were more likely to graduate than Latino students born in the United States.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Resiliency is defined as "the process of coping with disruptive, stressful, or challenging life events in a way that provides the individual with additional protective and coping skills than prior to the disruption that results from the event" (Richardson, Neiger, Jensen, & Kumpfer, 1990, p. 34). In other words, resiliency is the ability to bounce back, thrive, and successfully cope with challenging life events. Resiliency cannot be determined by one event but rather by viewing a person in relation to his or her environment and life events (Bartlett, 1994; Cowan, Cowan, & Schulz, 1996; Rutter, 1985). Resiliency is multidimensional and is an interactional process influenced by environmental and personal factors referred to as protective factors (Winfield, 1994).

Protective factors serve as buffers to adversity; the more protective factors a person possesses, the greater the likelihood the person will be able to persevere through life stressors. Researchers have found that protective factors contributing to resiliency are a much stronger predictor of positive development than are risk factors (Garmezy, 1982; Werner & Smith, 1992). Therefore, future research on resiliency should serve as the foundation of preventive interventions. Whereas the concept of resiliency has been known for decades, the resiliency process is just now beginning to be acknowledged as a central component of human development (Luther, Cicchetti, & Becker, 2000).

Understanding more about protective factors is important for all students, particularly for Latino students, as the majority of the population growth in the United

States comes from Latino youth (Ramos, 2002; Rodriguez & Morrobel, 2004). In addition, the Latino youth population has experienced high numbers of developmental deficits (Rodriguez & Morrobel, 2004). While educators can identify a plethora of stressors that place Latino students at risk, the paucity of research leaves researchers, policy makers, and educators at a loss about how to reduce negative outcomes for Latino youth. Traditionally, the focus has been on students' weaknesses instead of highlighting the numerous strengths they possess (Finnan & Chasen, 2007; Rodriguez, Morrobel, & Villaruel, 2003; Wolin & Wolin, 1997). Therefore, an important line of research is to examine influences of cultural background on elements of positive youth development (American Psychological Association, 2003; Search Institute, 2003).

Finally, identifying important protective factors for defining Latino students' resiliency will enable researchers, policy makers, and educators to better address persistent problems hindering Latino students, such as the achievement gap between Latino students and other student populations. In doing so, researchers and educators will gain the knowledge and tools necessary to create environments that empower Latino students to optimize their fullest potential. Rodriguez and Morrobel (2004) stated that, "the basic goal is to foster developmentally appropriate environments that embrace the culturally unique strengths of Latino youths in ways to enhance their ability to take advantage of the assets they have" (p. 121).

Statement of the Problem

Historically, Latino students have experienced school failure and low educational attainment due to factors including minority status, acculturation process, low

socioeconomic status, poverty, and a greater propensity for being tracked into remedial and special education classes (Garcia, 1992; Gonzalez & Padilla, 1997; Padilla, 1995; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 1995). As the Latino youth population is the fastest growing sector in the United States, the importance of enhancing educational experiences of Latino students is critical (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006). One way to achieve this is by gaining awareness of which protective factors are the most effective in fostering academic resiliency with Latino students. This is especially important as the Latino population continues to have the lowest high school graduation rate. Furthermore, national proficiency assessments on reading, writing, mathematics, and science continue to indicate an achievement gap between Latino and White students.

Amidst the struggle to raise academic achievement, educational leaders continue to search for ways to close the achievement gap (Krovetz & Arriaza, 2006). Latino students are as capable as any other students; however, there are often lower expectations for these students and especially those in urban areas (Ogbu, 1992; Smith, 2005). Continuing the tradition of focusing on risks or deficits of the Latino population can lead to a sense that Latinos are destined for a continuous cycle of underachievement.

It is vital that we begin to examine strengths that nurture Latino students to persist and succeed in school and in their overall lives. According to Maslow (1971), a person's basic needs must first be met before higher level desires or wants can be addressed. One way of addressing a student's basic needs is by nurturing internal and external protective factors that increase academic resiliency within students. Understanding nuances of

Latino student academic resiliency will enable educators to devise new programming and strategies to abate ever increasing numbers of high school dropouts.

If we are to foster a society engendering productive members of society adept at thriving despite societal issues they may encounter, it is necessary to thoroughly comprehend youth development (Rodriguez & Morrobel, 2004). As resiliency is fundamental to successful youth development, the focus of this study is to examine how a resiliency framework relates to Latino high school students. Whereas resiliency in European-Americans has been researched extensively, research on resiliency taking the Latino experience into account is scarce (Winfield, 1995). As the fastest growing sector of the United States population, it is important that a comprehensive understanding of resiliency includes Latino youth.

To date, there has been a lack of interest in Latino youth development with an inordinate focus on their presumed deficits. In a literature review of 1,010 empirical articles, 30% of the articles included Latino youth as participants for convenience but only 6% actually reported results for Latino youth (Rodriguez & Morrobel, 2004). Furthermore, fewer than 3% of the articles focused on Latino youth, with the majority of the focus centering on deficits (Rodriguez & Morrobel, 2004).

According to Ohye and Daniel (1999), "the culture-linked sources of resilience, strength, and self-definition remain unrecognized and unarticulated by our discipline" (p. 117). Without an understanding of the Latino youth population we cannot begin to address issues impacting them. The effect of societal issues such as historical and cultural practices as well as daily stressors experienced by many Latino high school students is

manifested all too often through a lack of educational attainment (Padron, Waxman, & Rivera, 2002). Due to a history of oppression, poverty, the incongruence between home and school expectations, as well as other societal issues, the Latino population has limited access to educational resources and social capital leading to educational success (Garcia, 1992; Padilla, 1995; Padron et al., 2002). Moreover, Latino students must assimilate to the dominant culture, which the American school system is based on, if they are to gain the social capital necessary to attain educational success (Anyon, 1997; Harker, 1984).

By the age of 13, White students are significantly ahead of Latino students in basic skills by approximately 2 years (National Center for Education Statistics, 2003; Uline & Johnson, 2005). Furthermore, the Latino population has the lowest graduation rate in the United States. In 2006, 59.3% of the Latino population had a high school diploma compared with 85.5% of the total population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006).

The desire to reverse these troubling statistics has resulted in a focus on the deficits of Latino students for much of American education. Programs are geared toward identifying risks and target intervention programs around these risks. However, protective factors are shown to be more predictive of positive youth development than risk factors (Garmezy, 1982; Werner & Smith, 1992). In particular, it is imperative to analyze protective factors most influential in nurturing academic resiliency within Latino high school students in order to foster environments that support the development of such protective factors. Therefore, the goal of this study is to shift the paradigm from a deficits-only approach to a focus that emphasizes the strengths of Latino youth.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this quantitative study was to understand the protective factors that most contribute to academic resiliency of Latino high school students. By administering the *California Healthy Kids Survey: Resiliency & Youth Development Module* (WestEd, 2008a), used prominently in California, to obtain quantitative data, protective factors most predictive of academic resiliency of Latino students from an urban high school in the Los Angeles area were examined.

Instead of focusing on students' failures, this study aimed to understand protective factors, derived from a resiliency framework, that positively impact Latino students' academic resiliency. In order to increase academic success (i.e., graduation rates) of Latino students, it is essential for researchers and educators to shift from a deficits and risk paradigm to one of strengths and resiliency, so that both researchers and educators can gain insights into the educational experiences of Latino students. This study contributes to literature on Latino youth, resilience, and educational achievement by better comprehending how to develop academic resiliency within Latino students.

Study Significance

This research study was designed to contribute to the understanding of cultural influences on protective factors and resiliency. Awareness and understanding of the protective factors most critical in fostering academic resiliency within Latino high school students will inform researchers, policy makers, and educators to better improve the educational achievement of Latino students. This study aimed to serve as a catalyst toward developing effective educational objectives and programs that foster greater

academic success in school for Latino students through a strengths perspective instead of the traditional deficits approach. This is of particular importance given the dire need for schools to support Latino students to meet the developmental and learning benchmarks of Latino students. Ultimately, the results of this research will be used to impart ideas for working with Latino students to support and cultivate academic resiliency and achievement.

Theoretical Framework

The historical approach of concentrating on deficits often leaves youth, parents, teachers, and others frustrated and discouraged (Constantine et al., 1999). This study was based on a resiliency framework emphasizing a paradigm change from the traditional approach of addressing negative attributes or deficits to a focus on strengths. Resiliency is referred to as the innate "self-righting mechanism" (Werner & Smith, 1992, p. 202). It is multifaceted, resulting from the dynamics between an individual, life events, and environment, buffered by protective factors (Bartlett, 1994; Cowan et al., 1996; Rutter, 1985; Winfield, 1994).

A longitudinal study on all children born on Kauai spanning 30 years provided poignant insight regarding resiliency (Werner & Smith, 2001). As revealed by this study, approximately 86% of participants bounced back from adversity; participants stated that somewhere along the way they received the message "You matter" (Werner & Smith, 2001). The study also revealed that participants possessed some type of competence. In other words, students need to realize they are good at something in order to form positive self-esteem. Furthermore, the study described participants as being involved in programs

or activities providing a positive, caring environment, such as high expectations and clear rules (Werner & Smith, 2001). Research has shown that despite hardship, resilient youth are able to successfully cope with risk factors and adversity (Donnon & Hammond, 2007; Masten, 1994). In short, resiliency is a result of successful development of youth.

Resiliency is best viewed as a lifelong process of learning how to better cope with stressors. A person is resilient when their strengths overcome their weaknesses. Therefore, a shift of balance from weaknesses to strengths is imperative (Benard, 1991; Franklin, 2000; Werner, 1990). People are resilient as a result of external (environmental) and internal (personal) factors, referred to as "protective factors." Protective factors serve as buffers to adversity. The more protective factors a person possesses, the greater likelihood the person will persevere through life stressors. Although resilient characteristics are innate, these characteristics can also be learned. Resiliency must be nurtured and develops over time; it is not simply a matter of relying on innate traits (Higgins, 1994).

Overview of Resiliency

A well-established analysis of resiliency has occurred over three phases. Each phase emerged from an underlying question (Richardson, 2002). In the first phase, the goal was to identify characteristics enabling people to thrive despite adversity by defining resiliency qualities. This phase was guided by the following question: What characteristics enable a person to overcome adversity? The second phase concentrated efforts on the resiliency process as the process of coping with stressors in a manner leading to resilient reintegration and acquiring qualities leading to resiliency (Richardson,

2002). This phase was in response to the following question: How can an individual attain resilient characteristics? The third phase discussed the theory of an innate resiliency within every person. This phase materialized from the following question: What and/or where is the motivational force within individuals that fosters resiliency?

Identifying Qualities of Resilience

Insight regarding internal and external characteristics facilitating the ability to positively cope with adversity was realized during the first resiliency phase (Richardson, 2002). Identification of characteristics enabling people to thrive despite adversity steered the path for a paradigm shift from a focus on identification of risk factors to that of strengths within youth, enabling youth to overcome adversity (Benson, 1997; Richardson, 2002). Research has been conducted to investigate specific protective factors in children buffering against adversity (Werner, 2005). The findings suggested similar environmental experiences are common among children demonstrating resiliency. According to the research, there are external and internal protective factors working together to foster resiliency (Constantine, Benard, & Diaz, 1999, p. 13). Protective factors are characteristics interacting with risk factors to mitigate negative influences of stressful and adverse conditions (Franklin, 2000; Henderson & Milstein, 2003). Protective factors serve as buffers to adversity. The basic principle of resiliency is that everyone has at least some characteristics of resiliency. According to Henderson and Milstein (2003), "Resilience is a characteristic that varies from person to person and can grow or decline over time" (p. 8). In addition, the majority of resilient traits can be learned (Higgins, 1994). This study focuses on six protective factors. The three external factors are caring

relationships, high expectations, and meaningful participation; the three internal factors are social competence, autonomy and sense of self, and sense of meaning and purpose. These factors are defined later in this chapter in the Definition of Key Terms.

Resiliency Process

The second phase of resiliency focused on the resiliency process, or the process of acquiring qualities that promote resiliency. The resiliency process is depicted through a Resiliency Model (Richardson et al., 1990). According to the Resiliency Model, people react to life events in an effort to return to their comfort zone (homeostasis). If the individual has an adequate amount of protective factors to deal with the event, the person adapts to the event and returns to their comfort zone. If the individual does not have adequate protective factors to deal with the event, the person experiences a disruption to their paradigm (Richardson, 2002). In other words, the individual undergoes disequilibrium. Therefore, the person must reintegrate information or emotion caused by the disruption into their paradigm. Disruptions are opportunities for growth, as individuals are motivated to return to their comfort zone. However, available protective factors and the person's interpretation of the event influence how the person copes or reintegrates the disruption into their life (Compass, 1987; Henderson & Milstein, 2003). There are four forms of reintegration: dysfunctional reintegration, reintegration with loss (digression), reintegration back to comfort zone/homeostasis (stagnation), and reintegration with resiliency (progression) (Richardson et al., 1990; Richardson, 2002). Individuals experience growth and sustain positive lives by consistently coping with disruptions through resilient reintegration (Johnson & Wiechelt, 2004; Richardson,

2002). According to the resiliency model, the resiliency process is the method of coping with stressors leading to resilient reintegration and acquiring qualities leading to resiliency (Richardson, 2002).

Resiliency Theory

Stemming from the perspective that resiliency is innate in everyone, the third phase focused on identification and application of the force driving a person to grow as a result of adversity and moving toward realization of their fullest potential (Richardson, 2002). This innate resiliency is the foundation for the three internal factors of social competence, autonomy and sense of self, and sense of meaning and purpose. This led to the development of the concept of resiliency and resiliency theory, serving as a general foundation for psychological and educational theories (Richardson et al., 1990).

The premise of resiliency theory is that a motivational force is necessary to move from our comfort zone to increased resiliency. Furthermore, everyone has this drive to progress and grow. Although this motivational force is driven from within, it is also influenced by factors in an individual's environment. All individuals have the ability to adapt to life events (Lifton, 1994). Richardson (2002) described resiliency theory "as the motivational force within everyone that drives them to pursue wisdom, self-actualization, and altruism, and to be in harmony with a spiritual source of strength" (p. 309). Resiliency theory identifies three main protective factors found within families, schools, communities, and peers. These external factors—caring relationships, high expectations, and meaningful participation—buffer the effects of adversity among youth (Benard, 1991; Henderson & Milstein, 2003; Krovetz, 1999; Speck & Krovetz, 1995).

Research Questions

As the graduation rate for Latinos persists at less than 50%, it is essential for educators to gain pertinent information and devise strategies for better meeting the developmental and educational needs of Latino students. This research focused on one particular type of resilience, namely academic resiliency. As such, the aim of this study was to investigate factors promoting academic resiliency within Latino students. The criteria of "on-track" to graduate served as the operational definition of academic resilience.

Using a resiliency framework as the foundation, the primary research question was the following: Which protective factors are more prevalent in Latino high school students who are "on-track" versus "not on-track" to graduate? As a subset to the primary research question, there were seven additional questions:

1. Are the external/internal primary relationships positively correlated?
2. How does gender impact the academic resiliency of Latino students in high school?
3. How do various Latino origins impact the academic resiliency of Latino students in high school?
4. How does country of birth impact the academic resiliency of Latino students in high school?
5. How does household composition impact the academic resiliency of Latino students in high school?
6. How do languages spoken impact the academic resiliency of Latino students in high school?

7. How does the educational level of parents impact the academic resiliency of Latino students in high school?

Research Design and Methodology

This study utilized quantitative methods to gather and analyze data from a survey, *California Healthy Kids Survey: Resiliency & Youth Development Module* (WestEd, 2008a), administered to Latino students at one urban high school in the Los Angeles area. This study addressed six protective factors based on resiliency theory implicit to the study. The three external factors were caring relationships, high expectations, and meaningful participation. The three internal factors were social competence, autonomy and sense of self, and sense of meaning and purpose.

Participants in this study were in their fourth year of high school. For the purposes of this study, the operational definition of a resilient student was one who is on-track to graduate. For a 12^{th}-grade student in the spring semester, on-track to graduate included all of the following: (a) completion of at least 200 credits and/or a combination of completed and in-progress credits totaling a minimum of 230 credits, (b) a combination of completed and in-progress credits that meet the minimum requirement in each subject category, (c) a minimum score of 350 on both the English and mathematics sections of the California High School Exit Examination, (d) completion of the service learning requirement, and (e) completion and/or in-progress status of completing the computer literacy requirement. These criteria are aligned to the graduation requirements set forth by California Education Code Section 51225.3 and are commonly used in school districts in California (California Department of Education, 2010). This research analyzed data

based on a set of criteria defining Latino students as academically resilient by comparing the responses of Latino students on-track to graduate to Latino students not on-track to graduate.

Limitations and Delimitations

Due to time constraints and accessibility, the study was conducted at one high school, which is comprised of two small learning communities in the Los Angeles area. Only students who submitted the completed parent consent form by the deadline participated in the survey. Students were asked to participate in the study based on parameters of the operational definition of resiliency, accessibility, willingness to participate, and ethnicity. Because this study investigated the protective factors of Latino students, only students indicating a Latino background participated in the study. As a result, the generalizability of this study is limited to Latino students. In addition, only students who fit the parameters of the operational definition of a resilient student participated in the study. Therefore, it is possible that all resilient students are not captured in this study.

Assumptions

This study assumed that components of the operational definition captured the vast majority of resilient Latino students at the high school. In addition, this study assumed that all participants responded accurately and honestly.

Definitions of Key Terms

1. Autonomy and Sense of Self*:* Autonomy and sense of self, an internal protective factor, is defined as a "sense of personal identity and power" (Constantine et al., 1999, p. 13).
2. Caring Relationships: Caring relationships, an external protective factor, are defined as "supportive connections to others in the student's life who model and support healthy development and well-being" (Constantine et al., 1999, p. 13).
3. Environmental or External Factors: Environmental or external factors are defined as "characteristics of families, schools, communities, and peer groups that foster resiliency" (Henderson & Milstein, 2003, p. 9).
4. High Expectations: High expectations, an external protective factor, are defined as "the consistent communication of direct and indirect messages that the student can and will succeed responsibly" (Constantine et al., 1999, p. 13).
5. Internal Factors: Internal factors are defined as "individual characteristics that facilitate resiliency" (Henderson & Milstein, 2003, p. 9).
6. Latino: The federal government defines Hispanic or Latino as a person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007).
7. Meaningful Participation: Meaningful participation, an external protective factor, is defined as "the involvement of the student in relevant, engaging, and responsible activities with opportunities for responsibility and contribution" (Constantine et al., 1999, p. 13).

8. Not On-Track to Graduate: A student is considered to be "not on-track" to graduate if they are not making adequate progress in earning credits. For a 12th-grade student in the spring semester, not on-track to graduate is the absence of one or more of the following: (a) completion of at least 200 credits and/or a combination of completed and in-progress credits totaling a minimum of 230 credits, (b) a combination of completed and in-progress credits that meet the minimum requirement in each subject category, (c) a minimum score of 350 in both the English and Mathematics sections of the California High School Exit Examination, (d) completion of the service learning requirement, and (e) completion of the computer literacy requirement (California Department of Education, 2010).
9. On-Track to Graduate: A student is considered to be "on track" to graduate if they are making adequate progress in earning credits. For a 12th-grade student in the spring semester, on-track to graduate includes (a) completion of at least 200 credits and/or a combination of completed and in-progress credits totaling a minimum of 230 credits, (b) a combination of completed and in-progress credits that meet the minimum requirement in each subject category, (c) a minimum score of 350 in both the English and Mathematics sections of the California High School Exit Examination, (d) completion of the service learning requirement, and (e) completion of the computer literacy requirement (California Department of Education, 2010).
10. Protective Factors: Protective factors are defined as "characteristics within the person or within the environment that mitigate the negative impact of stressful situations and conditions" (Henderson & Milstein, 2003, p. 8).

11. Resilience: Resilience is an interactional process influenced by external (environmental) and internal (personal) factors referred to as protective factors (Winfield, 1994).
12. Resiliency: Resiliency is the ability to bounce back, thrive, and successfully cope with challenging life events.
13. Resiliency Process: The resiliency process is the process of coping with stressors in a way that leads to resilient reintegration and the acquisition of the qualities that lead to resiliency (Richardson, 2002).
14. Sense of Meaning and Purpose: Sense of meaning and purpose, an internal protective factor, is defined as "belief and understanding that one's life has coherence and makes a difference" (Constantine et al., 1999, p. 13).
15. Social Competence: Social competence, an internal protective factor, is defined as the "ability to communicate effectively and appropriately, and to demonstrate caring, flexibility, and responsiveness in social situations" (Constantine et al., 1999, p. 13).

Summary and Organization of the Study

The purpose of this study is to analyze how a resiliency framework, used prominently in California, provides knowledge and predicts resiliency of Latino high school students. The research, which focused on strength and resiliency, was a paradigm shift from the typical and traditional approach of supporting Latino students through studying their deficits. Chapter Two contains a review of the literature on Latino educational attainment. The remainder of the chapter discusses factors impacting Latino achievement and a resiliency framework. In Chapter Three, an explanation of the

research questions is presented. A detailed discussion regarding the quantitative research design is also provided. Chapter Four presents the findings of the data analysis, and Chapter Five provides a discussion regarding the implications of the findings as well as recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

According to the U.S Census Bureau (2006), the Latino population comprises 43.2% of the total U.S. population. Latinos are the largest ethnic minority in the country and are the fastest growing minority population in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2002). Likewise, public school enrollment has increased substantially in recent decades for Latino students (Padron et al., 2002). Between 1983 and 2003, overall enrollment in elementary and high school increased from 41.2 million to 49.6 million (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005). In other words, the school population in the United States increased by more than 8 million within 10 years. As of 2008, Latinos accounted for 48% of public school students in California. However, the Latino population has the lowest level of educational attainment and the highest dropout rate of any ethnic group in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005).

Educational Attainment of Latino Students

National Trends

The lack of educational and occupational attainment experienced by the Latino population is a severe problem (Arbona, 1990). Latinos begin to experience an achievement gap from an early age (Ruiz, 2002). For example, by the age of 13, many Latino students lag behind White students by approximately two years in basic skills

(Ruiz, 2002). In 2003, 6.5% of the Latino population dropped out of high school compared to the total 3.8% dropout rate (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005).

Levels of educational attainment. Educational attainment of Latinos is dramatically lower than the overall population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006). For example, 24% of the Latino population has less than a 9th-grade education compared to 6.1% of the overall population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006). A total of 16.3% of the Latino population has between a 9th- and 12th-grade education but no diploma, whereas 8.4% of the overall population has less than a 9th- and 12th-grade education but no diploma (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006). The percentage of the Latino population with a high school diploma is 59.3%, whereas 85.5% of the overall population has a high school diploma (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006). A total of 12.4% of the Latino population has a Bachelor's degree or more, whereas 28% of the overall population has a Bachelor's degree or more (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006).

Occupational status. As Latino students are behind most other ethnicities in educational completion, the Latino population is overrepresented in occupations of declining growth such as service, construction, maintenance, production, transportation, and material moving (Kim, 2002; Okocha, 1994; U.S. Census Bureau, 2007). Meanwhile, Latinos are underrepresented in sales, management, professional, and other related occupations. Approximately 34% of the overall population is employed in management, professional, or other related occupations, whereas a mere 18% of the Latino population is employed in such occupations (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007). On the other hand, 82% of Latinos are employed in occupations with limited growth opportunities that tend to be

more physically intensive, more susceptible to injuries, and offer lower wages and/or benefits, whereas 66% of the overall population is employed in similar occupations (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007).

State of California Trends

Although Latino educational levels have increased from a decade ago, the Latino population still attains lower educational levels than Whites, African Americans, and Asians in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2004). In 2006-2007, the overall graduation rate in California was 79.5%, a 3.9% decrease from 2005-2006 (Los Angeles Unified School District, 2008). Throughout California, 5.4% of 9th- through 12th-grade Latino students dropped out in 2006-2007, compared to 2.8% of White students (California Department of Education, 2008c). Local statistics mirror national and state trends. In Los Angeles County, 5.7% of 9th- through 12th-grade Latino students dropped out compared to 2.6% of White students during 2006-2007 (California Department of Education, 2008c). During this same time period, the high school graduation rate in the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), which is the largest school district in the Los Angeles area, increased 2.5 % from the previous year to 66.4% (Los Angeles Unified School District, 2008). However, the high school dropout numbers for Latinos in 2006-2007 in LAUSD were consistently higher than any other ethnic group (California Department of Education, 2008c). Within LAUSD, 6.1% of 9th- through 12th-grade Latino students dropped out compared to 3.4% of White students during 2006-2007 (California Department of Education, 2008c).

California high school exit examination. The combined 2007 California High School Exit Examination underscores the achievement gap between Latinos and Whites, as the passage rate in the English Language Arts (ELA) section was 66% and 89%, respectively (California Department of Education, 2008a). The passage rate for the mathematics section had similar results, with 66% of Latino students passing, whereas 88% of White students passed (California Department of Education, 2008a). Within LAUSD, there was an even greater disparity. Latino students received only a 62% passage rate in ELA and 57% in mathematics, whereas White students received an 88% passage rate in ELA and 85% in Mathematics (California Department of Education, 2008a).

Scholastic aptitude test. In California, there were 156,985 Latino students and 155, 581 White students enrolled in school during 2004-2005 (California Department of Education, 2008d). However, White students took the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) at a higher rate than Latino students: 32,727 Latino students completed the SAT compared to 50,672 White students. In addition, Latino students had a lower average total score than White students with scores of 899 and 1,085, respectively (California Department of Education, 2008d). Within LAUSD, the scores were similar at 872 for Latino students and 1,082 for white students (California Department of Education, 2008d).

California standardized testing. The 2007 California Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) reported an increase in performance for LAUSD. However, Latino students continued to perform lower than White students (California Department of

Education, 2008b). For example, Latino students consistently scored lower in ELA compared to their White counterparts regardless of their high school grade level.

Factors Impacting Latino Achievement

Positive youth development results in improved health, socialization, and academic outcomes (WestEd, 2003). Continued exposure to a positive environment at home, school, and with the community and peers promotes external and internal factors enabling youth developmental needs to be met (WestEd, 2003). Immersed in favorable influences, youth naturally develop internal, resilient traits conducive to positive development and academic achievement. For this reason, it is important that environmental contexts of Latino youth be examined.

Social and Background Factors of Latino Youth

Many Latino youth grow up within a social milieu of poverty and economic uncertainty. This social context includes developmental needs, community environment, and family conditions (Gándara & Contreras, 2009). These factors come together to tremendously impact the educational aspirations and achievement of Latino youth.

Developmental needs. To grow and develop properly, all children need to have their basic needs met (Maslow, 1971). Whereas most middle-class children have been provided with appropriate nutrition, adequate health care, and a nurturing environment, families who live in poverty generally have access to fewer resources (Gándara & Contreras, 2009). Therefore, children who live in poverty tend to have inadequate nutrition and health care. If a child comes to school hungry or cannot read the notes on the board, it is difficult for the student to focus on schoolwork. This is particularly

pertinent to Latino students as they are impacted by poverty at twice the rate of White students (U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, 2005). Moreover, even after Latinos enter the middle class, the effects of poverty impact the academic performance of Latino students (Gándara & Contreras, 2009). For example, middle-class Latino students perform approximately 67 points below middle-class White students on the SAT. However, low-income White students perform relatively the same as upper-middle-class Latino students (College Board, 2004, as cited in Gándara & Contreras, 2009). The persistent effects of poverty even after entering into the middle class may be a result of a lack of social capital, which will be discussed later.

Poverty is linked to various medical conditions such as asthma and diabetes (Gándara & Contreras, 2009). However, more than 30% of Latino families lack health insurance (U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, 2005). Although some medical services are available for those who are uninsured, many families do not have access to these services because of lack of information, financial constraints, long wait periods, and inability of parents to take time off of work (Gándara & Contreras, 2009). Therefore, many health conditions go untreated. For example, 50% of poor children in urban areas have vision problems that are correctable, but they often go undetected during school vision screenings (Berliner, 2006; Gillespie, 2001). This impacts academic achievement, as students with chronic, untreated health issues are more likely to miss school.

Whereas many risk factors experienced by Latinos are associated with poverty, various risk factors are also associated with Latinos regardless of socioeconomic status,

such as mental health and identity development (Gándara & Contreras, 2009). Depression, which can affect motivation and result in underachievement, is prevalent among Latinos (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 1995). However, Latino students are also more likely to be undiagnosed and/or untreated, further impacting academic problems faced by Latinos (Delgado et al., 2006, as cited in Gándara & Contreras, 2009). It is conjectured that Latinos may go undiagnosed with depression due to a lack of cultural and linguistic understanding (Gándara & Contreras, 2009).

This lack of cultural understanding often results in negative stereotypes that can have a detrimental effect on identity formation for Latino students. Adolescence is a period of intense identity development as well as ethnic identity formation. A youth's identity as a student is a key factor in the identity development of youth. In addition, youth are extremely sensitive and attuned to how others view them. Therefore, how Latino students are viewed by society will impact identity formation. Latino students must battle negative stereotypes and struggle to understand who they are and how they fit in (Hayes-Bautista, 2004). As Gándara and Contreras (2009) stated, "For many Latino students, the struggle to reconcile the perceptions of others will result in their rejecting either their ethnicity or the role of good student, neither of which augurs well for healthy personal or psychological development" (p. 79). The reason why many Latinos withdraw or are unsuccessful in academic endeavors may be explained by the stereotype threat theory (Steele, 1997). For many minorities, there is a fear of trying to achieve and failing, thus confirming the stereotype that they are intellectually inferior. As a coping

mechanism, many Latino students may disengage from school and assert that school is not important to them (Gándara, O'Hara, & Gutierrez, 2004; Steele, 1997).

Community environment. The communities in which Latino students reside also influence academic achievement in many ways. There is a high level of housing segregation and thus school segregation among Latinos (Martin, 2006). In fact, there was a substantial increase in housing segregation among Latinos between 1980 and 2000 (Iceland & Weinberg, 2002). This segregation also impedes English language development as segregation into ethnic enclaves often results in language isolation. Without sufficient interaction and modeling of English, acquisition of the language is delayed (Gifford & Valdes, 2006). Latinos, especially low-income families, are so ethnically isolated that much of what students know of the "outside world" is provided via television (Gándara & Contreras, 2009).

In addition, local resources such as libraries, parks, and other community activities are limited in low-income areas, with the result that children in these areas have less familiarity with educational activities that foster positive development (Brooks-Gunn, Denner, & Klebanov, 1995). Parents who are more educated and have knowledge of these resources are more likely to utilize these resources (Gándara & Contreras, 2009). Accordingly, parents with less social capital are often unable to navigate these resources for their children. Furthermore, extracurricular educational opportunities are limited in low-income areas due to safety concerns (Gándara & Contreras, 2009). Safety concerns also make it difficult for children to explore their surroundings due to a lack of safe places to play outside. Opportunities to explore career interests and earn money are also

very limited, as part-time jobs for students are sparse (Ong & Terriquez, 2008; Steinberg, 1996).

The communities in which students live provide another resource in the form of role models. However, middle-class students have more access to positive role models than students from low-income areas because middle-class students are more likely to be exposed to positive role models that are not only supportive of higher educational goals but also possess the skills necessary to help students to realize these goals (Jarret, 1997). Among Latino students, it is not uncommon to belittle achieving in school (Gándara & Contreras, 2009). High rates of juvenile delinquency and teen pregnancy are also found in low-income neighborhoods, with Latinas having the highest percentage of teen pregnancy of any other ethnicity (Tienda & Mitchell, 2006). Both factors significantly impede social mobility.

Peer groups have the ability to positively or negatively influence one another. Students who do not have much social capital individually can serve as a support network to pool their knowledge together to collectively attain the necessary knowledge to achieve (Stanton-Salazar, 1997). On the other hand, if students befriend low-performing students, they are at a higher risk of dropping out (Rumberger & Rodriguez, 2002). This particularly affects Latino students because of the high dropout rate and low academic performance of Latino students. In fact, Latino students commonly report teasing students who are academically successful (Steinberg, 1996). Academically successful Latino students are even criticized for "acting White" by their peers (Matute-Bianchi, 1986). This condemnation is especially powerful during adolescence, as youths

desperately seek to belong. Gender differences among Latinos have been observed regarding the desire to be academically successful. Whereas a small number of Latino students expressed a desire to be labeled as a good student, a significant number of Latina students expressed a desire to be recognized as a good student (Gándara, O'Hara, & Gutierrez, 2004).

Family conditions. Although Latino parents report having high aspirations for their children, they often lack the cultural and social capital necessary to bring those aspirations to fruition (Gándara & Contreras, 2009). Cultural capital refers to the knowledge of how the system works and what it values; social capital refers to how to access important social networks (Lareau, 1989). Both cultural and social capital are key components of how middle-class White and Asian parents assist in their children's academic success (Steinberg, 1996). For example, well-educated parents understand the implications of students being placed in basic math. Therefore, they are more likely to intervene and ensure that their children are placed in college preparatory courses. On the other hand, parents with less education are more likely to accept the placement (Lareau, 1989; Useem, 1992). Cultural capital can influence the type of parenting style used. The authoritative parenting style, which is often utilized by the middle class, is conducive to success in school (Steinberg, 1996). However, Latinos often use an authoritarian parenting style, which may not cultivate behaviors valued by schools in the United States (Steinberg, Dornbusch, & Brown, 1992). Because cultural capital accrues over generations, middle-class, minority parents tend to have less cultural capital than the dominant culture (Gándara & Contreras, 2009).

At the onset of schooling, 33% of Latino youth face two or more of the five risk factors for school failure (Zill, Collins, West, & Germino-Hausken, 1995). The five factors are poverty, a single-parent household, a mother with less than a high school education, a primary language other than English, and a mother unmarried at the time of the child's birth. Furthermore, low-income students watch more television than middle-class students, which is an average of 6 hours a day (Fetler, 1984). A significant correlation between high levels of watching television and low achievement has been found (Fetler, 1984). Increased television watching decreases the time the student is reading books, playing, and interacting with caregivers.

The high mobility of low-income renters in comparison to homeowners also impacts academic achievement (Crowley, 2003). A residential move often involves changing schools, which is associated with behavioral problems, lower grades, and higher absenteeism (Entwisle, Alexander, & Olson, 1997). Frequent moves mean that school personnel are less familiar with the student and family; therefore, schools will be less likely to know the needs of these families (Gándara & Contreras, 2009). Having to adjust to a new school setting and peer group often leads to difficulty adjusting to school and are higher risk factors for dropping out of school (Rumberger, 2003). At the high school level, however, many school changes are not only the result of family mobility. Many schools transfer students who are perceived to be problems; other school changes may be prompted by the student due to difficulties adjusting or not fitting in at the school (Fine, 1991). Gándara and Contreras (2009) stated, "residential and school mobility are most

often associated with negative circumstances and take a disproportionate toll on the achievement of low income and Latino students" (p. 71).

Schooling Context of Latino Youth

School serves as a catalyst for future career endeavors as well as entrance into the middle class, especially for Latino students, as Latinos generally have less social capital than the dominant culture (Gándara & Contreras, 2009; Grogger & Trejo, 2002). However, the schooling context of Latino youth often increases the hardships encountered by Latino youth. Gándara and Contreras (2009) stated:

> But by and large, those schools that serve Latino students in neighborhoods of concentrated *poverty* are much like the students themselves—lacking in resources and the social know-how needed to garner more. The evidence suggests that rather than addressing the disadvantages these students face, the schools perpetuate it. (p. 87)

The schooling framework for Latino youth includes school resources, school climate, and school peers. School resources consist of the concrete items that are essential to education. School climate refers to the atmosphere someone feels on entering the school. School peers refers to the type of environment provided to the students that enables them to feel connected to the school and each other.

School resources. There appears to be a vast dichotomy in public schools such that there are exceptionally good schools and especially deficit schools. The latter often have principally Latino populations, are located in urban areas, and are overcrowded (Oakes, Mendoza, & Silver, 2004). Due to overcrowding, these schools frequently employ a year-round schedule, particularly in Los Angeles (Gándara & Contreras, 2009). A year-round schedule allows for multiple tracks by decreasing the school year from 180

days to 163 days. Therefore, a student attending school on a year-round schedule from Kindergarten through 12th-grade will have attended 91 school days less than a student who is not on a year-round schedule. Although this practice is now gradually being eliminated in Los Angeles, thousands of Latino youth have already been impacted and continue to be impacted by this process. Furthermore, many of these schools are in dire need of repair due to deficient funding as well as insufficient time to make necessary repairs because of the various tracks in session throughout the year. Deficient facilities have a far-reaching impact on student learning and teaching as well as high rates of teacher turnover (Darling-Hammond, 2002; Earthman, 2002; Karcher, 2002). Teachers are more likely to base their decision as to which school to work at on school environment as opposed to salary; therefore, when given the opportunity to move to a school with better working conditions, the vast majority of teachers seize the opportunity (Darling-Hammond, 2002; Karcher, 2002; Loeb & Page, 2001).

Gándara and Contreras (2009) asserted the following: "Given that it is exceptionally difficult, if not impossible, to effect school reform without a stable base of teachers, it is hard to deny the important, if indirect, role that school facilities play in student achievement" (p. 94). In fact, the most significant factor for the academic achievement of minority students is the quality of instruction, which is closely linked to the quality of teacher (Carbonaro & Gamoran, 2002; Darling-Hammond, 2002; Oakes & Saunders, 2004). An Illinois study found that 88% of teachers at schools with a minority population of 99% or more scored in the bottom quartile of the teacher-quality index, whereas only 11% of teachers at schools with the lowest percentage of minority students

scored in the bottom quartile of the teacher-quality index (Peske & Haycock, 2006). Along with limited access to quality teachers and high teacher turnover, schools that serve predominantly Latino students also have high administrator turnover. A meta-analysis of 27 studies found that consistency in leadership and length of superintendent tenure are positively correlated with student achievement stability (Waters & Manzano, 2006). Strong school leaders are critical to recruiting and retaining highly qualified faculty as well as reducing the achievement gap (Elmore, 2005). Gándara and Contreras (2009) maintained the following:

> To succeed, they must be skilled in the politics of equitably distributing limited resources and garnering others. But since principals and superintendents tend not to stay as long in low-income Latino schools and districts, they are less likely to have acquired the requisite political capital and skills. (p. 109)

Inequalities in education are perpetuated further in various ways for Latino youth. Although grouping students in elementary school by reading group is common practice, Latino students are often placed in the low reading group. This perpetuates a cycle that is almost impossible for the student to rise above because the lower reading groups proceed at a slower pace, thus covering less material (Gamoran, 1992). Students soon become tracked into remedial classes on entering high school. Therefore, even within the same school, a Latino student often has a very different educational experience than a White student attending the same school. Latino students are predominantly placed at schools that offer fewer college-preparatory and Advanced Placement courses than are offered at schools with a predominantly White population (Betts, Rueben, & Danenberg, 2000). Even when Advanced Placement courses are offered at the school a Latino student attends, the Latino student has less access to these courses than a White student. Whereas

78% of Los Angeles schools are composed of Latino students, only 13% of Advanced Placement enrollment was Latino (Solorzano & Ornelas, 2004). Solorzano and Ornelas (2004) referred to this as a "school within a school" because Latino students are tracked into lower achieving classes while other students are tracked into college preparatory classes within the same school. One of the issues is that many Latino students are simply not prepared to take the more demanding courses in high school because of the remedial tracking that occurred so early in their education.

Another educational inequity can be found through the integration of technology into curriculum. Although the number of Latino students being exposed to computers in their schools has increased dramatically, a difference in the ways technology is being used in schools is evident. For example, approximately one-third of Latino students accessed the internet at school compared to more than half of White students (Fairlie, London, Rosner, & Pastora, 2006). The schools attended by the majority of Latino students generally have limited space and funding for technology. In addition, these schools are more likely to have novice teachers who are struggling with classroom management and not as familiar with the curriculum. Therefore, they may be less likely to utilize the technology efficiently or at all (Sweet, Rasher, Ambromitis, & Johnson, 2004). The differentiation in how technology is used in various schools is further heightened because Latino students typically have less access to technology than White students (Wilhelm, Carmen, & Reynolds, 2002). This is of concern because access to technology is positively correlated to better schooling outcomes (Fairlie et al., 2006) In fact, students with access to technology at home are approximately 6% more likely to

graduate from high school compared to students without access to technology at home (Fairlie et al., 2006).

School climate. Within the school environment of Latino youth, there are issues of safety and segregation. A higher percentage of Latino students compared to White students—10% compared to 4%—reported fearing for their safety, either at school or on their way to school (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2005). Whether physical or psychological (that is, ostracized, marginalized, etc.), it is challenging to learn and feel a sense of belonging in an environment perceived to be unsafe (Scheckner, Rollin, Kaiser-Ulrey, & Wagner, 2002). Furthermore, victims of school violence are more prone to truancy and eventually dropping out of school (Ringwalt, Ennett, & Johnson, 2003). For students who do not feel safe psychologically, perhaps due to marginalization from such things as newcomer status, language barrier, etc., a safe place on campus is essential; however, this type of resource is seldom provided (Gándara & Gibson, 2004). Perhaps this is because resources of schools with a predominantly Latino population are already so stretched. This is in large part due to the extreme segregation of Latino students within schools. Not only do more than half of Latinos in California attend segregated schools, 75% of these schools are high poverty (Orfield & Lee, 2005). Moreover, there is acute segregation by language (Linquanti, 2006, as cited in Gándara & Contreras, 2009). In other words, English learners are limited in their opportunities to socialize and interact with native English speakers. This has negative implications for the acquisition of the English language, academic achievement, and high school graduation (Rumberger & Tran, 2006).

School peers. During adolescence, peers have the biggest influence on each other. Therefore, it is not a surprise that peers have the largest impact on one another's academic achievement. Extracurricular activities are one avenue to form friendships and feel a stronger connection to school (Brown & Theobold, 1998). In fact, Latino students who feel invested in their school are more likely to graduate (Rumberger & Rodriguez, 2002). Unfortunately, Latino students are less apt to be involved in extracurricular activities compared to other student populations. Several factors may inhibit students from joining these activities, including the cost, afterschool responsibilities such as a job or caring for a younger sibling, safety concerns, and feelings of marginalization (Gándara & Contreras, 2009).

Peers also serve as a support system and provide one another with critical information often referred to as social capital. Due to the immense racial segregation found within and among schools, Latino students have limited access to knowledge that is critical not only for academic achievement but also for social mobility. The reality is that the dominant culture and middle class have acquired more social capital than the vast majority of Latinos. Middle-class parents and students have more knowledge about such things as what classes to take, how to fund college, what to do to prepare for college (extracurricular activities, preparing for the SAT, etc.), and how to best access the resources available to them (Gándara & Contreras, 2009). This is one of the major explanations of why minority students experience greater academic success when attending a predominantly White, middle-class school versus attending a predominantly minority, high-poverty school (Orfield & Lee, 2005). In the middle-class school, a Latino

student has greater exposure to students and adults with more social capital through courses and extracurricular activities.

Theoretical Framework

This study utilizes the theoretical framework developed by the research panel for the *California Healthy Kids Survey: Resiliency & Youth Development Module* (WestEd, 2008a). The theoretical framework, illustrated in Figure 1, consists of six protective factors: three external factors and three internal factors. The protective factors utilized in this framework are most consistently credited for positive youth development (Constantine et al., 1999). The external factors include caring relationships, high expectations, and meaningful participation; the internal factors consist of social competence, autonomy and sense of self, and sense of meaning and purpose.

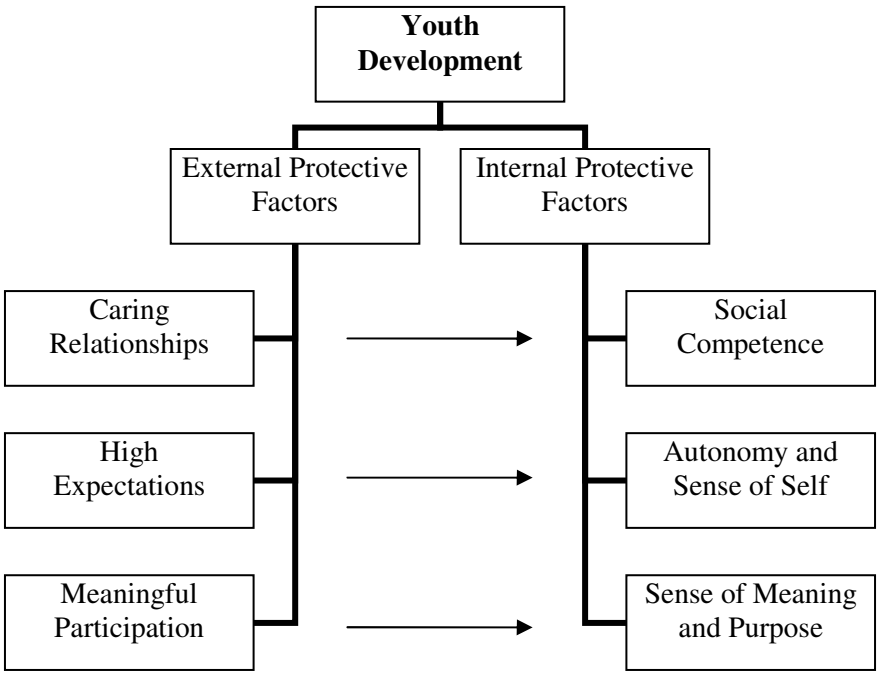

Figure 1. Resiliency and Youth Development Theoretical Framework

According to Constantine et al. (1999), "Resiliency theory posits that the explanatory and predictive power of these clusters resides in their ability to meet basic human developmental needs for safety, connection, belonging, identity, respect, mastery, power, and ultimately, meaning" (p. 8). It is believed that internal factors are outcomes of the youth developmental process. These internal factors are expressions of the external factors meeting the basic human needs of youth (Constantine et al., 1999). Although the three external factors impact all of the three internal factors, there are presumed primary relationships: caring relationships directly impact social competence, high expectations primarily influence autonomy and sense of self, and meaningful participation largely affects sense of meaning and purpose (Constantine et al., 1999).

External Protective Factors

External or environmental factors are defined as "characteristics of families, schools, communities, and peer groups that foster resiliency" (Henderson & Milstein, 2003, p. 9). An immediate caregiving environment constructed by caring relationships, high expectations, and meaningful participation has the most profound effect on youth development (Benard, 1991). External protective factors foster resiliency and are found within the family, school, and community (Benard, 1991; Krovetz, 1999). Protective factors have the ability to change a negative outcome and foster resiliency. A youth's basic human needs such as safety, love, respect, and mastery are met when protective factors are present within environments (Benard, 2004). Furthermore, these external protective factors foster development of internal protective factors, resulting in positive youth development (Benard, 2004).

Caring relationships. Caring relationships are defined as "supportive connections to others in the student's life who model and support healthy development and well-being" (Constantine, et al, 1999, p. 13). A caring relationship communicates the message: "You matter." Caring relationships are characterized by stability; nonjudgmental, genuine interest in the well-being of another; getting to know the individual; and ample and appropriate attention (Benard, 2004; Garmezy & Rutter, 1983; Krovetz, 1999; Werner & Smith, 1982). Benard (2004) stated, "the term 'caring relationships' conveys loving support—the message of being there for a youth, of trust, and of unconditional love" (p. 94). The sense of basic trust is pivotal to the ability to bond and engender positive human development (Erikson, 1963). For youth rising above adversity, the opportunity to form at least one close bond with a positive role model is critical (Garmezy, 1982; Krovetz, 1999; Werner & Smith, 1982). This caregiver provides stability in the youth's life, serving as a buffer and motivational force to push through adversity (Benard, 1991).

Caregiving relationships are found in the family, school, and community. Second only to a close family member, youths described a favorite teacher as the most positive role model in their life (Werner, 1996). Therefore, schools and community agencies can act as a shield and foster resilient characteristics even if the home environment does not serve as a protective factor (Coleman, 1987). The school and surrounding community are invaluable assets in providing social capital necessary to shift the balance from risks to strengths.

High expectations. High expectations are defined as "the consistent communication of direct and indirect messages that the student can and will succeed responsibly" (Constantine et al., 1999, p. 13). High expectations are "clear, positive, and youth centered expectations" (Benard, 2004, p. 45). High expectations are accomplished by creating a safe, structured environment and encouraging input from youth (Benard, 2004). Positive high expectations are created with youth by integrating youth's interests, strengths, and goals. Communicating high expectations to youth conveys the message that someone believes in their abilities and motivates them to achieve their fullest potential (Benard, 1991, 2004).

In order for high expectations to foster resiliency, youth must receive support from a caregiver to realize the expectations (Benard, 1991; Krovetz, 1999). The lack of positive high expectations is highly correlated to lower student achievement (Krovetz, 1999). Conversely, high expectations along with necessary support to realize these expectations result in remarkably high rates of academic achievement (Benard, 1991). Benard (1991) eloquently described this interaction:

> What appears to be the dynamic here is the internalization of high expectations for oneself. When the message one consistently hears from family members, from teachers, from significant others in one's environment is 'You are a bright and capable person,' one naturally sees oneself as a bright and capable person, a person with that resilient trait, a sense of purpose and a bright future. (1991, p. 14).

Meaningful participation. Meaningful participation is defined as "the involvement of the student in relevant, engaging, and responsible activities with opportunities for responsibility and contribution" (Constantine et al., 1999, p. 13). Meaningful participation entails involvement and responsibility in meaningful activities

(Krovetz, 1999). Opportunities for participation and contribution include reflection, dialog, creative expression through arts, problem-solving, and decision-making. These opportunities provide youth with an outlet to be heard, voice their opinion, weigh options and make decisions, have responsibility, express imagination, engage in critical thinking, work alongside and assist others, and give back to their community (Benard, 2004).

The following was noted by Burns and Lonquist (1996, as cited in Krovetz, 1999):

> When people have an opportunity to participate in decisions and shape strategies that vitally affect them, they will develop a sense of ownership in what they have determined and commitment to seeing that the decisions are sound and the strategies are useful, effective and carried out. This theory is basic to a democratic society. (p.10)

The ability to have control over your own life is a basic human need, as is the need to form a bond with others and experience a sense of belonging (Erikson, 1963; Krovetz, 1999). Opportunities for meaningful participation in group activities, such as being a member of a sports team or student government, can assist youth in meeting their need to belong (Benard, 2004; Werner & Smith, 1992). Furthermore, meaningful participation provides youth with opportunities to give back to others (Benard, 2004). Meaningful participation serves as a protective factor because it allows youth to move beyond seeing themselves as problematic and needy. Instead, youth are empowered to view themselves as successful and capable.

Internal Protective Factors

Internal protective factors are positive developmental outcomes indicating that resiliency is being exercised within youth (Benard, 2004). There are four common

internal protective factors present in resilient youth: social competence, problem solving skills, autonomy and sense of self, and sense of meaning and purpose (Benard, 1991, 2004). For the purposes of this study, problem-solving skills are included as a part of social competence.

Social competence. Social competence is defined as the "ability to communicate effectively and appropriately, and to demonstrate caring, flexibility, and responsiveness in social situations" (Constantine et al., 1999, p. 13). Social competence includes qualities such as communication skills; responsiveness; sense of humor; empathy and caring; compassion, altruism, and forgiveness; problem-solving skills; critical thinking; insight; and flexibility (Benard, 1991, 2004; Krovetz, 1999; Werner & Smith, 1982).

Communication skills serve as the catalyst to fostering relationships and an interpersonal bond (Benard, 2004). Social competence is dependent on the ability to draw out positive responses from others, referred to as responsiveness (Benard, 2004). Another characteristic of developing positive connections between people is humor (Lefcourt, 2001). Humor buffers adversity by transforming sadness into laughter and providing another way of seeing things (Higgins, 1994; Wolin & Wolin, 1993). Across a lifetime, humor is one of the essential protective mechanisms used by resilient individuals (Vaillant, 2000).

Other defining characteristics of resiliency are empathy and caring (Werner & Smith, 1992). Empathy is the ability to understand how another person is feeling. Not only does empathy promote the development of social competence, it is also at the center

of compassion, altruism, and forgiveness (Benard, 2004). Compassion is caring and wanting to ease someone else's misfortune.

Altruism is referred to as empathy in action and refers to "doing for others what they need and not what you want to do for them" (Valliant, 2002, p. 71). Altruism is regarded as the utmost form of social competence (Higgins, 1994). Forgiveness, as documented throughout the resilience literature, is invaluable to positive mental health and well-being (McCullough & Witvliet, 2002). This includes forgiveness not only to others but to oneself as well as one's abusers (McCullough & Witvliet, 2002).

Problem-solving skills include planning and resourcefulness. Planning necessitates seeing oneself in control of one's life or the situation, while also being resourceful to obtain assistance from others when needed (Krovetz, 1999). This skill set also includes the ability to think critically, insightfully, and flexibly (Benard, 1991).

Critical thinking is a form of higher order thinking where the goal is understanding context, or discerning the underlying meaning of a statement or situation (Schor, 1993). Critical thinking enables youth to gain awareness of structures of oppression, referred to as critical consciousness, and develop strategies for overcoming oppression (Freire, 1973).

Insight is akin to the concept of critical consciousness as it involves awareness of environmental cues and begets a newfound realization that alters one's current perceived reality (Benard, 2004). Insight allows youth to move beyond victimhood by enabling them to construe their adversity in a different way (O'Gorman, 1994). Flexibility is the

ability to see alternatives to solutions so that when an obstacle appears the person can navigate around the situation.

Autonomy and sense of self. Autonomy and sense of self are defined as "sense of personal identity and power" (Constantine et al., 1999, p. 13). Autonomy is having a sense of one's personal identity and the ability to act independently and wield order within one's environment (Benard, 1994, 2004; Krovetz, 1999). Characteristics exemplifying autonomy and sense of self include positive identity, internal locus of control, initiative, self-efficacy, adaptive distancing, resistance, and self-awareness (Benard, 2004).

Self-identity or self-esteem is how one internally views oneself separate from others. The formation of a positive self-identity is the hallmark of positive adolescent development, according to Erikson's (1968) theory of psychosocial development. Furthermore, ethnic minority youth must be empowered to integrate a positively valued ethnic identity into their self-identity in order to generate an overall positive self-identity (Phinney & Rosenthal, 1992).

A positive self-identity leads to self-efficacy, a belief in one's own ability. Self-efficacy is influenced by internal locus of control and initiative. Internal locus of control is a sense of personal power over life outcomes (Werner & Smith, 1992). Initiative is the internal motivation to take action toward a purpose or objective (Larson, 2000). The belief in one's power over one's own life is critical in determining personal life outcomes regardless of how much influence a person actually has (Bandura, 1995, 1997; Werner & Smith, 1992).

Adaptive distancing involves emotionally detaching oneself from dysfunction as a protective measure for one's self-esteem and desire to create goals (Chess, 1989). Adaptive distancing involves resistance. Resistance protects autonomy as it is the rejection of negative messages about one's identity, such as gender, sexuality, and culture (Benard, 2004). Resistance is an internal defense mechanism necessitating the presence of self-awareness in order to be constructive (Benard, 2004). Self-awareness is the process of reflecting on one's thinking and feelings as well as observing one's strengths, disposition, and desires free from emotion (Benard, 2004; Wolin & Wolin, 1993). As a result, the person is able to see themself and their life in a new way, leading to cognitive restructuring or reframing of one's experience. The power of reframing was observed repeatedly by Dr. Viktor Frankl (1984) while imprisoned in concentration camps in Germany. Prisoners who were able to find meaning and purpose despite their dire circumstances behaved differently from others. For example, those who had positively reframed their situation would use the razor blades provided to them to prick their cheeks so they would appear healthier and thus still able to work. Others, however, used the razor blades for the intended purpose of shaving their hair. Cognitive restructuring is viewed by many as a quintessential aspect of resiliency (Dalai Lama, 1998; Frankl, 1984; O'Gorman, 1994; Vaillant, 2000; Wolin & Wolin, 1993).

Sense of meaning and purpose. Sense of meaning and purpose is the "belief and understanding that one's life has coherence and makes a difference" (Constantine et al., 1999, p. 13). Sense of purpose includes goal direction, achievement motivation, educational aspirations, special interests, creativity, imagination, optimism and hope, and

faith and spirituality (Benard, 2004; Henderson & Milstein, 2003; Werner & Smith, 1992).

Future-oriented characteristics are goal direction, achievement motivation, and educational aspirations. Goal direction involves cognitive planning in anticipation of the future and intrinsic motivation (Vaillant, 2000). Achievement motivation is a crucial factor affecting behavior and performance, and has been extensively associated with various academic success factors such as increased high school graduation and higher grades (Benard, 2004; Scales & Leffert, 1999). Furthermore, educational aspirations are highly correlated with psychological health (Vaillant, 2002).

Having a special interest and being able to express oneself through imagination and creativity provide individuals with a sense of task mastery, as well as a meaningful way to distance oneself from negative effects of adversity (Benard, 2004). Whereas resilient youth may not be especially talented, they find comfort in some type of hobby or special interest (Werner & Smith, 1992). Creativity research has established a link between adversity and later creativity (Simonton, 2000). Imagination affords youth an avenue to envision a positive future (Rubin, 1996) Resilience research acknowledges the crucial role of creativity and imagination in moving beyond risk and adversity (Higgins, 1994; Wolin & Wolin, 1993).

Positive expectations and motivation are the foundation of optimism and hope (Benard, 2004). Optimism is rooted in beliefs and cognitions, whereas hope is connected to emotions and feelings. In Werner and Smith's (1992, 2001) longitudinal study, they found hopefulness that the odds could be overcome to be a chief element in the lives of

the resilient individuals. Faith, spirituality, and a sense of meaning signify the transformational ability to make sense out of adverse situations (Benard, 2004).

Conclusion

The need to empower and support Latino students to attain higher levels of educational achievement is pressing. It is important to acknowledge deficits and weaknesses of the Latino youth environmental context to the extent that the information will lead to a better understanding of the challenges facing the vast majority of Latino youth. However, the focus must shift toward acting on the positive aspects of the Latino youth environmental context. Resiliency as an aspect of the development process of youth can assist in illuminating the areas of strength within the Latino youth context, thus allowing strengths to serve as areas of action in which more Latino students can experience higher levels of academic success.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study aimed to serve as a catalyst toward developing effective educational objectives fostering greater academic success in schools for Latino students. To this end, the study investigated factors that support promoting academic resiliency in Latino high school students. In order for the internal factors (social competence, autonomy and sense of self, and sense of meaning and purpose) to be most fully expressed, there must be a foundation of external factors (caring relationships, high expectations, and meaningful participation) in place in the students' lives. Although there is a dynamic interplay between the external and internal factors, there does appear to be a principal relationship between certain external and internal factors. This is aligned to the Resiliency and Youth Development Theoretical Framework, which defines a primary relationship between the external and internal factors (Constantine, et al., 1999). This is illustrated in Figure 2. If this holds true for the Latino population, then educators and policy makers can begin to focus on specific actions that can best promote the external factors most relevant to Latino students. Results of this research will assist in cultivating academic resiliency and achievement within Latino students and their families.

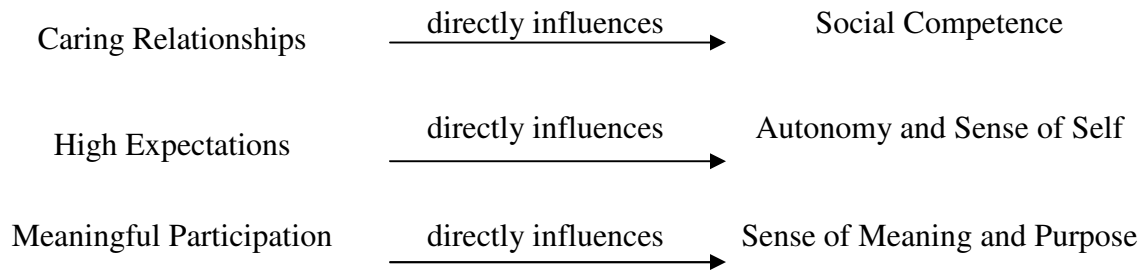

Figure 2. Primary Relationships Between External and Internal Factors

Research Questions

Using a resiliency framework, this study seeks to answer one major research question: Which protective factors are more prevalent in students who are "on-track" versus "not on-track" to graduate? As a subset of this question, seven additional questions were addressed:

1. Are the external/internal primary relationships positively correlated?
2. How does gender impact the academic resiliency of Latino students in high school?
3. How do various Latino origins impact the academic resiliency of Latino students in high school?
4. How does country of birth impact the academic resiliency of Latino students in high school?
5. How does household composition impact the academic resiliency of Latino students in high school?
6. How do languages spoken impact the academic resiliency of Latino students in high school?

7. How does the educational level of parents impact the academic resiliency of Latino students in high school?

The research questions were addressed through data from a survey instrument, *The Healthy Kids Survey: Resilience and Youth Development Module* (WestEd, 2008a).

Methods

Research Design

This quantitative ex post facto study examined preexisting conditions between groups (Patten, 2004) and explored the frequency of six resiliency factors within Latino high school students who were either on-track or not on-track to graduate. Data from *The Healthy Kids Survey: Resilience and Youth Development Module* (WestEd, 2008a) administered to Latino students at one urban high school were analyzed, based on a set of criteria defining students as academically resilient. Dependent variables for this study included six protective factors based on the Resiliency and Youth Development Theoretical Framework (Constantine et al., 1999). The three external factors were caring relationships, high expectations, and meaningful participation. The three internal factors were social competence, autonomy and sense of self, and sense of meaning and purpose. The grouping variable was on-track or not on-track to graduate. For logistical reasons, data were collected prior to graduation during the start of the Spring semester in March of 2010.

As resilience is multidimensional, it was necessary to identify clear criteria for collecting data. Therefore, criteria of on-track to graduate served as the operational definition of academic resilience. It was worthy to look at on-track to graduate as the sole

criterion for defining academic resiliency, as a sizeable portion of the Latino population never earns a high school diploma. Current statistics show that approximately 54% of the Latino population does not graduate from high school. This measure is of particular importance given the dire need for schools to obtain information regarding how to meet the developmental and learning benchmarks of Latino students.

For the purpose of this study, a resilient student was defined as a student on-track to graduate. For a 12th-grade student in the Spring semester, on-track to graduate included (a) completion of at least 200 credits and/or a combination of completed and in-progress credits totaling a minimum of 230 credits, (b) a combination of completed and in-progress credits meeting the minimum requirement in each subject category, (c) a minimum score of 350 in both the English and Mathematics sections of the California High School Exit Examination, (d) completion of the service learning requirement, and (e) completion and/or in progress of completing the computer literacy requirement (California Department of Education, 2010).

Setting

The study was conducted at an urban high school complex in the Los Angeles area. The school complex, which opened approximately five years ago, was designed specifically to house small learning communities. The opening of this school was a first step in addressing overcrowded school conditions and eliminating the need for year-round school calendars as well as bussing students to other areas of the county. The school complex consisted of one small, autonomous school, one independent pilot school, and two small learning communities. The student population was approximately 94%

Latino and of predominantly low socioeconomic status, with more than 90% of the student population qualifying for the Federal Free and Reduced Price Meal Program. The overwhelming majority of parents were first-generation immigrants. Furthermore, English was not the primary home language for the majority of students.

Participants

The target population of this study was Latino high school students. The sampling frame was Latino high school students in their fourth year of high school in an urban high school. The selection procedure was based on a convenience sampling of one urban high school within the Los Angeles area with a high percentage of Latino students. Participants were enrolled in one of the two small learning communities.

Approximately 200 Latino high school students were asked to participate in the study. Students and their parents were asked to complete a consent form if they were willing to participate in the study. A total of 105 consent forms were returned, with 92 students actually completing the survey. Of the students that participated in the study, 57 students were on-track to graduate and 35 students were not on-track to graduate. A minimum of 35 students categorized as on-track to graduate and 35 students categorized as not on-track to graduate were recommended for adequate power to conduct the data analysis (Cohen, 1988). Of the 92 students, 66 were female, 22 were male, and 4 did not indicate gender. Students ranged from 17 to 19 years old: 48 students were 17 years old, 41 students were 18 years old, and 3 students were 19 years old.

Procedures

This section is divided into three subsections. In the first subsection, student recruitment procedures are discussed. This is followed by a review of pre-data collection procedures. The section ends with a discussion of the data collection procedures.

Student Recruitment Procedures

The target student population for this study was Latino students in their fourth year of high school. The researcher arranged for an initial meeting with these Latino students, which took place during the Advisory period which is similar to Homeroom. This meeting took place approximately seven weeks prior to the actual data collection. During this brief meeting of approximately 5 minutes, the researcher asked students to participate in a study. Students were told that this study would serve to better understand protective factors contributing to academic success and that the results of this study could assist in developing educational objectives and goals to foster greater academic success in schools for Latino students. Students were not informed of the specific criteria. Therefore, students were not aware of whether they were selected as academically resilient or not academically resilient. Students were given an informed consent form for their parent/guardian to review (see Appendix A). They were asked to sign and return the permission form by the following week to their Advisory teacher if both the student and parent were willing to have the student participate in the study. The researcher then collected the forms one week later and once again three days later.

Pre-Data Collection Procedures

On receiving the consent forms, the researcher forwarded the consent forms along with a spreadsheet containing the names of the students and their dates of birth to the school district's research unit. The research unit then provided the data necessary to determine which students were on-track or not on-track to graduate. These data were limited to the data stated on the consent forms signed by the students and parents/guardians. On receiving the academic data from the research unit, the researcher reviewed the academic records to determine which students were on-track to graduate and which students were not on-track to graduate according to the criteria stated previously. Students were not made aware of whether they were classified as on-track to graduate or not on-track to graduate.

A survey form was assigned to each participant via an attached card with the name of an individual participant typed on it. This enabled the researcher to presort the survey forms and assign them according to who was on-track to graduate versus not on-track to graduate, while also ensuring only students who returned the permission forms were given a survey form. As the researcher needed to ascertain which survey forms were completed by students on-track to graduate versus not on-track to graduate, the back page of the survey forms had the words THANK YOU written across the center of the page, which is a common way to end a survey. The only difference between the two groups was the punctuation after the words THANK YOU. The survey forms completed by students on-track to graduate had a period behind THANK YOU whereas an exclamation point followed the THANK YOU on survey forms completed by students not on-track to

graduate. As this difference was so subtle, it would appear to be a typographical error if noticed at all.

Data Collection Procedures

After discussing the logistics of the data collection with the principal, it was decided the researcher would work directly with the counselors and teachers of the school site to ensure minimal impact on instructional time. Therefore, students were asked to complete the survey during one Advisory period. At the start of Advisory, students were summoned to the cafeteria. The researcher provided directions both verbally and in writing to the students. Students were reminded they had the right to refuse to answer any questions or to stop participating in the study at any time without penalty. It was also reinforced that surveys would remain confidential. In addition, the researcher was present to answer any questions students had concerning the survey.

Student volunteers not participating in the study assisted in passing out the surveys. To increase efficiency of handing out surveys, the surveys were separated by advisory teacher. Each student volunteer was responsible for one of eight advisories. As student participants entered the outside portion of the cafeteria, a student volunteer directed student participants to the appropriate line according to their advisory teacher. Students were told the name card served two purposes: to make certain only students who turned in consent forms completed the survey and for permission to return to class. Students were asked to tear off the name card before returning the completed survey. They were also instructed not to write their name anywhere on the survey.

After student participants completed the survey, student volunteers collected the surveys and time stamped the name cards, which also served as the students' return to class slip, as student participants left. Each survey was reviewed to be sure no name card remained attached to a survey. Therefore, no survey could be identified as any particular student's survey as no names were associated with the surveys. The survey took less than 25 minutes for the students to complete. Participants did not receive compensation for their participation.

Instrumentation

The survey consisted of a demographic questionnaire (see Appendix B) as well as the *California Healthy Kids Survey: Resiliency & Youth Development Module* (WestEd, 2008a). See Appendix C.

Demographic Questionnaire

The demographic questionnaire included items related to student age, gender, expectation of graduating, ethnicity/nationality, country of birth, household composition, languages spoken, and parental educational level.

California Healthy Kids Survey: Resiliency & Youth Development Module

The Resiliency & Youth Development Module (RYDM) consisted of 56 questions. All responses were based on a Likert scale where each student indicated how true they felt the statement was by marking one of four responses: *Not at All True, A Little True, Pretty Much True,* or *Very Much True.* This particular version of RYDM was intended for high school students. The nationally recognized panel of experts who developed RYDM relied on the latest research; therefore, the survey questions were

derived from 17 assets (11 external assets and 6 internal assets) researchers most consistently identify with positive youth development (WestEd, 2003). These 17 assets comprised the six protective factors of the Resiliency and Youth Development Theoretical Framework as shown in Table 1. The external assets consisted of 33 survey items, whereas the internal assets consisted of 18 survey items. Table 2 lists the specific item numbers by construct.

Table 1

Assets per Protective Factor

Protective Factors	Number of Assets
External Factors:	
Caring Relationships	4
High Expectations	4
Meaningful Participation	3
Internal Factors:	
Social Competence	3
Autonomy and Sense of Self	2
Sense of Meaning and Purpose	1

Five additional survey questions from the Add Health school were extracted from the congressionally mandated National Longitudinal Study on Adolescent Health (WestEd, 2008b). This scale served as an additional measure for school connectedness. As it does not specifically utilize the six protective factors of the Resiliency and Youth Development Theoretical Framework, this study did not use data from these five questions.

As this study utilized the RYDM, each asset item and cluster was tested for psychometric reliability and construct validity by the researchers who developed the module (Constantine & Benard, 2001). Data used for the validation of the survey were

collected from Spring 1999 through Fall 2000 from 56,398 students across 164 districts (Constantine & Benard, 2001). Internal-consistency reliability analyses were performed using the Spring 1999 pilot test data. Exploratory factor analyses and reliability analysis were performed on the Fall 1999 field test data. Items and scales were modified based on the findings. Additional exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis was conducted with Spring 2000 data (Constantine & Benard, 2001).

Caring relationships. There were 12 items concerning caring relationships with three items for each environmental category of school, home, community, and peers (WestEd, 2003). There were four measures of caring relationships: care/interest, attention, listening, and helping. For example, for the school environment "attention" measure, students responded to the following statement: At my school, there is a teacher or some other adult who notices when I am not there.

High expectations. There were 12 items concerning high expectations with three items for each environmental category of school, home, community, and peers (WestEd, 2003). There were four measures of high expectations: validation, personal best message, believes in student, and guidance. For example, for the school environment "believes in student" measure, students responded to the statement: At my school, there is a teacher or some other adult who believes that I will be a success.

Meaningful participation. There were nine items concerning meaningful participation with three items for each environmental category of school, home, and community (WestEd, 2003). There were three measures of meaningful participation: make decisions, do fun or interesting things, and make a difference/helping. For example,

for the school environment "make decisions" measure, students responded to the statement: At my school, I help decide things like class activities or rules.

Social competence. There were nine items concerning social competence with three items for each measure of cooperation and communication, empathy, and problem-solving (WestEd, 2003). For example, for the "empathy" measure, students responded to this statement: I try to understand what other people go through. All responses were based on a Likert scale where each student indicated how true they felt the statement was by marking one of four responses: *Not at All True*, *A Little True*, *Pretty Much True*, or *Very Much True*.

Autonomy and sense of self. There were six items concerning autonomy and sense of self with three items for each measure of self-efficacy and self-awareness (WestEd, 2003). For example, for the "self-efficacy" measure, students responded to: I can do most things if I try.

Sense of meaning and purpose. There were three items concerning sense of meaning and purpose with one measure of goals and aspirations (WestEd, 2003). For example, students responded to the following statement: I plan to go to college or some other school after high school.

Composites

A composite was created for each dependent variable as the composites were used in the data analysis. The composites were created by calculating the mean across the specific items for each of the six variables. Table 2 identifies the items from the survey that measured each variable. The specific questions can be found in Appendix C.

Table 2

Items per Composite

Construct	Subconstruct	Item Numbers
Caring Relationships	School	6, 8, 10
	Home	49, 51, 53
	Community	15, 17, 20
	Peer	42, 43, 44
High Expectations	School	7, 9, 11
	Home	48, 50, 52
	Community	16, 18, 19
	Peer	45, 46, 47
Meaningful Participation	School	12, 13, 14
	Home	54, 55, 56
	Community	21, 22, 23
Social Competence	Cooperation and Communication	31, 36, 37
	Empathy	33, 34, 38
	Problem-Solving	27, 28, 35
Autonomy and Sense of Self	Self-Efficacy	29, 30, 32
	Self-Awareness	39, 40, 41
Sense of Meaning and Purpose	Goals and Aspirations	24, 25, 26

Cronbach Alpha Analysis

Alpha coefficients were conducted on the study variables as a measure of internal consistency reliability of each construct of the *California Healthy Kids Survey: Resiliency & Youth Development Module* (WestEd, 2008a). Table 3 shows the reliability level of each variable as well as the number of items per scale. As depicted in Table 3, all but one of the variable measures had an alpha coefficient above the acceptable reliability level, $\alpha = .75$. The exception in this study was meaningful participation, $\alpha = .74$. The

questions for meaningful participation included items 12, 13, 14, 21, 22, 23, 54, 55, and 56 on the survey; see Appendix C. Table 3 lists the alpha coefficient by variable.

Table 3

Reliability of Dependent Variables of Academic Resiliency

Variable	α	Items Per Scale
External Factors:		
Caring Relationships	.85	12
High Expectations	.84	12
Meaningful Participation*	.74	9
Internal Factors:		
Social Competence	.85	9
Autonomy and Sense of Self	.84	6
Sense of Meaning and Purpose	.89	3

*Slightly below an acceptable level of reliability.

Data Analysis

Statistical analysis of the data included descriptive statistics (e.g., means and standard deviations for all study variables), a *t*-test for independent samples to determine differences among all study variables, a Pearson Correlation matrix to identify correlations among variables, and chi-square tests to assess differences between academic resiliency and other factors.

All data were collected, entered into the SPSS 17.0 statistical package, and analyzed in a manner preserving student confidentiality, as students' names are not connected to the surveys or entered into the electronic database. The hard copies of the surveys were stored in a locked cabinet, and the electronic data was stored on a password protected USB drive. Access to the hard and electronic copies of the data was limited to

the researcher. Furthermore, data could not be linked to any particular student as names were not associated with the data.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of this quantitative study was to better understand protective factors most contributing to the academic resilience of Latino high school students. This study investigated whether students who were on-track to graduate had higher protective factors than students not on-track to graduate. By identifying those protective factors most dominant among Latino students on-track to graduate, educational objectives fostering such protective factors may be developed, thereby providing insight into how to improve the Latino high school graduation rate.

This study collected data through the use of a demographic questionnaire and the California Healthy Kids Survey: Resilience & Youth Development Module (WestEd, 2008a). In this research, there were six dependent variables: caring relationships, high expectations, meaningful participation, social competence, autonomy and sense of self, and sense of meaning and purpose. The first three are external factors and the latter are internal factors. All six factors are continuous variables. The grouping variable was on-track versus not on-track to graduate. This variable is dichotomous or categorical in nature.

Through the research the primary question addressed was the following: Which protective factors are more prevalent in students who are on-track versus not on-track to graduate? As a subset to this question, there are seven additional questions for analysis:

1. Are the external/internal primary relationships positively correlated?

2. How does gender impact the academic resiliency of Latino students in high school?
3. How do various Latino origins impact the academic resiliency of Latino students in high school?
4. How does country of birth impact the academic resiliency of Latino students in high school?
5. How does household composition impact the academic resiliency of Latino students in high school?
6. How do languages spoken impact the academic resiliency of Latino students in high school?

This chapter presents a discussion of the general statistics for each of the dependent variables, followed by an analysis of the primary research question and seven subset questions, and ending with a conclusion.

General Statistics for Each Dependent Variable

The mean was derived from a Likert scale ranging from 1 (*Not At All True*) through 4 (*Very Much True*). Sense of meaning and purpose had the highest mean score ($M = 3.76$, $SD = 0.58$) whereas meaningful participation had the lowest mean score ($M = 2.93$, $SD = 0.55$). The mean and standard deviation for each variable are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Mean and Standard Deviation

Variable	*Mean*	*SD*
External Factors:		
Caring Relationships	3.37	0.50
High Expectations	3.45	0.44
Meaningful Participation	2.93	0.55
Internal Factors:		
Social Competence	3.36	0.55
Autonomy and Sense of Self	3.54	0.52
Sense of Meaning and Purpose	3.76	0.58

Note. N = 92.

Prevalence of Protective Factors in Latino Students

A *t*-test for independent samples was conducted to determine if there was a significant difference between the mean responses to the dependent variables (caring relationships, high expectations, meaningful participation, social competence, autonomy and sense of self, and sense of meaning and purpose) of Latino students on-track to graduate and Latino students not on-track to graduate. Students self-reported their responses to 51 questions using Likert scale: A = *Strongly Disagree*, B = *Disagree*, C = *Neither Disagree nor Agree*, D = *Agree*, E = *Strongly Agree*. This scale was later converted to a numeric scale (1 = A, 2 = B, 3 = C, 4 = D, 5 = E) for coding purposes.

Results indicated a significant mean difference between Latino students on-track to graduate ($M = 3.52$, $SD = 0.34$) and not on-track to graduate ($M = 3.34$, $SD = 0.55$) for high expectations (t [90] = 1.75, $p < .05$), such that Latino students on-track to graduate had higher perceptions of others having high expectations for them compared to Latino students not on-track to graduate. A significant mean difference between on-track to

graduate (M = 3.90, SD = 0.33) and not on-track to graduate (M = 3.51, SD = 0.79) for sense of meaning and purpose (t [90] = 2.79, $p < .05$) was also found, such that participants on-track to graduate reported a stronger sense of meaning and purpose than did Latino students not on-track to graduate. As reported in Table 5, a significant difference between the means was not found for caring relationships, meaningful participation, social competence, or autonomy and sense of self.

Table 5

t-Test by Group per Factor

	On-track to graduate (a)		Not on-track to graduate (b)				
Variable	Mean	*SD*	*Mean*	*SD*	*t*	*p*	df
External Factors:							
Caring Relationships	3.45	*0.42*	3.25	*0.60*	1.88	.06	90
High Expectations	3.52	*0.34*	3.34	*0.55*	1.75*	.01	90
Meaningful Participation	3.01	*0.51*	2.79	*0.58*	1.95	.47	90
Internal Factors:							
Social Competence	3.38	*0.47*	3.32	*0.68*	0.53	.10	90
Autonomy and Sense of Self	3.60	*0.43*	3.46	*0.64*	1.20	.13	90
Sense of Meaning and Purpose	3.90	*0.33*	3.51	*0.79*	2.79*	.00	90

Note. a. n = 57, b. n = 35. * $p < .05$, two-tailed.

External and Internal Primary Relationships

The resiliency theory states that there are three primary relationships among the six factors as illustrated in Table 6. To evaluate whether individual variables that make up the primary relationships or pairs were positively correlated, a Pearson Correlation matrix was used by analyzing the composites of each protective factor with the independent variable of on-track or not on-track to graduate. Each of the three primary

relationship pairings were significantly correlated. Furthermore, the sense of meaning and purpose composite was significantly correlated to on-track or not on-track to graduate, $r(92) = .33$, $p < .01$. The results of these findings are reported in Table 7.

Table 6

Primary Relationships Between the Six Factors

Relationship	External Factors	Internal Factors
1. Primary	Caring Relationships	Social Competence
2. Primary	High Expectations	Autonomy and Sense of Self
3. Primary	Meaningful Participation	Sense of Meaning and Purpose

Table 7

Pearson Correlation by Composite per External and Internal Factor

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	On-Track or Not On-Track to Graduate
1 Caring Relationships	-	.84**	.58**	**.63****	.67**	.55**	.20
2 High Expectations		-	.54**	.59**	**.67****	.62**	.20
3 Meaningful Participation			-	.48**	.49**	**.46****	.20
4 Social Competence				-	.71**	.49**	.06
5 Autonomy and Sense of Self					-	.58**	.13
6 Sense of Meaning and Purpose						-	.33**

Note. 1 = Caring Relationships, 2 = High Expectations, 3 = Meaningful Participation, 4 = Social Competence, 5 = Autonomy and Sense of Self, and 6 = Sense of Meaning and Purpose. **$p < .01$, two-tailed.

Impact of Gender on Academic Resiliency

A chi-square test was used to assess the difference between the frequency of males and females on-track to graduate versus not on-track to graduate. A total of 92 students participated in the study; however, four students did not identify their gender.

An equal number of males were on-track to graduate versus not on-track to graduate. Conversely, two-thirds of females were on-track to graduate versus not on-track to graduate. In addition, 80% of those on-track to graduate were females. Gender and on-track to graduate were found to be independent of each other as males and females are distributed similarly ($\chi^2 = 1.96$, $p = .16$). Table 8 displays the frequencies.

Table 8

Chi-Square Test by Gender and On-track versus Not On-track to Graduate

Participants	On-Track to Graduate	Not On-Track to Graduate	Total
Male	11	11	22
Female	44	22	64
Total	55	33	88

Impact of Various Latino Origins on Academic Resiliency

Students were asked to respond to the following question: Which best describes you? The responses were based on a Likert scale (A = *Colombian/Colombian-American,* B = *Guatemalan/Guatemalan-American*, C = *Mexican/Mexican-American*, D = *Peruvian/Peruvian-American*, E = *Salvadoran/Salvadoran-American*, F = *Other*: ___). Students were instructed to mark all that apply. This scale was then converted to a numeric scale (1 = A, 2 = B, 3 = C, 4 = D, 5 = E, 6 = F) for coding purposes. After analyzing this information, the data for this question were recoded to account for the open-ended option (6 = Other: ___). Code 6 (Other: ___) was divided into three separate codes (6 = Nicaraguan/Nicaraguan-American, 7 = Honduran/Honduran-American, 8 = Multiethnic).

A chi-square test was used to calculate the difference between the frequency of various Latino origins and on-track to graduate versus not on-track to graduate. More than half of the students surveyed were of Mexican/Mexican-American descent. A significant difference between the various Latino origins and academic resiliency of high school-age Latino youth was not found ($\chi^2 = 3.55$, $p = .74$). Frequencies are presented in Table 9.

Table 9

Chi-Square Test by Various Latino Origins and On-Track versus Not On-Track to Graduate

Latino Origin	On-Track to Graduate	Not On-Track to Graduate	Total
Guatemalan/Guatemalan-American	9	6	15
Mexican/Mexican-American	31	17	48
Peruvian/Peruvian-American	0	1	1
Salvadoran/Salvadoran-American	9	4	13
Nicaraguan/Nicaraguan-American	1	1	2
Honduran/Honduran-American	1	0	1
Multi-ethnic	6	6	12
Total	57	35	92

Impact of Country of Birth on Academic Resiliency

Students were asked to indicate whether they were born in the United States or in another country. Although students who indicated they were born in another country were asked to specify the other country, this information was not analyzed. Therefore, born in the United States was coded 1 and born in another country was coded 2. A chi-

square test was used to measure the difference between the frequency of country of birth and on-track to graduate versus not on-track to graduate. A total of 83.70% of students responded they were born in the United States, with more students on-track to graduate than not on-track to graduate at 57.14% and 42.86%, respectively. Of the students born in another country, 87.67% were on-track for graduation while 13.33% were not on-track to graduate. A significant difference between the country of birth and academic resiliency was found ($\chi^2 = 4.64$, $p = .03$), such that Latino students born in another country are more likely to graduate than Latino students born in the United States. Frequencies are shown in Table 10.

Table 10

Chi-Square Test Birth Region and On-track versus Not On-track to Graduate

Birth Region	On-Track to Graduate	Not On-Track to Graduate	Total
United States	44	33	77
Other Country	13	2	15
Total	57	35	92

Impact of Household Composition on Academic Resiliency

Students were asked to respond to the question, "Who do you live with?" The responses were based on a Likert scale (A = Mother, B = Father, C = *Stepmother*, D = *Stepfather*, E = *Foster parent*, F = *Grandmother*, G = *Grandfather*, H = *Aunt*, I = *Uncle*, J = *Cousin*, K = *Other*: ___). Prior to analyzing this information, the data for this question needed to be recoded, as the original question provided students with 11 options with the last one being open ended. Furthermore, the participants were instructed to mark all that

apply. After reviewing the responses, the question was recoded into eight categories, ensuring that all responses fit into one of the categories as described in Table 11.

Table 11

Description of Household Composition Categories

Code	Home Composition	Description
1	Single parent	Only immediate family (may include siblings or children). There is no differentiation between mother or father.
2	Two parents	Only immediate family (may include siblings or children). There is no differentiation between mother or father or step-parent or biological parent.
3	Single parent and extended family members	There is no differentiation between mother or father. Extended family members include grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins.
4	Two parents and extended family members	There is no differentiation between mother or father or step-parent or biological parent. Extended family members include grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins.
5	Siblings	Sibling is the caretaker. Neither parent lives with the student.
6	Extended family members	Member of the extended family is the caretaker. Parent(s) not present
7	Extended family members and nonfamily members	Member of the extended family or nonfamily member is the caretaker. Family members live with the student; however, neither parent lives with the student.
8	Nonfamily members	A nonfamily member is the caretaker. Family members including either parent do not live with the student.

A chi-square test was used to assess the difference between the frequency of household composition and on-track to graduate versus not on-track to graduate. Of the

92 students surveyed, 84.78% indicated they resided with either one or two parents. Responses were evenly distributed among students on-track to graduate and students not on-track to graduate. Household composition and academic resiliency were found to be independent of each other ($\chi^2 = 2.60$, $p = .86$). The frequencies are presented in Table 12.

Table 12

Chi-Square Test by Household Composition and On-Track versus Not On-Track to Graduate

Household Composition	On-Track to Graduate	Not On-Track to Graduate	Total
Single Parent	25	14	39
Two Parent	24	15	39
Single Parent and Extended Family	1	2	3
Two parents and Extended Family	3	2	5
Siblings	1	0	1
Extended Family	2	2	4
Extended Family and Non-Family	1	0	1
Total	57	35	92

Impact of Languages Spoken on Academic Resiliency

Two aspects of languages spoken were explored through the demographic section of the survey:

1. Which language is spoken in your home?
2. Which language are you most comfortable speaking?

Languages spoken were limited to English and Spanish. The responses were based on a Likert scale (A = *Only English*, B = *English More Than Spanish*, C = *Both the Same*, D = *Spanish More Than English*, E = *Only Spanish*). This scale was later converted to a numeric scale (1 = A, 2 = B, 3 = C, 4 = D, 5 = E) for coding purposes.

A chi-square test was used to appraise the difference between the frequency of languages spoken at home and on-track to graduate versus not on-track to graduate, as well as the languages the participants were most comfortable speaking. At 53.27%, the majority of students stated that Spanish was spoken at home more than English. None stated that only English was spoken at home, whereas 10.87% stated that only Spanish was spoken at home. The findings revealed no significant difference between languages spoken and academic resiliency ($\chi^2 = 5.29$, $p = .15$). Table 13 shows the frequencies.

Table 13

Chi-Square Test by Languages Spoken at Home and On-track versus Not On-track to Graduate

Language Spoken at Home	On-Track to Graduate	Not On-Track to Graduate	Total
Only English	0	0	0
English More Than Spanish	4	2	6
Both the Same	18	9	27
Spanish More Than English	26	23	49
Only Spanish	9	1	10
Total	57	35	92

The most common response for students both on-track to graduate and students not on-track to graduate was “Both the Same”. In other words, students felt equally comfortable speaking either English or Spanish, with 68.48% responding in this manner. The second most common answer was “English More Than Spanish.” Of those who stated that they felt more comfortable speaking English rather than Spanish, 72.22% were on-track to graduate. The findings revealed no significant difference between languages most comfortable speaking and academic resiliency ($\chi^2 = 2.10$, $p = .72$). The frequencies are reported in Table 14.

Table 14

Chi-Square Test by Languages Most Comfortable Speaking and On-Track versus Not On-Track to Graduate

	On-Track to Graduate	Not On-Track to Graduate	Total
Only English	1	2	3
English More Than Spanish	13	5	18
Both the Same	38	25	63
Spanish More Than English	4	2	6
Only Spanish	1	1	2
Total	57	35	92

Impact of Educational Level of Parents on Academic Resiliency

In order to assess parental educational level, participants responded to two identical multitiered questions as illustrated in Table 15. One question pertained to their maternal figure, and the other to their paternal figure. Participants were asked to mark *Yes* or *No* to each question. This scale was later converted to a numeric scale (1 = Yes, 2 = No) for coding purposes.

Table 15

Educational Level of Parents Multitier Question

Did your mother/female guardian:		
Did your father/male guardian:		
Attend some grade school (up to 8th grade)?	Yes	No
Attend high school?	Yes	No
Graduate from high school?	Yes	No
Attend college?	Yes	No
Attend a vocational, technical, or career training school?	Yes	No
Graduate from a 4-year college/university?	Yes	No
Earn an advanced degree such as MA, MBA, JD, or PhD?	Yes	No

Prior to analyzing this information, the data for this question were recoded to ascertain the highest level of education attained by each parental figure. This was accomplished by recording the highest level of maternal and paternal education indicated by the participant where 0 = *None*; 1 = *Attend some grade school (up to 8th grade)*; 2 = *Attend high school*; 3 = *Graduate from high school*; 4 = *Attend college*; 5 = *Attend a vocational, technical, or career training school*; 6 = *Graduate from a 4-year college/university*; and 7 = *Earn an advanced degree such as MA, MBA, JD, or PhD*.

Attend college and Attend a vocational, technical, or career training school were interchangeable in terms of highest level of education completed. In addition, two maternal figures and one paternal figure attended a vocational, technical, or career training school and did not graduate from high school; and one paternal figure attended college but did not graduate from high school. All other participants who indicated that a parental figure attained a Level 4 or above of education also indicated that the parental figure graduated from high school. One participant did not specify maternal figure's level of education and six participants did not specify paternal figure's level of education. Five out of the six participants who did not specify paternal figure's level of education stated on the survey that the level of education was unknown.

A chi-square test was used to quantify the difference between the frequency of parental educational level and on-track to graduate versus not on-track to graduate. Out of the 92 students who completed the survey, only one student indicated that a parent had completed college. Specifically, it was a paternal figure who earned an advanced degree. Maternal and paternal level of education were similarly distributed. The most common

response for both maternal and paternal level of education was Attend some grade school (up to 8th grade), at 37.36% and 39.53%, respectively. Students reported that 14.29% of maternal figures and 15.12% of paternal figures graduated from high school. As illustrated by Table 16, students not on-track to graduate indicated maternal figures graduating from high school (20%) at a higher rate than students on-track to graduate (10.71%). The same held true for paternal figures, at 29.41% for students not on-track to graduate and 15.38% for students on-track to graduate. A significant difference was not found between academic resiliency and maternal educational level (χ^2 =2.86, p = .72) nor for paternal educational level (χ^2 = 5.15, p = .53). The frequencies are shown in Table 17.

Table 16

Chi-Square Test by Maternal Level of Education and On-Track versus Not On-Track to Graduate

Maternal Level of Education	On-track to Graduate	Not On-track to Graduate	Total
None	14	6	20
Attend some grade school (up to 8th grade)?	22	12	34
Attend high school?	6	6	12
Graduate from high school?	6	7	13
Attend college?	4	2	6
Attend a vocational, technical, or career training school?	4	2	6
Graduate from a 4-year college/university?	0	0	0
Earn an advanced degree such as MA, MBA, JD, or PhD?	0	0	0
Total	56	35	91

Table 17

Chi-Square Test by Paternal Level of Education and On-Track versus Not On-Track to Graduate

Paternal Level of Education	On-Track to Graduate	Not On-Track to Graduate	Total
None	13	7	20
Attend some grade school (up to 8th grade)?	16	7	34
Attend high school?	10	6	12
Graduate from high school?	8	10	13
Attend college?	4	3	6
Attend a vocational, technical, or career training school?	0	1	6
Graduate from a 4-year college/university?	0	0	0
Earn an advanced degree such as MA, MBA, JD, or PhD?	1	0	0
Total	52	34	86

Conclusion

This study investigated how protective factors impacted Latino students with the hope that this information might shed some light on how to effectively raise the graduation rate for the Latino population. With this premise, one primary question and seven secondary questions were addressed. The findings indicated that two protective factors were more prevalent in students who were on-track versus not on-track to graduate: (a) high expectations (external factor), at $p < .05$, and (b) sense of meaning and purpose (internal factor), at $p < .05$. No significant difference was found for the other protective factors of caring relationships, meaningful participation, social competence, or autonomy and sense of self.

Various Latino origins and academic resiliency were found to be independent of each other. Responses were evenly distributed among students on-track to graduate and students not on-track to graduate. The findings revealed no significant difference between gender and academic resiliency of high school age-Latino youth. No significant difference between household composition and academic resiliency was found, nor was a significant difference found between languages spoken and academic resiliency of high school age-Latino youth. The findings revealed no significant difference between academic resiliency and maternal educational level. The same was true for paternal educational level.

In reviewing which external/internal primary relationship was positively correlated, the results indicated that all six factors were positively correlated with each other, at $p < .01$. However, sense of meaning and purpose was the only factor correlated significantly to on-track or not on-track to graduate, at $p < .01$. A significant difference between the country of birth and academic resiliency was found, indicating that Latino students born in another country were more likely to graduate than Latino students born in the United States.

In Chapter Five, recommendations on how to foster the two significant protective factors in order to cultivate academic resiliency within Latino students is discussed. The impact of country of origin on graduation status as well as the correlation between the six protective factors is also discussed.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

Introduction

This study employed a resiliency framework which represents a paradigm shift from a focus on weaknesses to strengths (Richardson et al., 1990; Wolin & Wolin, 1993). Resiliency is shaped by both external and internal protective factors (Winfield, 1994). Research has shown that protective factors are a much stronger predictor of positive youth development than risk factors (Garmezy, 1982; Werner & Smith, 1992). Given the dismal graduation rate of Latinos, it is vital that preventive interventions be implemented.

This study utilized data from 12 demographic questions as well as a 56-item survey, the *California Healthy Kids Survey: Resilience & Youth Development Module* (WestEd, 2008a). The survey was completed by 92 students at one public high school located in an urban area. Two small learning communities within the high school participated in the study. Using quantitative methods, the study addressed one primary question: Which protective factors are more prevalent in students who are on-track to graduate versus not on-track to graduate? In addition, there were seven additional subquestions:

1. Are the external/internal primary relationships positively correlated?
2. How does gender impact the academic resiliency of Latino students in high school?
3. How do various Latino origins impact the academic resiliency of Latino students in high school?
4. How does country of birth impact the academic resiliency of Latino students in high school?

5. How does household composition impact the academic resiliency of Latino students in high school?
6. How do languages spoken impact the academic resiliency of Latino students in high school?
7. How does the educational level of parents impact the academic resiliency of Latino students in high school?

This chapter discusses the significance of nurturing the academic resiliency of Latino students. The chapter is organized into four main sections, beginning with a discussion of the findings. Recommendations to support greater student academic resiliency at the school site follow. Limitations of the study are then examined and the chapter concludes with recommendations for future research regarding the academic resiliency of Latino students.

Discussion of the Findings

As there is a great need to raise the Latino high school graduation rate, this study sought to better understand how the six protective factors, which comprise the survey, influence the academic resiliency of Latino students through the lens of a strengths-based approach. This section discusses the findings for the protective factors, country of birth, and educational level of parents on academic resiliency.

Protective Factors and Academic Resiliency

The current research found a statistically significant difference between the responses of students on-track to graduate versus not on-track to graduate in the two protective factors of high expectations and a sense of meaning and purpose. Significant

differences were not found among the remaining four protective factors (caring relationships, meaningful participation, social competence, and autonomy and sense of self). The findings are aligned to the resiliency theory, which states that the more protective factors a student has the more resilient a student is. The findings revealed that Latino students on-track to graduate were more apt to perceive high expectations from others around them as well as to feel a stronger sense of meaning and purpose than Latino students not on-track to graduate. Furthermore, the mean responses for students on-track to graduate, although not statistically significant, were consistently higher than Latino students not on-track to graduate, thus reinforcing the stronger presence of protective factors within Latino students on-track to graduate. For the purpose of this study, academic resiliency was defined as on-track to graduate; however, the study only captured students not on-track to graduate who were in fact still attending school. This in itself displays a level of resiliency that may, in part, explain why a significant difference was found only for two out of the six protective factors.

Nevertheless, this study indicated that high expectations and sense of meaning and purpose were more salient factors than the other protective factors for Latino students. Research has indicated that the protective factor of high expectations is decidedly correlated with increased student achievement (Krovetz, 1999). As interdependence is a strong focus in the Latino culture, it is important to feel approval from family and school personnel. Knowing that others believe in your abilities and have high expectations for you serves as a poignant motivator to continue with schooling. When a student receives the message that they are capable of accomplishing their goals,

the student begins to internalize this view and develops a sense of meaning and purpose (Benard, 1991). In other words, the external factor of high expectations very likely becomes internalized as sense of meaning and purpose. Sense of meaning and purpose speaks to a student's conviction that there is a reason and a worth for his or her life. This factor has been widely linked to increased high school graduation rates (Benard, 2004; Scales & Leffert, 1999). Sense of meaning and purpose is a largely future-oriented attribute in that it works in tandem with achievement motivation, allowing a student to make decisions now in preparation for the future.

Correlation of Protective Factors

The findings revealed all six protective factors to be positively correlated and the sense of meaning and purpose composite was positively correlated to the grouping variable of on-track or not on-track to graduate. In fact, the mean score composite responses across all six protective factors for both Latino students on-track and not on-track to graduate were between 3 (*Pretty Much True*) and 4 (*Very Much True*) except for meaningful participation, which had a mean score of 2.93 (see Table 4). Interestingly, the research indicated a primary relationship between meaningful participation and sense of meaning and purpose; however, meaningful participation had the lowest mean score (M = 2.93) whereas sense of meaning and purpose had the highest mean score (M = 3.76).

The reason a stronger relationship between the three primary relationships (caring relationships: social competence; high expectations: autonomy and sense of self; and meaningful participation: sense of meaning and purpose) was not revealed may be a result of several factors. First, the sample size was relatively small. In addition, this study

was conducted at a single school site leading to a rather homogenous population. Moreover, the study population was composed of two small learning communities of approximately 450 students each. Based on the researcher's observations, both small learning communities were close-knit school communities where teachers and administrators were well acquainted with the students. This may have contributed to the mean score responses being so favorable. Furthermore, this study captured the responses only of students who remained in school until the start of Spring semester of their fourth year. It is quite possible that students no longer attending school would not have responded as positively as the students who had continued attending school despite not being on-track to graduate.

Despite this, the findings reinforced the dynamic interplay between the six protective factors as described by the resiliency theory. The implications of this are quite noteworthy, as they suggest that increasing the presence of just one protective factor in a student's life can trigger the presence of other protective factors. Referring back to resiliency theory, the more protective factors a person has, the more resilient or capable the person is to not only recover from but to grow from challenging circumstances. This study, as well as past research, indicated that galvanizing a student's sense of meaning and purpose may be the most effective factor in motivating a student to achieve academically. For example, schools should provide students with ample opportunities for meaningful participation by viewing students as participants as well as key resources in the educational process (Henderson & Milstein, 2003). This can include student participation in decision making, goal setting, and problem solving by serving in such

areas as a school governance committee or peer mediation program. Students can also assume a leadership role in school clubs, after-school programs, or goal setting within the classroom.

Country of Birth and Academic Resiliency

The findings indicated that a significant difference existed between country of origin and students on-track or not on-track to graduate. The study revealed that Latino students born in another country were more likely to be on-track to graduate than Latino students born in the United States. Moreover, this study indicated the Latino students born in the United States were more than three times more likely to not be on-track to graduate than on-track to graduate.

The higher academic resiliency found in Latino students born in another country compared to Latino students born in the United States has been observed by several scholars. A concept coined "immigrant optimism" may assist in explaining this phenomenon (Gándara & Contreras, 2009). Latino immigrants tend to be much more optimistic about their future than other ethnicities or Latinos born in the United States. In addition, Latino immigrants had a more positive view of public schools than did Latinos born in the United States (Escalante, 2006). Escalante (2006) stated this may be a result of Latino immigrants comparing the schools in the United States to that of their birth country. Many of the students at the school where this study was conducted did not have the opportunity to attend school in their birth country and did not receive a formal education until arriving in the United States. The understanding that education and schooling is a privilege in many countries may create in students born in another country

a stronger drive to excel in high school. Students who were not born in the U.S. may have a more fervent appreciation of the opportunity for access to education, which is guaranteed to children and adolescents born in this country.

Educational Level of Parents and Academic Resiliency

A significant difference was not found between academic resiliency and the level of parental education. Contrary to what was anticipated, the findings revealed that Latino students not on-track to graduate reported that their parents had graduated from high school at a higher rate than Latino students on-track to graduate. It was expected that Latino students on-track to graduate would have a higher percentage of parents who graduated from high school, as these students would have more at-home access to knowledge pertaining to graduating from high school as well as support in continuing with school. The findings could be attributed to parents who did not graduate from high school emphasizing the opportunities not afforded to them with their adolescents (Gándara & Contreras, 2009). As a result, students whose parents did not graduate from high school may better appreciate the value of a high school education as opposed to students whose parents graduated from high school. Life experience is an invaluable tool. If you grow up seeing your parents struggle and the parent connects their struggle to a lack of education, it seems natural that an adolescent would internalize education equating with increased opportunities. Thus, students whose parents did not graduate from high school may strive harder to achieve academically, leading these students to be more likely to be on-track to graduate.

Recommendations

This section discusses strategies that can be implemented by schools to increase the academic resiliency of Latino students. This study found Latino students on-track to graduate were more apt to perceive others to have high expectations for them than students not on-track to graduate. Similar results were found for sense of meaning and purpose. Furthermore, sense of meaning and purpose was significantly correlated to whether or not a student was on-track to graduate. Although these strategies focus on the two protective factors of high expectations and sense of meaning and purpose, the strategies inevitably involve other protective factors due to their reciprocal nature.

High expectations are the result of clearly communicating the message that students are capable of succeeding. This conveys to students that someone believes in their abilities, which serves to motivate students to set and achieve goals. High expectations along with a support system have been found to result in high rates of academic achievement (Mehan, Villanueva, Hubbard, & Lintz, 1996). Cultivating a culture of high expectations is paramount to increasing academic success (Kozol, 1997). Over time, students internalize the message that they are capable and will succeed, providing the student with a sense of meaning and purpose.

Sense of meaning and purpose is derived from an individual's self-efficacy and belief that they have the ability to influence their surroundings (Constantine et al., 1999). This is attributed to a student's ability to persist and maintain hopefulness through difficult times. When a student believes a compelling future lies ahead, they become motivated, goal oriented, and assert educational aspirations. Sustaining a strong

conviction that there is purpose to your life is the most commanding indicator of a positive outcome as it encompasses a propensity toward educational aspirations and an orientation toward high achievement (Benard, 1991; Werner & Smith, 1982). When adolescents believe in a positive future, a future where they believe they can be successful and accomplish their goals, they are less likely to become involved in activities that might jeopardize the attainment of their goals.

Resiliency Building Strategies

Next to immediate family members, school personnel, particularly teachers, are credited most often as being a positive role model in a youth's life (Werner, 1990). Love and being cared for is a basic human need. For students who are not getting this need fully met at home, receiving loving support at school becomes even more vital. This provides school personnel with an incredible ability to influence the lives of students. In essence, schools are granted the capacity to dramatically affect the resilience of their students. School personnel can accomplish this through professional development, the structure and organization of learning, creating a collaborative atmosphere, providing high levels of student participation, and implementing a resiliency curriculum for students (Benard, 2004; Henderson, 2007; Henderson & Milstein, 2003; Richardson & Gray, 1999).

Professional development. A professional development centered on resiliency training for school personnel should be one of the initial steps taken by schools wanting to increase the resiliency of their students (Richardson & Gray, 1999). This training forum should not be limited to teachers but should include all school staff having direct

and indirect contact with students. This affords school personnel the opportunity to better understand the resiliency process. In addition, resiliency training assists school personnel with strategies to identify students' strengths (Thomsen, 2007). Utilizing students' strengths and interests is a powerful component in motivating students to learn (Benard, 2004). Teachers, counselors, administrators, and all school personnel can also apply strategies taught in resiliency training to formulate clear expectations and regulations that are conducive to setting high expectations and fostering a sense of meaning and purpose.

Structure and organization of learning. School personnel should constantly encourage higher level thinking, such as critical thinking and problem solving (Gardner, 1997). This will enhance a student's sense of autonomy while at the same time communicating to the student that the school personnel believe they are capable of multifaceted thinking. It is essential that students be challenged and guided to learn just past their comfort zone, which is referred to as the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). As this may be somewhat uncomfortable for a student, it is important that school personnel be persistent and supportive. This conveys to the student the belief in their ability, that school staff will not give up on them, and the belief that they are worth the staff's time (Benard, 2004). Moreover, a course schedule should be available not only to a student who is already achieving academically, but to all students. As one student once told the researcher, "Doing well in school is not so much how smart you are, but how much you're willing to work and how many people believe you can do it" (Anonymous participant #1). Every student should have access to college preparatory and advanced placement courses, as students often produce their best work when they feel

they are being challenged by someone who believes in them (Henderson & Milstein, 2003).

Along these lines, school personnel should utilize such forms of evaluation as critical inquiry and authentic assessments. These culminating assignments lend themselves to higher order thinking and provide students with a platform to reflect on their learning experience (Gardner, 1997; Henderson & Milstein, 2003). Furthermore, field trips help students synthesize material learned in the classroom. It is essential to not merely offer field trips but to communicate to students how they might benefit from the experience as well as provide an assignment that integrates the field trip with educational content being taught in the classroom. Although these activities are a privilege, it is also important to ensure that access to these resources is available to all students and not limit it to a certain GPA or good behavior.

Finally, schools should offer a plethora of enrichment resources such as extended use of the library facilities during final exams, opportunities to enhance vocational skills, performing arts, and other extracurricular activities (Gándara & Contreras, 2009). These opportunities should be highly publicized so that a wide range of the student body can participate. Students who participate in these extracurricular activities should also be recognized for their efforts and commitment to learning, as this conveys to students that the school values all strengths and talents. School personnel should enlist student participation in planning field trips and other activities and resources. Becoming involved in the process increases appreciation of the activity and accountability and results in meaningful participation.

Collaborative atmosphere. Creating an environment that is collaborative rather than hierarchical is crucial (DuFour, 2008). Schools should be a setting in which the power of decision making and responsibility is shared. Peer helping, cooperative learning, and mentoring are all examples of such a reciprocal relationship. These activities encourage the compelling role of caring peers and friends in building resiliency within each other (Richardson & Gray, 1999).

Providing students with opportunities to participate and be meaningfully involved also fosters a collaborative atmosphere, which can be accomplished in many ways (Wenger, 1998). Assigning students roles of responsibility within the classroom or the school at large empowers students and provides students with a sense of purpose. If you treat a student as if they are responsible, they will act responsibly. Assigning responsibilities to students also provides students with additional opportunities to be successful. The more invested they are in the school community, the less likely students are to feel alienated. Another option is to get feedback from students when developing lesson plans. Students become more naturally engaged when they feel someone is interested in their opinion.

Providing opportunities for a student's voice to be heard, whether it be sharing opinions or participation in formal decisions, increases ownership of the activity and the information being learned. Moreover, this fosters a climate of collaboration and cooperation. This interaction also promotes a bond and a supportive environment between the student and teacher working toward fulfilling the basic human need of love (Benard, 2004). Active participation and collaborative decision making motivates

students to learn. Furthermore, becoming more invested in the learning process will also instill a responsibility toward learning.

Resiliency curriculum for students. Schools should implement a resiliency curriculum for students specific to the needs of the individual student population. Such a collaborative program would be conducted by students with adult facilitation to provide support, resources, and guidance (Richardson & Gray, 1999). This curriculum should provide students with the tools to explore and strengthen their resilience, which may include but not be limited to a discussion of personal strengths, effective communication, self-esteem, interrelationship skills, goal setting, motivation, the time binder effect, and stewardship. The curriculum should also include a component that affords students the opportunity to put what they have learned into action through a peer mentoring program, an assembly to educate other students about resiliency, or some other activity where they implement their resiliency skills while sharing the information with the others.

Limitations

One limitation to this study was the small sample size of 92 students. Of the students surveyed, only 35 students were on-track to graduate. A second limitation to this study was the sampling method, as this research was conducted at only one school site due to time constraints and accessibility. Furthermore, students self-selected to participate in the study. Therefore, all students are not represented in this study. In addition, students were asked to participate in the study on one particular day during their advisory period. If the student was absent on that day, there was no other opportunity to participate in the study.

In addition, this study used solely quantitative methods. Adding qualitative data would have provided richer data. Adding interviews or an open-ended question would have provided students with the opportunity to discuss more fully what had been most meaningful for them in terms of academic resiliency.

Finally, this study included Latino students from various origins. Although no significant difference was found between the various Latino origins and on-track versus not on-track to graduate, these findings may have been greatly impacted by the small sample size of various ethnicities. As there is much variability within the overall population of Latinos, there is value in focusing on one ethnic group at a time.

Future Research

The focal point of this study was on the academic resiliency of Latino high school students using a strengths-based approach instead of the traditional focus on deficits. The researcher surveyed Latino high school students to answer the research questions using a positive paradigm. Below are four recommendations for future research on academic resiliency of Latino students.

First, future studies should seek to increase the scope of the research by obtaining a larger sample size from more than one setting. This would allow for a broader view and increased external validity of the data. This is critical when seeking to implement educational strategies and objectives across settings.

Second, this study analyzed the academic resiliency of Latino students on-track to graduate versus not on-track to graduate at one point in time. By limiting the sample to students still attending high school, the variance in responses may have been limited.

Future research may benefit from expanding the study to include Latino youth no longer attending high school. In addition, a comparison of academic resiliency over time as well as a comparison of data from students who actually graduated with those who did not graduate would provide greater insight.

Third, this study relied on quantitative methods to gather data; however, future research on academic resiliency of Latino students would benefit from including qualitative methods such as interviews to further understand which protective factors can increase academic resiliency. Interviews would provide an in-depth view into students' perspectives as to what contributed to their academic resiliency, enabling the researcher to capture the intricacy and nuances of what factors contribute to Latino academic resiliency.

Finally, future researchers may want to implement a resiliency program utilizing the two protective factors (high expectations and sense of meaning and purpose). This would allow researchers to identify how to increase protective factors in Latino youth and whether increasing protective factors in Latino youth would result in higher graduation rates. Employing the use of a pre- and post-test measurement would provide quantifiable data to be analyzed.

Conclusion

As this chapter was being written, a student approached the researcher and asked, "Am I doing good? Am I going to graduate or am I going to be one of those kids that slip through the cracks?" (Anonymous participate #2). At first, the researcher was amused by such an honest question; then, this simple yet profound question was saddening. The

reality is that less than 60% of the Latino population graduates from high school; indeed, more than 40% of the Latino population "slips through the cracks." As both high expectations and a sense of meaning and purpose are attributed to higher academic achievement, it is imperative that protective factors within Latino students be cultivated.

Based on observations, the researcher believes low expectations are at the core of the low academic achievement of Latino students. Students rise and fall to the expectations that school personnel and other adults set forth for them. To increase academic achievement, students must be challenged, encouraged to succeed, and empowered to actively participate. Through this process, students gain a stronger sense of meaning and purpose. In order to foster academic resiliency, we must build networks of social supports among schools, family, and the community. Schools must create an environment that is collaborative rather than hierarchical so that a symbiotic relationship between students and school personnel may flourish.

Research shows that cultivating high expectations and sense of meaning and purpose is effective in improving academic achievement. The basic premise behind building resiliency within students is to shift the balance from risk factors to protective factors. There are various strategies to foster these protective factors. This involves multiple events and numerous people intervening, but at times it comes down to just one person or one opportunity that marks a turning point in a student's life. The researcher once heard this referred to as "the big arrow effect." Each day in every interaction, we impact others. It is up to us whether we positively or negatively impact others. When we positively impact others, the effect is long lasting and far reaching. Thus, a big arrow

effect is created. In other words, everyone has the capability to foster resiliency within students. It is up to each individual whether or not to seize the opportunity to positively influence a young life.

APPENDIX A

INFORMED CONSENT FORMS

Parent's Consent Form

Date of Preparation: August 10, 2009

Loyola Marymount University

Resiliency of Latino High School Students

I hereby authorize Diana Lucero, Doctoral Candidate, to include me (my child/ward) in the following research study: Resiliency of Latino High School Students: The Impact of External and Internal Factors.

I (my child/ward) have been asked to participate on a research project which is designed to better understand the protective factors that most contribute to Latino high school students' academic success and which will last for approximately 20 minutes.

It has been explained to me that the reason for my (my child/ward) inclusion in this project is because I (my child/ward) am a Latino student in my fourth year of high school.

I understand that if I (my child/ward) am a subject, I (my child/ward) will be asked to complete a questionnaire and allow Diana Lucero to view my (my child's/ward's) academic records which will include: total credits earned, credits yet to be earned, and whether or not I (my child/ward) has passed the California High School Exit Examination, Computer Literacy, and Service Learning.

These procedures have been explained to me (my child/ward) by Diana Lucero, Doctoral Candidate.

I understand that the study described above does not involve any risks and/or discomforts.

I understand that I (my child/ward) will receive no direct benefit from my participation in this study; however, the possible benefits to humanity include assisting in the development of educational objectives and goals to create greater academic success in school for Latino students.

I understand that Diana Lucero, who can be reached at res.diana@yahoo.com, will answer any questions I may have at any time concerning details of the procedures performed as part of this study.

If the study design or the use of the information is to be changed, I will be so informed and my

consent reobtained.

I understand that I (my child/ward) have the right to refuse to participate in, or to withdraw from this research at any time without prejudice.

I understand that circumstances may arise which might cause the investigator to terminate my (my child's/ward's) participation before the completion of the study.

I understand that no information that identifies me (my child/ward) will be released without my separate consent except as specifically required by law.

I understand that I (my child/ward) have the right to refuse to answer any question that I (my child/ward) may not wish to answer.

I understand that I (my child/ward) will receive no money or compensation for my (my child's/ward's) participation in this study.

I understand that if I have any further questions, comments, or concerns about the study or the informed consent process, I may contact John Carfora, Ed.D. Chair, Institutional Review Board, 1 LMU Drive, Suite 3000, Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles CA 90045-2659 (310) 338-4599, John.Carfora@lmu.edu.

In signing this consent form, I acknowledge receipt of a copy of this form.

Subject is a minor (age_____).

_____ _____

Parent/Guardian's Signature Date

_____ _____

Participant's Signature Date

Child's Assent Form

Date of Preparation: August 10, 2009

Loyola Marymount University

Resiliency of Latino High School Students

You are being asked to participate in this study because you are a Latino student in your fourth year of high school. You will be asked to complete a questionnaire and allow me to look at you academic records which will include:

1. The total credits you have earned.
2. Credits yet to be earned.
3. Whether or not I have passed the California High School Exit Examination, Computer Literacy, and Service Learning.

This study is strictly voluntary and does not involve any risk to you. You can refuse to participate in this study at any time without any negative consequences. While you will not directly benefit from your participation in this study; this research may assist in the development of educational objectives and goals toward creating greater academic success in school for Latino students. If you have any questions about the study, please contact me at res.diana@yahoo.com. Please keep this form for future reference.

_____ _____

Researcher's Signature Date

Forma con Información de Consentimiento

Fecha de Preparación: 10 agosto 2009

Loyola Marymount University

La abilidad de adaptación de los estudiantes latinos en las escuelas secundarias

Yo doy mi autorización a Diana Lucero, candidata doctoral, que me incluye a mí (mi hijo/a) en el estudio siguiente: *La habilidad de adaptación de los estudiantes latinos en las escuelas secundarias*. El impacto de factores externos e internos.

Yo (mi hijo/a) he sido seleccionado/a para participar en este estudio. Este proyecto está diseñado para mejor entender las cualidades positivas que más contribuyen al éxito académico de los estudiantes latinos en escuelas secundarias. Esta encuesta durara aproximadamente 20 minutos.

Se me ha explicado que la razón que yo y mi hijo/a hemos sido incluidos en este proyecto es porque yo (mi hijo/a) soy estudiante latino en mi cuarto año de secundaria.

Yo y mi hijo/a entendemos que si somos seleccionados para participar en este estudio tendré que completar un cuestionario y permitir a Diana Lucero ver la información académica mía y de mi hijo/a. La cual incluye créditos obtenidos, créditos por obtener y si yo (mi hijo/a) he pasado el Examen Estatal de Salida de Escuelas Secundarias en California, conocimiento de computación y aprendizaje de servicio.

Estos procedimientos se me han sido explicados (mi hijo) por Diana Lucero candidata doctoral.

Yo entiendo que el estudio previamente descrito no tiene ningún riesgo ni me causara molestias.

Yo entiendo que yo (mi hijo) no recibiré beneficios directo por mi participación en este estudio. Sin embargo los posibles beneficios para la humanidad serán en el desarrollo de los objetivos y metas educacionales para los estudiantes latinos en las escuelas.

Yo entiendo que Diana Lucero puede ser contactada a res.diana@yahoo.com y podrá dar respuestas a cualquier pregunta o más detalles sobre el estudio.

Si se producen cambios en el diseño del estudio o la información serré informado(a) y tendré que dar mi consentimiento otra vez.

Yo entiendo (mi hijo/a) que tengo el derecho de negarme a participar en este estudio en cualquier momento sin que yo sea perjudicado.

Yo entiendo que bajo algunas circunstancias el investigador puede terminar mi (mi hijo/a) participación en este estudio antes de que se termine.

Yo entiendo que ninguna información que me identifique a mi (mi hijo/a) será publicada sin mi consentimiento excepto como es especificado por la ley.

Entiendo que yo y mi hijo/a tenemos el derecho de negarnos a responder cualquier pregunta que yo (mi hijo/a) no queremos responder.

Yo entiendo que yo (mi hijo/a) no recibiremos compensación monetaria por mi (mi hijo/a) participación en este estudio.

Yo entiendo que si yo (mi hijo/a) tengo más preguntas o comentarios acerca del estudio o acerca del proceso de consentimiento, yo puedo contactar a John Carfora Ed.D. Chair, Institutional Review Board, 1 LMU Drive, Suite 3000, Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles CA 90045-2659 (310) 338-4599, John.Carfora@lmu.edu.

Al firmar la forma de consentimiento yo reconozco que he recibido una copia de esta forma.

El participante es un menor (edad ___).

_____ _____

Firma del padre o guardián Fecha

_____ _____

Firma del participante Fecha

APPENDIX B

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

The purpose of this study is to understand the protective factors that most contribute to Latino high school students' academic success. Your participation is voluntary, but your answers will be helpful in developing educational objectives and goals that foster greater academic success in school for Latino students.

Please do not write your name anywhere on this questionnaire.

Circle only one answer unless asked to **"Mark all that apply"**

First, we would like some background information about you.

1. How old are you? A) 17 years B) 18 years C) 19 years D) Other: _____
2. What is your gender? A) Male B) Female
3. Are you graduating this June? A) Yes B) No
4. Which best describes you? **(Mark all that apply)**
   A) Colombian, Colombian-American
   B) Guatemalan, Guatemalan-American
   C) Mexican, Mexican-American
   D) Peruvian, Peruvian-American
   E) Salvadoran, Salvadoran-American
   F) Other: _____
5. Where were you born?
   A) United States B) Other Country: _____
6. Where was your mother born?
   A) United States B) Other Country: _____
7. Where was your father born?
   A) United States B) Other Country: _____
8. Which language is spoken in your home?

A) Only English	B) English More Than Spanish	C) Both the Same	D) Spanish More Than English	E) Only Spanish

9. Which language are you most comfortable speaking?

A) Only English	B) English More Than Spanish	C) Both the Same	D) Spanish More Than English	E) Only Spanish

10. Who do you live with? **(Mark all that apply)**
    A) Mother B) Father C) Stepmother D) Stepfather E) Foster parent
    F) Grandmother G) Grandfather H) Aunt I) Uncle J) Cousin
    K) Other: _____

11. Did your mother/female guardian:

Attend some grade school (up to 8th grade)?	Yes	No
Attend high school?	Yes	No
Graduate from high school?	Yes	No
Attend college?	Yes	No
Attend a vocational, technical, or career training school?	Yes	No
Graduate from a 4 year college/university?	Yes	No
Earn an advanced degree such as a MA, MBA, JD, or PhD	Yes	No

12. Did your father/male guardian:

Attend some grade school (up to 8th grade)?	Yes	No
Attend high school?	Yes	No
Graduate from high school?	Yes	No
Attend college?	Yes	No
Attend a vocational, technical, or career training school?	Yes	No
Graduate from a 4 year college/university?	Yes	No
Earn an advanced degree such as a MA, MBA, JD, or PhD	Yes	No

APENDIX C

California Healthy Kids Survey

Please mark on your answer sheets how you feel about each of the following statements.

School Protective Factors

How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your school?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I feel close to people at this school.	A	B	C	D	E
2. I am happy to be at this school.	A	B	C	D	E
3. I feel like I am part of this school.	A	B	C	D	E
4. The teachers at this school treat students fairly.	A	B	C	D	E
5. I feel safe in my school.	A	B	C	D	E

Next, mark how **True** you feel the next statements are about your school and the things you might do there.

At my school, there is a teacher or some other adult…

	Not at All TRUE	A Little TRUE	Pretty Much TRUE	Very Much TRUE
6. who really cares about me.	A	B	C	D
7. who tells me when I do a good job.	A	B	C	D
8. who notices when I'm not there.	A	B	C	D
9. who always wants me to do my best.	A	B	C	D
10. who listens to me when I have something to say.	A	B	C	D
11. who believes that I will be a success.	A	B	C	D
12. I do interesting activities.	A	B	C	D
13. I help decide things like class activities or rules.	A	B	C	D
14. I do things that make a difference.	A	B	C	D

	Not at All TRUE	A Little TRUE	Pretty Much TRUE	Very Much TRUE
15. who really cares about me.	A	B	C	D
16. who tells me when I do a good job.	A	B	C	D
17. who notices when I am upset about something.	A	B	C	D
18. who believes that I will be a success.	A	B	C	D
19. who always wants me to do my best.	A	B	C	D
20. whom I trust.	A	B	C	D

Outside of my home and school, I do these things…

	Not at All TRUE	A Little TRUE	Pretty Much TRUE	Very Much TRUE
21. I am part of clubs, sports teams, church/ temple, or other group activities.	A	B	C	D
22. I am involved in music, art, literature, sports or a hobby.	A	B	C	D
23. I help other people.	A	B	C	D

Internal Protective Factors

How true do you feel these statements are about you personally?

	Not at All TRUE	A Little TRUE	Pretty Much TRUE	Very Much TRUE
24. I have goals and plans for the future.	A	B	C	D
25. I plan to graduate from high school.	A	B	C	D
26. I plan to go to college or some other school after high school.	A	B	C	D
27. I know where to go for help with a problem.	A	B	C	D
28. I try to work out problems by talking or writing about them.	A	B	C	D
29. I can work out my problems.	A	B	C	D
30. I can do most things if I try.	A	B	C	D
31. I can work with someone who has different opinions than mine.	A	B	C	D
32. There are many things that I do well.	A	B	C	D
33. I feel bad when someone gets their feelings hurt.	A	B	C	D

34. I try to understand what other people go through.	A	B	C	D
35. When I need help, I find someone to talk with.	A	B	C	D
36. I enjoy working together with other students my age.	A	B	C	D
37. I stand up for myself without putting others down.	A	B	C	D
38. I try to understand how other people feel and think.	A	B	C	D
39. There is a purpose to my life.	A	B	C	D
40. I understand my moods and feelings.	A	B	C	D
41. I understand why I do what I do.	A	B	C	D

Peer Protective Factors

How true are these statements about your FRIENDS?

I have a friend about my own age…

	Not at All TRUE	A Little TRUE	Pretty Much TRUE	Very Much TRUE
42. who really cares about me.	A	B	C	D
43. who talks with me about my problems.	A	B	C	D
44. who helps me when I'm having a hard time.	A	B	C	D

My friends…

	Not at All TRUE	A Little TRUE	Pretty Much TRUE	Very Much TRUE
45. get into a lot of trouble.	A	B	C	D
46. try to do what is right.	A	B	C	D
47. do well in school.	A	B	C	D

Home Protective Factors

How true are these statements about your home or the adults with whom you live?

In my home, there is a parent or some other adult…

	Not at All TRUE	A Little TRUE	Pretty Much TRUE	Very Much TRUE
48. who expects me to follow the rules.	A	B	C	D
49. who is interested in my school work.	A	B	C	D
50. who believes that I will be a success.	A	B	C	D

51. who talks with me about my problems.	A	B	C	D
52. who always wants me to do my best.	A	B	C	D
53. who listens to me when I have something to say.	A	B	C	D

	Not at All TRUE	A Little TRUE	Pretty Much TRUE	Very Much TRUE
54. I do fun things or go to fun places with my parents or other adults.	A	B	C	D
55. I do things that make a difference.	A	B	C	D
56. I help make decisions with my family.	A	B	C	D

WestEd Survey Permission Letter

Diana M. Lucero
7425 South Sepulveda Boulevard
Los Angeles, California 90045

July 22, 2011

Regional Coordinator, WestED
Cal-SCHLS Regional Center
300 Lakeside Drive, 25th Floor
Oakland, California 94612-3540

Dear Leslie Poynor, PhD:

I am completing a doctoral dissertation at Loyola Marymount University entitled "Resiliency of Latino High School Students: The Impact of External and Internal Factors." I would like your permission to reprint in my dissertation the "California Healthy Kids Survey: Resilience & Youth Development Module":

WestEd. (2008). *California healthy kids survey: California department of education high school questionnaire: Version H11- Fall 2008 resilience and youth development module.*

The requested permission extends to any future revisions and editions of my dissertation, including non-exclusive world rights in all languages, and to the productive publication of my dissertation by UMI. These rights will in no way restrict republication of the material in any other form by you or by others authorized by you. Your signing of this letter will also confirm that your company owns the copyright to the above-described material.

If these arrangements meet with your approval, please sign this letter where indicated below and return it to me electronically. Thank you very much.
Sincerely,

Diana Marie Lucero

Diana M. Lucero
PERMISSION GRANTED FOR THE USE REQUESTED ABOVE:

Leslie Poynor
Name (Please Print)

Leslie Poynor
Signature

8/8/11
Date

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