

The Challenges That Cause Lower College Competition Among Latinos

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Abstract

Though there is a high rate of high school enrollment among Latinos, the number of college graduates is still low compared to other ethnic groups in the United States. This can be attributed to the cultural practices and financial issues that affect many households in Latino families. Therefore, in order to address these issues, both family and community support are needed so that many students can enroll in a four-year college program. However, this research paper analyzes the challenges that cause lower college competition among Latinos. It also analyzes the education standard in Latino families and as an ethnic group and then compares it to other groups in the United States. The research discusses what should be done to improve the number of four-year college enrollments. Finally, it provides recommendations on how to address the challenges so that many Latinos can enroll for a four-year college degree.

Introduction

Educational achievement in the United States (U.S.) Latino has been changing systematically over the last few years. There is rapid growth in the number of Latinos enrolling for high school and a slight decline in the number of high school dropouts. However, the number of Latinos graduating from a four-year college is still low compared to other ethnic groups in the United States. Several studies have established that despite the decline in the number of high school dropouts, 60% of high school graduates do not enroll for a four-year college degree. The number of high schools with a four-year college program is low compared to other ethnicities like Asia and Whites, and this affects the number of college graduates among Latinos (Lopez, 2012). It is argued that almost 40% of Latinos who fail to enroll for a college degree do not have enough finances to pay for a college degree. It is an alarming trend that requires support to make sure that there is an increase in the number of high school graduates enrolling for four-year college degree courses among Latinos. Studies have also shown that there is a higher number of Latino students enrolled in a two-year community college program than in a four-year program (Lopez, 2012). Therefore, in order to increase the number of students enrolling in a four-year college degree program, there must be support from families, which can ensure that students are taking their studies seriously. Latino cultural practices must also be addressed to improve coordination between families and students so that they do not drop out of college.

Latino culture is nurtured in such a way that families live together for a long time. It makes it

impossible for first-generation college students to survive away from college, and this encourages students to register for college within the neighborhood. It reduces the chances of Latino students registering for a four-year college degree away from home. According to Lopez (2012), this reduces the chances of students enrolling in a college, and therefore, it is one of the bottlenecks that needs support to be addressed so that Latino students can pursue education without being held back by culture, which affects the education standard of the community. Latino college students need support from their families to adhere to the U.S. education system and standards.

Research has also indicated that the rate of college dropout among Latinos is also very high compared to other ethnic. It means that the number of Latinos graduating from college is low and, therefore, affects the economic status or condition of most Latino homes. According to Krogstad (2016), the number of Latinos having degrees in the United States is low compared to African Americans, whites, and Asia Americans, and therefore, it reflects in the job market as well. Studies have shown that Hispanics are registering in large numbers for high school degrees, but the enrollment for a four-year college degree is low. Despite the low enrollment for four-year college degrees, the group still registers a low rate of college completion. A study conducted by Pew research Center (PRC) indicates that Asian lead in completion rate with 63% followed by white at 41%, Blacks 22% and Latino 15% (Krogstad, 2016). This trend is not appropriate, and therefore, first-generation Latinos require moral and financial support from their families in order to succeed with their college education.

Studies have shown that families can be useful in students' completion of college if the family understands the college environment and can relate well with college administration and faculty. This type of support can be helpful for first-time students in college since it helps build relationships between students and faculty, making students settle immediately for their studies. Research has indicated that this support is usually available for students from families where other family members have attended college, and, therefore, it increases the completion rate among Latinos. According to Berbery and Karen (2017), families usually serve as a source of strength and comfort for several first-generation college students, and therefore, it is important for families to work together with students to increase the number of students who complete college (Berbery & Karen, 2017). Research has also established that some students struggle with life to balance between college and family issues, which makes it difficult for a college student to concentrate (Berbery & Karen, 2017). This increases the number of college dropouts among Latinos, and therefore, family support is essential to take away certain responsibilities that are usually given to students so that they can concentrate in college. The family can be a double-edged sword for many Latino students who struggle to balance family and college. Family support can ensure that a student maintains a constant relationship with the family while concentrating on college.

However, Latinos usually stay together and are homogenous; therefore, they cannot stay away from home for a longer duration. This affects the enrollment of Latinos in four-year college degree programs. Research has also indicated that male Latinos are the protectors of families, and this makes it difficult for them to stay in a boarding college away from home. With family support, the

number of male Latinos graduating from a four-year college is likely to increase. As stated by Berbery and Karen (2017) several Latinos usually enroll for a community college which make them stays from home instead of boarding away from homes. This culture can reduce the number of four-year college graduates among Latinos if not addressed properly. It is necessary for families to provide support, whereby high school graduates are assisted by parents or guardians to enroll in college programs and are also given moral support. It is clear that there are several challenges, both cultural and financial, that Latinos must address to improve the number of students enrolled in four-year degree programs in colleges.

In order to improve the rate of enrollment, cultural practices and financial issues that act as barriers to college enrollment and completion of college must be addressed. First, families must work together to take first-generation students through college enrollment and offer moral support. Parents or guardians might understand the importance of a four-year college, but this must also be transferred to students so they can understand and aspire for a better life after completing a college education. Research conducted by the Pew Hispanic Center discovered that the rate of college dropout among Latinos is high due to financial constraints (Marchesi, 2017). Therefore, this can be addressed through family support whereby a knowledgeable family member takes a first-generation student through the process of college loan application. According to Marchesi (2017), if Latino students could have access to college loans, many of them would enroll in a four-year college, and the rate of college dropout would be low as well. It is because the hustle of getting a college loan is difficult, and it usually ties students with their culture since they have to work and study at the same time, and this interferes with their studies, resulting in a higher number of college dropouts among Latinos.

The fact that many Latino parents do not understand the United States education system affects the number of college enrollments. It is, therefore, necessary for Latino parents to be keen on students' studies and do a lot of follow-up to make sure that first-generation students adapt to the U.S. education standard. Research has also indicated that many undocumented Latinos do not have access to college loans, and therefore, undocumented students work extra hard to enroll for a four-year college degree, and without family support, many of them cannot afford to complete their education (Gacel-Ávila, Jane, & Isabel, 2005). Studies have also indicated that for a Latino, whether undocumented or documented, to complete college, one has to balance between family and education. Family can help students mitigate the balancing issues, and this will encourage many students to work hard in college, which will reduce the number of college dropouts (Gacel-Ávila, Jane, & Isabel, 2005). It is, therefore, important for parents or guardians to take students through college systems and also develop good relationships with college administration and faculty so that it can improve the completion rate of Latino students.

Research has also established that the bond in Latinos families is very strong and this makes it impossible for Latino students to stay in college. It is an advantage to most students since they get support from their parents from home. Culturally, Latinos have a strong link and usually stay together or in one neighborhood. According to Gacel-Avila, Jane, and Isabel (2005), this helps Latinos to raise funds amongst themselves for their students to succeed in college, and because of the bond and

living in one neighborhood, it makes it possible to provide financial and moral support to Latino students and this result to high number of college completion among Latinos. Though a study has established that this culture lowers the number of four year college graduates among Latino, Gacel-Ávila, Jane and Isabel (2005) argue that it makes sure that parents and other families participate effectively in education of a family members and therefore, it improves the number of college graduates. Even though it is most likely to be effective for colleges within the neighborhood, it is an essential culture or practice that ensures that Latino students are involved in education and complete college as required.

It is, therefore, recommended that Latino parents or families support students by taking them to college and enrolling first-time students so that it can give them moral support to work hard at school. Parents should also encourage Latino students to apply for college loans, and this can be achieved through taking students through the process of loan application and registration. A study has indicated that many Latino students are not aware that they can access college loans, so families can take the initiative and provide the necessary support to make sure that Latino students meet the financial requirements for a four-year college student.

References

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