

ABSTRACT

Resiliency, Self-Efficacy, and Persistence of College Seniors: An Emphasis on First-Generation

Hispanic Students

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The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to investigate the relationship between resiliency, self-efficacy, and persistence of college seniors with an emphasis on first- and continued-generation Hispanic students. An examination of how retention factors have supported Hispanic college seniors was explored through qualitative interviews. Institutions of higher learning have struggled to retain incoming freshmen especially Hispanic students who historically face greater challenges to succeed.

One hundred and sixty college seniors at a Hispanic serving institution consented to completing the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC), The New General Self-Efficacy Scale, and the Proactive Attitude Scale. The means and standard deviations of these retention factors were relatively similar across ethnicities including Hispanic students who were first- and continued-generation.

Eight Hispanic college seniors were interviewed with the intent of gaining a deeper understanding of factors that provided support through their college journey. From these interviews, six themes emerged as factors contributing to success. The themes included: resiliency, family support, university support system, difficulty adjusting to college life, personal traits, and family expectations. The researcher found that participants benefit from having strong role models as well as, external and internal resources to navigate the college culture.

Implications of this research provide insight to college, career, school, and community counselors working with prospective students. Counselors are likely to address and support the needs of first- and continued-generation Hispanic students while contributing to the improvement of university programs. A renewed emphasis on strategies to increase the number of Hispanic college graduates must include a commitment at all levels of the campus community.