UNDERSTANDING EXPERIENCES, ENGAGEMENT, AND PERSISTENCE FOR
LATINA/O STUDENT-ATHLETES

by
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Abstract

     Background: In 2014-2015, there were more than 20,000 Latina/o student-athletes participating in the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), making them the third-largest group of athletes after White and African Americans (GOALS, 2015). However, research on intercollegiate athletics has been based on a predominately male and Black/White binary approach, excluding Latina/os (Oseguera, Merson, Harrison, & Rankin, 2018). **Purpose**: The overreaching purpose of this three-paper dissertation is to: (1) explore the experiences of Latino male student-athletes in a Division I public 4-year institution in the Southern U.S.; (2) understand how Latina/o student-athletes' campus engagement is related to grade point average (GPA); and (3) examine Latina/o student-athletes' intent to persist compared to Black and White student-athletes. **Methods**: In my first study, I draw on Crenshaw's (1992) intersectionality to understand the challenges and motivations they face based on their Latino and athletic identities. Building off my first manuscript, my second and third manuscripts are quantitative studies using a nationally representative secondary dataset that collected data from over 8,000 student-athletes at 150 NCAA institutions. In the second study, I used Ordinary Least Square Regression (OLS) and modified modify Nora's (2003) Student/Institution Engagement model to test whether the relationships between GPA and campus experiences (e.g., interactions with faculty, coaches, peers) are statistically different between Latino and Latinas. The third paper is guided by Terenzini and Reason (2005) Comprehensive Model of Influences of Student Learning to understand Latina/o student-athletes' intent to graduate, consideration of transferring for academic reasons, and consideration of transferring for athletic purposes. **Findings**: In paper 1, my findings revealed the following three themes: racial remarks, peer stigmas, and cultural obligations. In Paper 2, my results showed that participation in class was positively related to

Latina/o student-athletes GPA, and identifying as Latina was not statistically significant. Paper 3 found that White student-athletes have higher odds of intending to graduate than Latina/o student-athletes. In addition, Latina/o student-athletes are more likely to transfer for academic and athletic reasons compared to White student-athletes.   **Conclusion**: Overall, my results suggest that faculty, teammates, and coaches play an important role in supporting Latina/o student-athletes' academic success.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The United States is experiencing a shift in its demographics where Latina/os account for the second largest population behind Whites (Pew Research Center, 2016). In 2016, 17.8% of the United States identified as Latina/os compared with 76.9% as Whites and 13.3% as Blacks (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016). Additionally, there is a projection that Latina/os will make up 30% of the US population by 2050 (Nuñez, 2009; Pew Foundation, 2008).

While Latina/os are a growing demographic in the U.S, they have the lowest educational degree attainment rate compared to African Americans, White, and Asians (Pew Research Center, 2016). In 2017, approximately 24% of all enrolled college students identified as Latina/o (American Association of Community Colleges, 2018; Krogstad, 2016). However, only 15% of Latina/os in the U.S. between the ages of 25-29 have earned a bachelor's degree (Pew Research Center, 2016). While Latina/os are being represented in enrollment it does not translate into graduation rates (Garcia, 2016). Therefore, it is important to research what factors can help Latina/o students graduate from college.

Latina/o Student-Athletes

There is a growing body of scholarship forming around Latino students, yet an often overlooked population are Latina/o student-athletes. Despite the growing number of Latina/os in the U.S. and higher education, there is little known research on Latina/o student-athletes. The National College Athletic Association (NCAA) Growth, Opportunities, Aspirations and Leaning of Students in college (GOALS) report highlights how Latina/os are the largest first-generation population participating in college athletics at 33% (GOALS, 2015). In 2015, the NCAA

reported over 22,000 Latina/o student-athletes participating in NCAA sports (GOALS, 2015). It is evident that the Latina/o demographic is being represented in intercollegiate athletics.

There are over 460,000 college student-athletes participating in the NCAA every year (NCAA, 2017). The 2017 College Race and Gender Card (RGRC) reviews NCAA participants based on their race and gender in Division I, II, and III, and found that Latino males made up 5.7%, and Latina females made up 5.2% of student-athletes (RGCR, 2017). The NCAA has reported a 29% increase of Latina/o student-athletes making them the third largest demographic next to Black and White student-athletes (NCAA, 2016). As Latina/os continue to grow in the NCAA, it is important to inform the NCAA, higher education institutions, and athletic departments future efforts to improve Latina/o student-athletes experiences and success.

Organization of Dissertation

This dissertation consist of three stand-alone research papers that analyze the experiences, success, and persistence of Latina/o student-athletes. My first paper aims to understand the experiences of Latino male student-athletes at a Division I university in the Southern U.S., the second study tested whether relationships between GPA and campus engagement are statistically different between Latino and Latina student-athletes, and the third examined Latina/o student-athletes persistence to graduate compared to Black and White student-athletes. The three studies together seek to inform colleges/universities and the NCAA on the academic success for Latina/o student-athletes' academic outcome, specifically looking at retention and graduation rates.

The first paper explored Latino male student-athletes experiences at a public 4-year institution in the Southern U.S. This qualitative case study was guided by Crenshaw's (1992) concept of intersectionality. Crenshaw (1992) analyzed the experiences of Black women and

argued that race, class, gender, and other identified statuses can interact and lead to distinct experiences. Using intersectionality, I examined the racial and athletic experiences of Latino male student-athletes. Using hierarchical content analysis, I identified the following three themes: racial remarks, peer environment, and cultural obligations. These themes helped examine the racial and athletic perceptions Latino male student-athletes encountered. Furthermore, findings from the study showed that negative racial and athletic stereotypes were evident, but the Latino male student-athletes were aware that participation in athletics created an opportunity to earn a college degree.

Expanding the concerns of my first paper, I added a larger sample and Latinas to identify whether interactions with peers, faculty, administration, and athletic staff are positively related to Grade Point Average (GPA). Using the Student Athlete Climate Study (SACS) dataset I examined how campus engagement is statistically significant to Latina/o student-athletes GPA. I used Amaury Nora's Student/Institution Engagement Model (2003) to focus on how campus engagement can influence academic success for minority students (Nora, 2003). The findings from the study can be utilized by the NCAA and college/universities to strengthen successful pathways for Latina/o student-athletes academic achievement and athletic eligibility.

My final paper examined Latina/o student-athletes' persistence compared to Black and White student-athletes. Using the SACS dataset, I examined persistence by the following responses: I intend to graduate from my institution, I have considered transferring to another college or university due to academic reasons, and I have considered transferring to another college or university due to athletic reasons. I estimated three different logistic regression models to analyze each of the three dependent variables. This paper is guided by Terenzini and Reason's (2005) Comprehensive Model of Influences of Student Learning. The findings from

this study may help leverage the institution and the NCAA to improve academic and athletic success for Latina/o student-athletes.

<div align="center">**Definition of Terms**</div>

The following section defines terms used throughout my three studies. These terms are used to provide clarity about Latina/o student-athletes. The major terms have been identified and defined as followed.

Latina/o

Latina/os include but are not limited to individuals who identify as Chicanas/os, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, and hail from these or other Latin American countries, in North, Central, South America, and elsewhere (Solórzano, Villapando, & Oseguera, 2005).

Student-athlete

A student who has been solicited by athletic staff or other parties associated with athletics and actively participate on one or more intercollegiate team under the jurisdiction of the athletic department (NCAA, 2015).

National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA)

The NCAA is a member-led organization dedicated to the well-being and success of college athletes (NCAA, 2019a).

Division I

Division I schools have the biggest student bodies, largest athletic budget, and have the most scholarships. Institutions who participate in Division I usually devote financial resources to support their athletic programs, and many use large media contracts to attract the NCAA most popular sports men's football and basketball (NCAA, 2019a).

Division II

Division II is the second highest competition level of the NCAA but programs do not devote their athletic programs to the pursuit of lucrative media and merchandising contacts and offer "partial scholarships" (NCAA, 2019b).

Division III

The lowest NCAA division, Division III has shorter practices and playing seasons, and participants are integrated as members of the student body by the promotion of academics as the primary focus (NCAA, 2019c).

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Chapter II

Examining the Intersection of Race and Athletics for Latino Male Student-Athletes

Introduction

Intercollegiate athletics is a critical component in American higher education, in very few countries can students obtain a college degree while playing in a collegiate sport (Shulman & Bowen, 2001). Over the past several decades, intercollegiate athletic programs have grown at rates that have raised concerns at many higher education institutions. Some believe that there are numerous benefits that college athletics can provide for an institution, such as academic opportunities for student-athletes, institutional camaraderie, and public visibility (Duderstadt, 2003). There is much debate, though, as to whether college athletics may instead be a detriment to student-athletes and the institution as a whole (Thelin, 2011).

Latinos are the fastest growing population in the NCAA and the third largest participating population in intercollegiate athletics (GOALS, 2015). The Latino student-athlete population has increased by 29% over the last 5 years (GOALS, 2015). In addition, there are 78 Hispanic Serving Institutions[1] (HSIs) participating in the NCAA (NCAA Diversity Research, 2018). In 2016, there were 435 HSIs that enrolled 1,836,870 Hispanic students (HACU, 2016).

The evident rise of Latinos in intercollegiate athletics suggests a need to understand the experiences of Latino student-athletes. Examining the experiences of Latino student-athletes can help colleges and universities successfully retain and graduate them (Martinez, 2018). However, the NCAA has been criticized for being a White-controlled college sport organization, which benefits from the labor of student-athletes of color (Hawkins, Carter-Francique, & Cooper,

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[1] Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) are defined by the Higher Education Act as a degree-granting institutions with full-time equivalent undergraduate enrollment of at least 25% or more Hispanic (Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, 2016).

2017). According to the NCAA, 89% of head coaches identify as White (NCAA Diversity Research, 2018), but over 60% of students identify as people of color. This disparity raises concern about how sports in the United States may support minority students, particularly an emerging group like Latino who were previously underrepresented in the NCAA (Iber & Reglado, 2006).

While there has been a large increase in the amount of research on student-athletes and their academic progress, there are still limited theoretical models examining the influence that the climate of intercollegiate athletics has on student-athlete identity and student-athletes academic success (Rankin, Merson, Sorgen, McHale, Loya, & Osegura, 2011). I use this study to explore the experiences of Latino male student-athletes in higher education public 4-year Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) in the Southern United States. Previous literature has yet to identify the relationship between athletic and academic identity for Latinos. The study seeks to understand the following research questions 1. How are Latino male student-athletes' college experiences shaped by the intersection of their racial and athletic identities? The study first presents a conceptual framework, literature review, followed by a research methods section, and concluding discussion and implication for supporting Latino student-athletes.

Literature Review

In the past few decades there has been a growing amount of research and literature on student-athletes. This is in large part due to the growing popularity and exposure of college athletics, especially at the Division I level (Gaston-Gayles, 2004). However, there are still many gaps that need to be filled when looking at students of color experiences participating in NCAA Division I athletics. This section aims to highlight what is known about the student-athlete

experience. I aim to shed light on a less emphasized demographic of student-athletes Latino male student-athletes.

Institutional Burdens

First, it is important to understand how student-athletes have the same academic demands of the general student body and athletic demands (Comeaux & Harrison, 2011). It is common for student-athletes to dedicate more time to their sport, outside of the mandatory time commitments set by the NCAA (Comeaux & Harrison, 2011). The NCAA limits 20 hours a week for organized sports and play, but these limits are often exceeded (Wolverton, 2016). In 2015, a survey found that student-athletes spent more than 40 hours per week on athletic commitments (Wolverton, 2016).

Athletic commitments can be attributed to coaches adding pressures of winning and personal success for student-athletes (Comeaux & Harrison, 2011). The continually increasing popularity and visibility (from television and media coverage) of college athletics has added commercialization and pressures for athletic teams to win (Comeaux & Harrison, 2011). This places more pressure on student-athletes to perform well in their sport forcing them to commit more of their time to athletic activities over academic activities (Comeaux & Harrison, 2011). These commitments can lead to an unhealthy balance between academic and athletic roles (Simons, Van Rheenen, & Covington, 1999). As a result, this can create isolation for student-athletes to be incorporated with their non-athlete campus community.

Peer Interaction

Student-athletes are often categorized by the campus community to be less academically prepared than their non-athlete peers (Comeaux & Harrison 2011). For example, negative stereotypes of student-athletes in the academic domain by other classmates and professors have a

negative impact on the development of student-athletes. Perceptions of the "dumb jock" contribute to the internalization of this persona among student-athletes (Comeaux, 2015). Furthermore, student-athletes are often perceived by having special treatment by the university and little academic motivation (Comeaux, 2015). Student-athletes' perceptions about being solely admitted to a university for their physical performance devalues their association to the campus community (Valentine & Taub, 1999). According to Valentine and Taub (1999), students feel skeptical and less trusting of student-athletes obtaining an "A" in class. These stereotypes can have a negative impact on the perceptions that student-athletes have on their ability to succeed in the classroom (Althouse, 2007). These factors increase the likelihood for student-athletes having negative perceptions by their peers.

Racial Factors

Most research has compared African-American male student-athletes compared to their White counterparts (Oseguera, Merson, Harrison, Rankin, 2018). African-American student-athletes deal with the same negative stereotypes of all student-athletes, but must deal with racism and isolation on college campuses (Comeaux & Harrison, 2007). For example, faculty, administrators, and professors often have the perception that if a student-athlete is African-American, that they were only admitted because of athletic ability (Comeaux & Harrison, 2007). The majority of institutions in the United States are predominantly White, and often African-American student-athletes feel racial discrimination as well as isolated on campus (Solórzano & Yosso, 2001). These negative stereotypes lead to weakened internal academic expectations, which is detrimental to academic motivation (Comeaux & Harrison, 2007).

Latino Students in Athletics

Literature on Latino students outside of athletics may help understand Latino student-athletes in higher education. For many Latino students, cultural obligation towards family can serve as a primary concern, instead of education or athletics (Turcios-Cotto & Milan, 2013). This can cause Latino to not continue in higher education, but "provide for, protect, and defend for his family" (Locks, Hurtado, Bowman, & Osegura, 2008, p. 263). For instance, in many Latino communities, *familismo* and *ser buen educado* provide essential cultural trends that can stop Latino students from achieving educational or athletic aspirations. *Familismo* is a firm belief in strong family ties, with the family as the primary source of support and loyalty to the family taking over one's personal desires (Turcios-Cotto & Milan, 2013).

The term *ser buen educado* translates to "be well educated" but in Latino culture it carries a different meaning. Being *buen educado* does not just mean to have a good education. It means to be well mannered, respectful, and have high morals (Turcios-Cotto & Milan, 2013). One of the morals for Latino students is to be able to provide for the family (Turcios-Cotto & Milan, 2013). If that means dropping out of school, Latino males that they have a moral responsibility to help the family. Though the majority of Latino students and parents believe higher education is essential to a college future, many Latino student-athletes see themselves supporting their family over choosing an education.

Conceptual Framework

Intersectionality

This study utilizes intersectionality to examine how racial and athletic identity can shape the educational experiences of Latino male student-athletes. The purpose of intersectionality is to bring awareness to the experiences and struggles of people of color, specifically looking at the interaction of race, class, gender, sexual identity, age, and disability (Crenshaw, 1989).

Intersectionality is extension to Critical Race Theory (CRT) and was first used to describe how Black women faced discrimination differently to Black males (Crenshaw, 1989). I looked at Latino males in higher education because they are under-represented on college campuses compared to their Latina female counterparts (Sáenz & Ponjuan, 2009). Latino males have higher school dropout rates, preference in joining the workforce, and dropping out of college (Sáenz & Ponjuan, 2009; Solórzano, Villalpando, & Osegura, 2005; Yosso & Solórzano, 2006).

Student-athletes must maintain a balance between their identities as students and as athletes. However, identifying as a Latino male and a student athlete can create the phenomenon of intersectionality which refers to belonging to two or more negatively stereotyped or marginalized groups (Comeaux, 2015). These negative stereotypes may lead to weakened internal academic expectation, which is detrimental to academic motivation (Comeaux, 2015).

Student-athletes in general have to balance allocating their time and motivation between their dual roles to be successful as students and athletes. Additionally, Latino males often fall victim to stereotypes perpetrated against them by a dominant population of overwhelmingly white, male, middle class peers (Lopez, 2005). Latino student-athletes in higher education are understudied in existing research and must maintain a balance between their identities as students and as athletes. For this study, the subgroups of Latinos include but are not limited to Chicanas/os, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Central and South Americans, and other Latinos (Solórzano, Villalpando, & Osegura, 2005).

Methods

Participants

This qualitative study took place at an NCAA Division I public research university in the southern United States. The sample used for this study included three male student-athletes from

various sports. The institution sports for males included baseball, basketball, cross country, football, golf, and track & field.

The participants reported to weekly study session hours. Romario is a third-year transfer student with a scholarship, participating in a high-revenue generating sport. He has yet to decide on a major but is aiming towards a degree in Kinesiology. Throughout his time at a local community college he made Dean's list and earned an overall GPA of 3.5. He decided to go to a community college to raise his grades from High School and save money.

Ulysses was a fourth-year business major, competing in a low-revenue generating sport. He has been active in sports throughout his 4 years at the institution and comes from the institution's hometown. Throughout his high school career he was in contact with many institutions for recruitment, but decided to stay closer to his friends and family.

Norberto was a third year Technology major participating in a low-revenue generating sport. He red shirted his freshman year and has been participating ever since. He helped his high school win state championships on two occasions, and participated in other sports throughout high school. He decided to enroll at the institution since it is closer to home, and his family and friends can see him compete.

Data Collection

I used two methods to obtain an in-depth understanding of the experiences for Latino student-athletes. The methods included two 30-minute interviews with each participant along with a 12-item questionnaire. This exploratory case study used purposeful sampling to get an in-depth understanding of the participants (Bhattacharya, 2017). The participants were selected to investigate an accurate representation of the issue being examined (Bhattacharya, 2017).

Participants were contacted at the beginning of the Spring semester via email; four individuals were contacted but only three responded. The three participants all provided informed consent to be interviewed, have a follow-up interview at the end of the semester, and completed a survey before the first interview. The interviews took place between January and May. Before each interview commenced, the participant was asked to review and sign the university consent form. All interviews were recorded; once both interviews were completed they were transcribed. While the first interview examined the negative perceptions that student athletes were encountering with the academic community, the second interview focused on examining the academic roles of students-athletes.

The interview questions were developed to address the research questions of this project through the interviewers' responses. The interviews served as the primary method for data collection, since they provided potential and elicit descriptions for the study (Bloomberg & Volpi, 2012). Additionally, interviews provide the researcher with an opportunity to clarify, examine additional information, and follow-up questions were used to provide a greater detail on the three subjects being questioned (Bloomberg & Volpi, 2012). The questionnaire was designed to collect profile data and asked participants for their purpose in attending and playing for the university. The survey required participants to self-report their sport, major, year, hometown, educational goals, and athletics goals. Each questionnaire was reviewed before conducting interviews. The interviews consisted of open-ended questions that asked participants to explain their experiences with peers, faculty, and staff, time spent on campus, campus environment, and challenges they encountered personally and academically.

Procedure

I manually transcribed and coded each interview and questionnaire. Through this process I aimed to categorize and evaluate codes. I was able to identify major themes, highlighting commonalities across the responses (Patton, 2005). The purpose of this approach was to analyze themes, patterns, and trends in qualitative data that aligned with intersectionality as it pertains to student-athletes (Comeaux, 2010). The emerging themes will be explained in the following section.

Data Analysis

Hierarchical content analysis goes beyond words and provides knowledge and understanding to the phenomenon being studied (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). In addition, the interviews helped explore the participant's experiences, and identify particular responses (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The analysis is helpful as it can generate new knowledge from the participant's responses (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The responses from the interviews established how Latino student-athletes come from different upbringings, and have different attitudes about their athletic and academic achievements.

Findings

In the following section I present responses from Romario, Ulyses, and Norberto. I organized themes by the research question on understanding how Latino male student-athletes college experiences are shaped by the intersection of race and athletics. Major themes are identified to help illuminate patterns and themes with the study (Patton, 2005). Essentially, the participants responses provided themes directly related to athletics and race.

Racial

The answers from the participants emphasized different insulting racial themes Latino student-athletes encountered in higher education. All the participants experienced discrimination

for their Latino background. Romario noted: *"They (my teammates) would tell me 'sprint as fast as you can, pretend immigration is behind you,' or 'good thing you can run fast so when you get deported you can come back to the United States."*

These perceptions emphasized racial jokes for being a Latino in the United States. Racial jokes can be described as an unconsciously racist belief coded as humor and can be understood as a verbal assault with the attempt at comedy (Yosso, Smith, Ceja, & Solórzano, 2009). The intersection of Romario's participation in athletics and his nationality, resulted in racial jokes by his teammates.

Norberto explained how being a student-athlete can invalidate his Latino identity to his non-athlete peers. His response examined how hostility existed within the Latino campus community due to his athletic identity.

> When people (students) ask me to join an organization I tell them that I want too but I am student-athlete, and they say "oh it's probably not your type of club." The club is a Latino club, and I don't understand what they mean by that. Is it because I am an athlete I am not Latino enough? They don't understand how hard it is to be a student-athlete or know how much my family struggled to come to the United States.

The response provides various stereotypes, highlighting how student-athletes might not contribute to the campus community. The student group is helping promote isolation for student-athletes to remain in their athletic realm. The sense of seeing student-athletes as not part of the academic community provides hostility by non-athlete peers. Additionally, Norberto questioned if his racial identity was not seen as a valid, due to his athletic identity. Norberto frustration to his Latino peers can highlight their perceptions of Norberto "acting white." This occurs when student-athletes of color are seen by their athletic identity and get their cultural backgrounds invalidated (Comeaux, 2010).

Ulyses reflected on the racial experiences he encountered growing up in a Latino community. He explained how racism existed throughout his athletic career.

> I grew up in an all Latino area, and most of us talked Spanish. When we would   travel to play games, I remember other teams, parents, and just random people yelling at us (team). They would yell "wetback," or "speak English here you're in America." Our coach would hear them, and he would tell us to ignore them, and just play your game.

After describing how racial discrimination existed throughout his athletic career. Ulyses remembered how past perceptions impacted him today.

> Now I try to play my game as much as I can and avoid all the people who say
> anything racist to me. I have seen racist remarks by some of teammates. When they say "where is your family really from?" I tell them "Honduras." They say "Honduras or Mexico it's the same thing, I didn't even know they had sports teams." It's like people will just be racist wherever you go play.

Culture

Additional findings formulated a mixture of cultural commitments Latino student-athletes encounter. Norberto responses aimed at highlighting the contributions he is making through athletics for his family. His responses highlighted the cultural obligations that Latino encounter in higher education:

> I've never really liked school. I grew up as the eldest male in the family and I am the first to enroll in college. In all honesty, I only did it, because I knew I was setting the path for my younger siblings and cousins. Now there are no excuses for them not to go to college.

Norberto's response suggested how Latino student-athletes aspirations can intersect with familial obligations. This response reassured the concept of *familismo,* and how the morals for Latino students is to be able to set an example for the family.

Norberto's response considered the fact that his aspirations were strongly influenced by his achievement of making the team. Norberto responses to the open-ended survey depicted his commitment to take advantage of the opportunity provided to him. Norberto described, not just educational challenges but cultural ones as well.

> I think it's safe to say that most Latino kids that are student athletes are playing sport. If I could go back from my freshman year and do it again, I would do it entirely different. I would engage more in student life. It's funny, as I was writing these answers, I couldn't remember one time where my parents asked me how school was going. It was always how is everything going with your team? I think that says a ton! Maybe they were too scared to ask, as they had never gone past elementary. It's almost the thought process of "Well, how can I help, if I never did it". I think that right there is the biggest hurdle for Latino students in general, but more with athletes. We go to school with one thing in mind, playing professionally, outside of that everything is a burden, why? Because the parents don't tell their friends "He is going to school to be an architect" they're saying "He is going to play sports for a university.

This response provided a wide range of challenges experienced. Instead, Romario's parents rather ask about the athletic experience, undermining his overall college experience due to not knowing what to ask.

Limitations

I was only able to interview male student-athletes who came into the specific academic space, excluding their female counterparts. In addition, the academic space did not consist of every sport the institution offered. I interviewed the student-athletes with whom I worked with throughout the semester. While there was a limited sample of student-athletes, it was sufficient to address my research question.

Discussion

The findings highlight how racial and athletic identity shape Latino student-athletes college experience. Intersectionality was evident as campus interactions in and outside the classroom, participants in the study all experienced and were aware of racism that existed for Latinos participating in college athletics. The results correlated with how athletes-of-color are not immune from subtle and over forms of racism (Lee, Bernstein, Etzel, Gearity, & Kulick 2018). My study emphasizes how racism in the United States has not vanished, but has become more indirect and subtle (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2000). Occurrences of racial stereotypes were

evident by insults and slurs. Despite of experiencing racism, the participants all were aware of the opportunity they have received to play their sport while getting a college a degree. The opportunity they received was motivational since their parents were glad to see them go to college and make a difference for their family.

Implications for Practice

As the number of Latinos participating in the NCAA continue to increase, research needs to provide insight on their experiences. My study hopes to raise questions on how current research Latino student-athletes is scarce. Latino student-athletes deal with the same negative perceptions as all student-athletes, but there is a lack of research to highlight their college campus experience.

With the population of Latino students growing in higher education and the NCAA, more studies must be done regarding what concerns Latino students go through in higher education. It is essential to recognize the population growth of Latino's in intercollegiate athletics to provide successful pathways to obtain a post-secondary degree. For students of color like Latinos, college is a place for them to build a sense of belonging. When Latino students have support in the college environment, it can ultimately lead to graduating from higher education.

The establishment of support groups, can provide academic, athletic, and social enhancement for Latinos. Counter-spaces serve as "sites where deficit notions of people of color can be challenged and where positive collegiate racial climate can be established and maintained" (Solórzano & Yosso, 2001, p.65). Originally created by African-American students at Predominately White Institutions (PWIs), these counter-spaces need to spread to all race/ethnicity to provide a supportive environment for students of color in higher education.

These counter-spaces can serve as a powerful tool that help emphasize a comfortable campus environment. According to participants of these counter-spaces, "social counter-spaces were important because they provide students of color with space outside of the classroom to vent their frustrations and to get to know others who shared their experiences of discrimination" (Solórzano & Yosso, 2001, p. 67). Not having support for students of color can be discouraging and with these counter spaces you are able to relate to students and support one another to get through any discrimination occurring (Solórzano & Yosso, 2001). Counter-spaces respond to negative experiences that students of color encounter at HSI, and provide positive support.

At HSI's counter-spaces can be used to serve Latino identity. HSIs can provide counter-spaces by connecting Latino students with Latino faculty and promoting Latino curriculum (Garcia, 2016). First, Latino faculty from similar backgrounds can help Latino students engage culturally and educationally (Garcia, 2016). Second, a Latino curriculum at an HSI can include Ethnic Studies courses to validate Latino identity. Ethnic studies courses can help incorporate diversity across the campus by learning the history and culture of people of color (Garcia & Okhidoi, 2015). These steps can help enhance Latino identity at HSIs and create a positive campus climate.

Conclusion

This research aimed to understand the experiences of Latino male students participating in intercollegiate athletics . It is important to understand how the intersection of race and athletics can help provide insight on the assumptions and stereotypes of historically underrepresented students experience in higher education. The best way to incorporate the overlooked stories of Latino student-athletes is by conducting empirical studies to share personal experiences. Personal experiences help analyze and get a better understanding of how racial

campus climates affect affects the experience of students of color (Solórzano & Yosso, 2001).

We are able to understand that even at HSIs Latino student-athletes are targeted by their race,

bringing inequality and discrimination.

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Appendix A
Interview Protocols

Hello, thanks for participating in the interviews. My name is Guillermo Ortega I am a second year PhD student at the department of Higher Education Leadership and Policy Studies. The interview will take 30-45 minutes, with a questionnaire that will be emailed to you to fill out at your convenience. The purpose is to understand the perceptions and experiences of your academic and athletic career. There are no desirable or undesirable answers, I just want you to answer the questions as honest as possible. Feel comfortable about your answers, I want to know what you really think and how you really feel.

If it is okay with you, I will be typing our conversation. The purpose of this is so I can get all the details about our conversation. All your responses will remain confidential. Before we get started with the interview please take some time to read the consent form.

Thank you so much for participating!

Questions:

1. What is your major?

2. Why did you choose that major?

3. How long have you been playing your sport?

4. How did you get into that sport?

5. How long have you been playing at the institution?

6. What motivates you to participate in your sport?

7. What motivates you to continue studying for your degree?

8. Briefly describe a typical day at school?

9. Before we conclude this interview is there anything else you would like to share?

Appendix B

Questionnaire for Students
<u>Latino Male Student-Athlete</u>
1.   Basic Information
                Name:
                Year:
                Major:
                Sport:
                Hometown:
2.   What are your next plans regarding your educational career?
3.   What are your next plans regarding your athletic career?
4.   How do you describe your experiences with your coaches?
5.   How do you describe your experiences with your teammates, and other students?
6.   How do you describe your experience with faculty?
7.   How do coaches, faculty, and administrators enhance your career development?
8.   Do you take classes with your teammates?
9.   How often do you attend tutoring hours and office hours?
10.   Do your teammates encourage you to attend events to learn about culture?
11.   How does the campus create meaningful interactions with people from other cultural
        backgrounds?
12.   What do you believe is the greatest challenge for Latino male Student-Athletes in Higher
        Education?

Chapter III

Examination of Campus Engagement and GPA for Latina/o Student-Athletes

Introduction

In 2014-2015, there were more than 20,000 Latina/o student-athletes participating in the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), making them the third largest group of athletes after White and African Americans (NCAA, 2015). Scholars have observed the increase of Latina/os in the United States and higher education (Gándara, 2010), but they have tended to overlook Latina/o representation in athletics. With the rise Latina/os in higher education, institutions must be ready to respond and accommodate their participation in intercollegiate athletics.

The purpose of this study is to understand how Latina/o student-athletes' campus engagement is related to grade point average (GPA). With limited research on Latina/o student-athletes, it is important to understand what factors are associated with their GPAs. I focus on GPA as an outcome for this population because the NCAA requires student-athletes to have a 2.3 GPA to be eligible for their sport (NCAA, 2018b). In addition, I define academic achievement through GPA because it is a common measurement by institutions (York, Gibson, & Rankin, 2015). Therefore, GPA serves as an important measure for student-athlete success.

More broadly, GPA is a measurement that the NCAA uses to evaluate teams (Gayles & Hu, 2009). According to Johnson, Wessel, and Pierce (2010), GPA and individual eligibility are primary determinates for APR scores. Understanding what type variables can influence GPA needs to be examined may ultimately be helpful for athletic and academic administrators in their decisionmaking. Introduced in 2004, the Academic Progress Rate (APR) is a metric the NCAA uses to track real-time academic progress of student-athletes and teams (Gayles & Hu, 2009).

The APR allows every team to receive two points per student-athlete per semester for staying in school and one point for being academically eligible for financial aid (NCAA, 2018a). The APR takes a team's total points, divided by the total points possible, and then multiples that by 1,000 (NCAA, 2018a). To emphasize the importance of academics, the NCAA punishes teams that do not meet a minimum of 900 points by revoking scholarships or being ineligible to participate in post-season competitions (Althouse, 2007).

With the NCAA's emphasis on academics, it is important to understand how campus engagement can help student-athletes' GPA. Prior research suggests that Latina/o students who are more actively engaged with their campus community are more likely to be academically successful (Nora, 2003). An engaged student can be academically successful because they are devoting their time to classes, extracurricular activities, and peers and faculty (Nora, 2003). However, we know relatively little about whether campus engagement positively relates to Latina/o student-athletes' GPAs. In this quantitative study, I analyze Student-Athlete Climate Study (SACS) data to examine whether interactions with peers, faculty, administrators, and athletic staff are positively related to GPA among Latina/o student-athletes. I draw on the literature on student-athletes and Nora's (2003) Student/Institution Engagement model to address the following research questions:

1. What engagement factors (i.e., Faculty, Student, Athletic) are positively related to Latina/o student-athletes' GPA?

2. Are there statistically significant differences in the relationships between engagement factors and GPA among Latino and Latina student-athletes?

Literature Review

Student-Athletes

While little is known about Latina/o student-athletes' GPA, I use this section to highlight studies that have examined student-athletes and their academic performance represented through GPA. The NCAA core purpose is to ensure student-athletes athletic and educational experiences are positive (NCAA, 2015). Since its formation, the NCAA has stated that academics is the main priority of all student-athletes (NCAA, 2015). According to NCAA guidelines, student-athletes must spend no more than 20 hours per week, with a maximum of four hours per day on athletic related activities (NCAA, 2019). By limiting the time in athletics, student-athletes can ultimately achieve academic success.

However, there has been criticism on how student-athletes' athletic commitments may affect their GPA (Simons, Van Rheenen, & Covington, 1999). Studies have demonstrated that student-athletes have lower GPAs compared to non-athletes due to their athletic commitments (Rubin & Rosser, 2014; Eitzen, & Hufnagel, 1982). For example, surveys suggest that student-athletes spend up to 40 hours of athletic related activities (Wolverton, 2016). These activities include traveling to and from practice and competitions, attending team meetings, receiving physical rehabilitation by team trainers in the training room, and receiving counseling or guidance from athletic staff who are not (Althouse, 2007). The time required for these athletic commitments can limit a student-athletes' opportunities for academic related activities compared to non-athletes.

Furthermore, studies have found that gender is an important predictor for student-athletes GPA. Johnson, Wessel and Pierce (2012) conducted a study to predict GPA for first-year student-athletes at a Division I university. The study included student-athletes demographics, precollege characteristics, and sports (Johnson et al., 2012). The findings showed that female student-athletes outperformed males academically (Johnson et al., 2012). The NCAA's

graduation rates show that female student-athletes had an 88% graduation rate compared to 75% of males (NCAA, 2018a). This may be due to the large number of men participating in revenue generating sports. Revenue generating sports include men's football and basketball, and graduation rates remain low (Hawkins, Carter-Francique, & Cooper, 2016). According to Gaston-Gayles and Hu (2009), student-athletes who participate in nonrevenue generating sports are more likely to succeed academically than athletes participating in revenue generating sports. Additionally, Adler and Adler (1999) explained how revenue generating sports are often commercialized by television, media coverage, and sponsors. The commercialization adds pressure for athletic teams, athletic departments, and universities to have a successful season and program (Adler & Adler, 1999). This pressure causes revenue generating student-athletes to dedicate more time to their sport than nonrevenue athlete, resulting in a lower GPA (Adler & Adler, 1999).

Faculty and students are less likely to engage with Black student-athletes due to their involvement in sports (Killeya, 2001). Faculty and peers have the perception that student-athletes of color have nothing to contribute academically to the campus community and are only admitted because of their athletic ability (Harper, 2018). These negative perceptions can lead Black student-athletes to not seek academic help from their faculty, advisors, or students peers (Killeya, 2001). Furthermore, Black student-athletes are more likely to express feelings of isolation and experience racial remarks compared to White student-athletes (Cooper & Hawkins, 2012). Black student-athletes are stereotyped as the "Black dumb jock" by academic stakeholders and non-athlete peers (Bimper, Harrison, & Clark 2012). The stereotype leads to a misconception that Black student-athletes are attending college only for athletic pursuits and not for academics (Bimper, Harrison, & Clark, 2012). As a result, Black student-athletes are

encouraged to concentrate on sports-related activities rather than academics (Cooper & Hawkins, 2012).   I acknowledge that the literature does not specifically address Latina/os, but it is important to provide insights on the potential importance that exist for racial minority groups of student-athletes.

The Importance of Campus Engagement for Latina/o Students

Hurtado, Carter, and Spuler (1996) found that Latina/o students' social interactions with peers and faculty are positively related to academics. Latina/o students who are engaged with the campus community can help build support networks that can contribute to GPA and persistence (Nora, Barlow, & Crisp, 2011). Latina/o students' interactions with peers can contribute to higher GPAs and improved graduation rates (Crisp, Taggart, & Nora, 2015). First-generation Latina/os often struggle navigating the college experience, and turn to their peers for support (Nuñez, 2009).

Latina/o students who engage with faculty outside the classroom have a higher chance of succeeding academically (Nuñez, 2009). Faculty members can provide guidance and development for Latina/o students, influencing their GPA and persistence (Crisps & Nora, 2009). However, Latino student-athletes are a unique case of Latinos, since student-athletes are less likely to interact with the campus community and interact more with their athletic community (Comeaux & Harrison, 2011). Jayakumar and Comeaux (2011) state that student-athletes tend to be isolated from the campus community and socialize with teammates, coaches, and athletic related staff. These studies help us understand how research exists for Latina/o student GPA, but there are still gaps to be filled to understand how athletic engagement is significant with their GPA.

Latina/o Students' Grade Point Averages (GPAs)

Since NCAA member institutions are comprised of 4-year institutions, I consider literature on Latina/os GPA at 4-year institutions. Additionally, with minimal research on Latina/o student-athletes I analyzed studies that focused on Latina/o student GPA. Researchers have argued that Latina/o have lower college GPAs compared to their White counterparts (Miller, 2005). One reason may be due to Latina/os disproportionately coming from low-income backgrounds and having parents who did not enroll in college (Laird, Thomas Bridges, Morelon-Quianoo, Williams, & Holmes, 2007). St. John, Hu and Fisher (2011) found that financial aid is an opportunity for first-generation Latina/os to go to college and any source of financial aid can help them succeed in college. Generally speaking, attributes such as lower socio-economic status (SES) and first-generation are reported as two of the strongest indicators for GPA and persistence (Astin & Oseguera, 2005).

I highlight SES and first-generation status because many Latina/os come from low-income areas with fewer resources available and are first-generation college students (Horn & Chen, 1998). However, athletic participation for Latina/os in secondary school has been known to improve test scores and lead to higher chances of attending college (Rosewater, 2009). If athletics can help Latina/os academically in secondary schooling, then I plan to examine if there is a relationship to Latina/o student-athletes GPA who participate in college athletics. Therefore, I build on previous literature to identify what predictors can positively influence Latina/o student-athletes GPA.
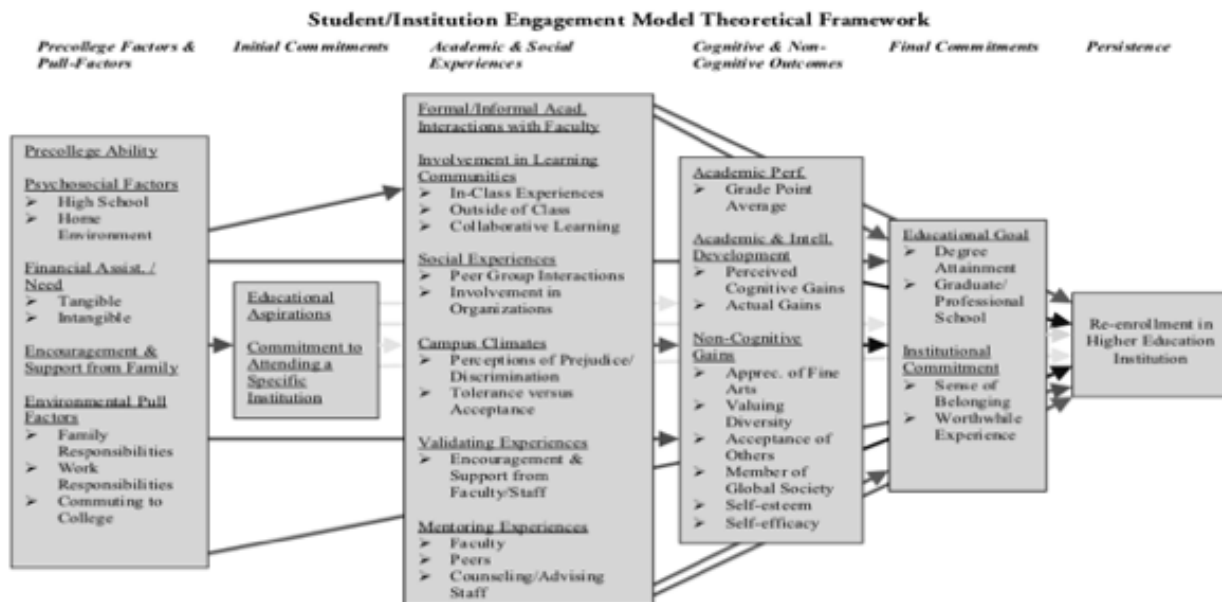
Figure 1: Amaury Nora's (2003) Model of Student/Institution Engagement Model

Conceptual Framework

While there has been research on student engagement, there are limited models that specifically focus on Latina/o students. I draw upon Amaury Nora's (2003) Model of Student/Institution Engagement Model (Figure 1) to examine Latina/o student-athletes' success. The model examines how interaction with faculty, students, and academic staff enhances Latina/o student's campus persistence to obtaining a degree (Nora et al., 2011). The Student Engagement Model proposes six major components for students: (1) precollege/pull factors, (2) sense of purpose and institutional allegiance, (3) academic and social experiences, (4) cognitive and non-cognitive outcomes, (5) goal determination/institutional allegiance, and (6) persistence (Nora et al., 2011).

Based on literature on student-athletes, I modify Nora's model to examine GPA for Latina/o student-athletes, by using three components of the model: (1) precollege/pull factors, (2) academic and social experiences, and (3) athletic experiences and engagement (Figure 2). Nora's model takes into account how students bring a series of pre-college characteristics and

experiences that can influence GPA. Past experiences can include student's high school GPA, academic preparation, level of parent education, and SES (Nora et al., 2011). Academic and social experiences include interactions with faculty, peers, advisors or counselors, and student organizations (Nora et al., 2011). Lastly, I analyze athletic experience and engagement due to the average 20 hours student-athletes must spend per week with their teammates, coaches, and athletic staff (Bell, 2009; Watt & Moore, 2001). Athletic commitments are relevant because unlike other students, the demands and participation of athletics are unique commitments for student-athletes (Comeaux & Harrison, 2011). I use these activities to help examine how academic and athletic engagements predict GPA for Latina/o student-athletes.
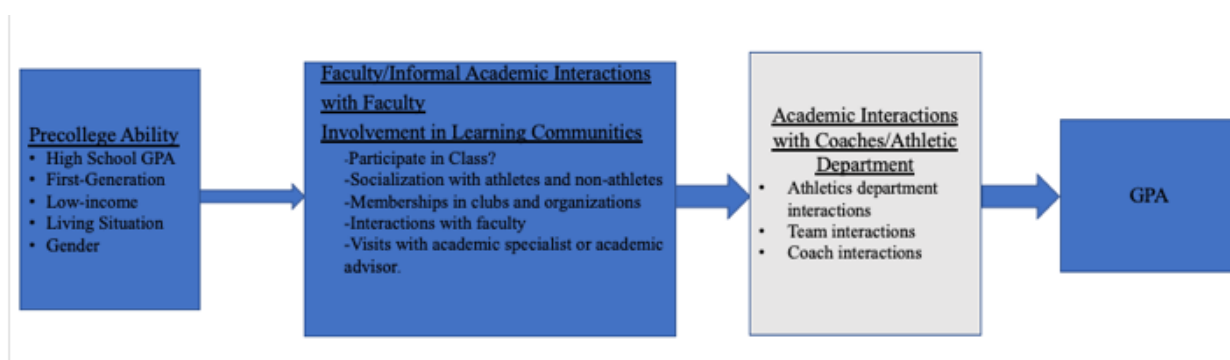
Figure 2: Modified version of Amaury Nora's (2003) Model of Student/Institution Engagement Model

Data and Methods

Data

I used the Student-Athlete Climate Study (SACS), to examine the different engagements for Latina/o student-athletes. Researchers complied SACS data by surveying 8,000 student-athletes from more than 150 NCAA institutions. SACS was developed to examine the campus, team, and athletic department climate and understand the academic and athletic success, as well as athletic identity (Rankin et al., 2011). The responses about individual campus experiences came from all the NCAA Divisions (Rankin, et al., 2011). The dataset responses from student-athletes include demographics, sports, and NCAA Division (Rankin et al., 2011). Additionally,

"ratio estimation was used to develop a weight adjustment on the characteristics of gender, race, academic class standing, and NCAA division in order to make the data as representative as possible of the sample" (Oseguera et al., p. 123). SACS aims to expand the knowledge of student-athletes' well-being by analyzing their engagement with the campus, intercollegiate athletics, and their team (Rankin et al., 2011).

I begin my findings by presenting descriptive statistics for categorical variables in Table 1. A total of 389 respondents identified as Latina/o and 227 identified as female. Only a small number of respondents identified as low-income ($n = 39$) or first-generation ($n = 66$). Lastly, 218 of the respondents lived on-campus. Table 2 provides the mean and standard deviation of variables included in the model for Latina/o student-athletes. The mean self-reported response for current GPA was 6.20 (1.63 SD).

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics for Categorical Variables

Variable	N	Percent in Rating
Female	227	58
First Generation	66	17
Low-Income	39	10
Live On-Campus	218	56
Academic & Honor Society	65	17
Arts & Entertainment Society	4	1
Fraternity/Sorority	14	4
Intramural/Club Sports	62	16
Issues/Politics Club	9	2
Cultural Groups	39	10
Performance or Fine Arts	10	3
Publications or Media Groups	1	0.3
Recreation/Hobby Groups	16	4
Religious/Spiritual Group	38	10
Student Government	12	3

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics of Latino Student Athletes in SACS Data (N = 389)

Variable	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Grade Point Average (GPA) (1 = D or below, 9 = A)	6.20	1.63	1.00	9.00
Participate in class? (1 = Never, 5 = Very Often)	3.97	0.92	1.00	5.00
Faculty Student Interaction (1 = Strongly Negative, 5 = Strongly Positive)	4.13	0.76	1.00	5.00
Primarily Socialize with Other Student-Athletes (1 = Strongly Disagree, 4 = Strongly Agree)	3.26	0.73	1.00	4.00
Visits with academic specialist or academic advisors (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)	4.10	0.86	1.00	5.00
Visits with athletic academic specialist or academic advisor (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)	4.10	0.86	1.00	5.00
Athletic department interactions (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)	4.00	0.92	1.00	5.00
Team interactions (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)	4.28	0.88	1.00	5.00
Head Coach (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)	4.10	1.09	1.00	5.00
High School GPA (1 = D or below, 9 = A)	7.45	1.35	3.00	9.00

Variables

I used GPA as my dependent variable, it is a commonly used proxy for student success (York at al., 2015). Student-athletes must meet their academic and athletic GPA to remain eligible. As mentioned earlier, the APR is primarily calculated by the student-athletes' GPA and individual eligibility. Additionally, scholarships and financial aid often have GPA requirements (Johnson et al., 2012). Therefore, it is important for coaches, staff, and institutions to understand what variables are related to GPA (Johnson et al., 2012).

My control variables start with precollege ability (Table 1). Precollege ability has been found to be an influential factor for minority students' academic success (Nora & Cabrera, 1996). Based on SACS, I use the following variables to define precollege characteristics: high school GPA, first-generation (*FG*), low-income (*LI*), and living situation (*Live On-Campus*). Gender was dichotomous. I used "0" for Latinos and "1" was added as a dummy variable to represent Latinas.

My independent variables begin with what Nora (2003) referred to as academic integration. I used participation in class, socialization with athletes and non-athletes, memberships in clubs and organizations, interactions with faculty, and visits with academic advisor. Participation in class is measured on a likert scale from 1 (*Never*), 2 (*Rarely*), 3 (*Sometimes*), 4 (*Often*), and 5 (*Very Often*). Additionally, academic development was used to understand what type of academic engagement activities student-athletes are attending. For example, membership in clubs and organizations was collected with different types of organizations student-athletes can join. The clubs and organizations included: *Fraternity/Sorority, Intramural/Club Sports, Issues/Politics Club, Cultural Groups, Performance or Fine Arts, Publications or Media Groups, Recreation/Hobby Groups, Religious/Spiritual*

Groups, and Student Government. Interactions with faculty *(Faculty Student Interaction)* were constant variables measured on a continuous scale, and measured the quality of formal and informal interactions with faculty members (Rankin et al., 2011).. Lastly, academic advisor can be explained if student-athletes had a positive interactions with their academic advisor; this was reported on a likert scale from 1 (*Strongly Disagree*). 2 (*Disagree*), 3 (*Neither Agree nor Disagree*), 4 (*Agree*), and 5 (*Strongly Agree*).

Finally, I used athletic commitments because previous studies have neglected the influence athletics has on student-athletes. I analyzed athletic interactions using the following variables: athletic advisors, athletic department interactions, team interactions, and coach interactions. First, I examined if student-athletes socialize with other student-athletes (*Primarily Socialize with Other Student-athletes*) and use a continuous variable to understand if interactions with the team were positive (*Team Interactions*). Next, I examined the student-athlete's overall relationship with athletic related personnel's to see if the relationships were positive on a likert scale from 1 (*Strongly Disagree*). 2 (*Disagree*), 3 (*Neither Agree nor Disagree*), 4 (*Agree*), and 5 (*Strongly Agree*). The measure of the overall relationship with athletic personnel is followed up with a measure of relationship satisfaction with athletic administrators (*Athletic Administrators*), athletic advisors (*Athletic Advisor*), and head coach *(Head Coach)*. Ultimately, these interactions can help identify which are statistically significant for Latina/o student-athletes' GPA. I plan to have a table of descriptive statistics including means, standard deviations, minimums, maximums, and percent mission when I run the dataset.

Methods

I used IBM-SPSS version 24 to estimate an ordinary least square (OLS) regression models (OLS). OLS can be used to model a single response variable which has been recorded

continuously (Hutcheson, 2011). Additionally, beta coefficients from OLS estimation can measure the strength of the relationship between key independent and dependent variables (Meyers, Gamst, & Guarino, 2013). In my study, OLS was used to examine the strength of relationships between engagement and Latina/o student-athletes' GPA.

I answer my first research question by testing whether the relationship between GPA and campus engagement is positively related for Latina/os. I use Y as my dependent variable. The β represents what I am predicting, the X stands for my different variables or different groups, and ϵ represents my standard error. I added a vector of interaction terms between the variable for females and the variables of their academic, social, and athletic experiences.

$$Y\,(GPA) = \beta0 + \beta1 Latina + \beta2 PreCollege + \beta3 ParClass + \beta4 InterAth + \beta5 InterNonAth \\ + \beta6 MemClub + \beta7 InterFac + \beta8 VisAdvisor + \beta9 SocTeam + \beta10 AthAdmin \\ + \beta11 AthAdvisor + \beta12 HeadCoach + \epsilon$$

My second research question examined if there are statistically significant differences in the relationships between engagement factors and GPA among Latino and Latina student-athletes.

$$Y\,(GPA) = \beta0 + \beta1 Latino + \beta2 PreCollege + \beta3 ParClass + \beta4 nterAth + \beta5 InterNonAth \\ + \beta6 MemClub + \beta7 InterFac + \beta8 VisAdvisor + \beta9 SocTeam + \beta10 AthAdmin \\ + \beta11 AthAdvisor + \beta12 HeadCoach + \beta13 Gender + \epsilon$$

Limitations

While this study plans to fill gaps for Latina/o student-athletes there are still limitations that need to be acknowledged. First, while SACS includes NCAA member institutions, it does not report the institution type. The study did not take into account if institutions were Predominantly White Institutions (PWI), Hispanic Serving institutions (HSI), Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU), and etc. Researchers have shown that if Latina/o have representation within the faculty and the campus community it can lead to Latina/o students being academically and socially engaged (Garcia, 2016). Second, the data did not disaggregate

for Latina/o ethnicities. Latina/os come from different ethnic backgrounds and cultures, and it is important to highlight their unique experiences (Huber & Solórzano, 2015). The data combined all Latina/o identities into one category, leaving out any information on Latina/os ethnic backgrounds.

Findings

I present the results from the OLS in Tables 3, 4, and 5. All the tables include the beta coefficient and standard error. The regression represented in Table 3 shows the pre-college characteristics, and found that high school GPA was a statistically significant control variable ($p \leq 0.05*$). The findings suggest that high school GPA is positively associated with college GPA; for every on-unit increase in high school GPA, there is a corresponding increase of .31 GPA points in college.

Table 3 Summary of Ordinary Least Square (OLS) Regression Models Testing

for Latino Student-Athletes GPA

	Beta Coefficients		SE
High School GPA	0.31	*	0.06
First-Generation	-0.10	***	0.22
Low-Income	-0.02	***	0.28
Living On-Campus	-0.01	***	0.16
Female	0.04	***	0.17
Adjusted R^2 .105			

Note: $p \leq 0.05$ * $p \leq 0.01$ ** $p \leq 0.001$***

With regards to my first research question, Table 4 examines Latino student-athletes' academic and social experiences. The regression suggests that there is a positive association between participation in class and Latina/o college athletes' GPA[2]. Additionally, the model suggest that

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[2] Beta estimate is .13, but the pseudo-continuous nature of GPA limits the interpretability of that coefficient.

there is a positive association between being involved in an academic honor society and Latina/o

college athletes' GPA[3].

Table 4 Summary of Ordinary Least Square (OLS) Regression Models Testing for Latino Student-Athletes GPA

	Beta Coefficients		SE
High School GPA	0.25	*	0.06
First-Generation	-0.10	***	0.21
Low-Income	-0.01	***	0.27
Living On-Campus	-0.03	***	0.16
Female	0.04	***	0.17
Participation in Class	0.13	*	0.09
Faculty Student Interaction	0.03	***	0.13
Primarily Socialize with Other Student-Athletes	0.00	***	0.11
Academic & Honor Society	0.25	*	0.21
Intramural/Club Sport	0.04	***	0.21
Cultural Groups	-0.06	***	0.27
Religious Groups	-0.01	***	0.26
Other Clubs and Organizations	-0.04	***	0.29
Visits with Academic Advisors	0.06	***	0.10
Adjusted R^2 .184			

Note: $p \leq 0.05$ * $p \leq 0.01$ ** $p \leq 0.001$ ***

Table 5 indicated that Latino student-athletes athletic experiences and engagement was

not significant to their GPA. I checked correlations to ensure why the adjusted R^2 lowered in the

model. I used Pearson Correlation to check all my independents variables, and there were two

moderate positive correlation with visits with academic advisor visits with athletic advisor (.642)

and athletic department interactions (.521). I re-ran the model with only academic advisor or

academic advisor and the findings were consistent for each model. Lastly, to answer my second

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[3] Beta estimate is .25, but the pseudo-continuous nature of GPA limits the interpretability of that coefficient.

research questions, identifying as a Latina was not statistically significantly related to GPA (p ≤ 0.001***).

Table 5 Summary of Ordinary Least Square (OLS) Regression Models Testing for Latino Student-Athletes GPA

	Beta Coefficients		SE
High School GPA	0.26	*	0.06
First-Generation	-0.09	***	0.22
Low-Income	-0.01	***	0.27
Living On-Campus	-0.04	***	0.16
Female	0.04	***	0.17
Participation in Class	0.13	*	0.10
Faculty Student Interaction	0.03	***	0.13
Primarily Socialize with Other Student-Athletes	0.00	***	0.11
Academic & Honor Society	0.26	*	0.21
Intramural/Club Sport	0.04	***	0.21
Cultural Groups	-0.06	***	0.27
Religious Groups	-0.01	***	0.26
Other Clubs and Organizations	-0.04	***	0.25
Visits with Academic Advisors	0.06	***	0.13
Visits with Athletic Advisor	0.00	***	0.13
Athletic Department Interactions	0.00	***	0.11
Team Interactions	-0.02	***	0.10
Head Coach	0.05	***	0.08
Adjusted R^2 .177			

Note: $p \leq 0.05$ * $p \leq 0.01$ ** $p \leq 0.001$***

Discussion

In this study, I examined the relationship between Latina/o student-athletes' engagement and GPA. While scholars have looked at Latina/o students campus engagement and GPA, little is known about Latina/o student-athletes' campus engagement. My findings suggest that high school GPA may have a significant impact on Latina/o student-athletes' college GPA. Consistent with prior research, high school GPA is associated with Latina/o students' academic outcome in college (Mendez & Bauman, 2018; Arbona & Nora, 2007; Peter & Horn, 2005).

Additionally, high school GPA can be considered as a predictor for academic college performance for student-athletes (Shulman & Bowen, 2001). This adds evidence to support that high school GPA can be a significant when understanding Latina/o student-athletes.

I also found that participation in class is positively related to Latina/o student-athletes' GPA. Students who actively participate in class are more likely to be academically engaged and persist in college (Hernandez & Lopez, 2004). Specifically, for Latina/o students, classroom participation can influence students likelihood of persisting academically by establishing positive classroom experiences with their faculty and peers (Kim, Rennick, & Franco, 2014). In addition, being involved in an academic or honor society was positively statistically significant. Joining a college organization can help students get engaged with the social and academic life of their college (Nora & Crisp, 2009). It is worth noting that academic and honor societies are known for their academic excellence and professional leadership (Ferrari & Appleby, 2019). In that sense, academic and honor societies are positively related to academic success.

Finally, I want to address how athletic experiences and engagement were not statistically significant throughout the model. It is possible that the weak relationship can be due to coaches, teammates, and athletic advisors contributing to the academic success of student-athletes beyond GPA (Rankin et al., 2011). For example, athletic advisors and athletic administrators can include helping student-athletes with mental health, professional development, and maintaining relationships with their family (Thompson, 2011). In addition, coaches and teammates tend to discuss athletic related goals and how student-athletes can be successful in their sport (Beamon, 2008). Thus, it is important to examine the athletic experiences and engagement for Latina/o students participating in the NCAA.

Implications

My findings can provide meaningful implications for academic and athletic stakeholders. First, Nora's (2003) Student/Institution Engagement model was developed for persistence and success for Latina/o students, not student-athletes' GPA. Because there is little known about Latina/o athletic commitment and educational experiences, there are limited theoretical models that can connect Latina/o student-athletes' college engagement with GPA. In order to understand the experiences of student-athletes, there needs to be theoretical frameworks that account for their academic and social integration in college (Comeaux & Harrison, 2011).

Second, my finding suggests that participation in class is significant for Latina/o student-athletes' GPA. Classroom interactions can help support Latina/o student-athletes' academic success by providing mentorship with faculty members. For example, Giraldo-García, Galletta, and Bagaka (2019) stated that mentors can provide a positive academic influence and serve as a support system for students, especially students of color. Therefore, athletic departments, head coaches, and faculty members need to collaborate and develop a mentor-mentee program to help Latina/o student-athletes' academic success.

Future research is needed to examine if campus engagement is different for Latina/o student-athletes compared to different racial and gender groups in the NCAA. Previous research has mainly examined the how academic engagement influences the academic success of White male student-athletes (Oseguera et., 2018). Thus, it is important to look at engagement across a diverse group of student-athletes to improve academic success for minoritized groups in the NCAA. Additionally, there needs to be more qualitative research that can help examine how athletics play a role in Latina/o student-athletes' college experience.

Conclusion

The purpose of this quantitative study was to contribute to the limited research on Latina/o student-athletes. Using the SACS dataset, this study sought to understand what engagement factors (i.e., Faculty, Student, Athletic) are positively related to Latina/o student-athletes' GPA, and if there are statistically significant differences in the relationships between engagement factors and GPA among Latino and Latina student-athletes. Based on the findings of the study, high school GPA serves as an important variable for Latina/o student-athletes' GPA. Additionally, the more Latina/o student-athletes participate in class the more likely their GPA increases. Lastly, campus engagement and GPA had no statistically significant differences for Latinos and Latinas.

Prior literature has not focused on Latina/o student-athletes, but I draw attention by focusing on how campus engagement can increase their GPA. This research can benefit the NCAA and colleges/universities by providing insight on the academic success for Latina/o student-athletes. Working with Latina/o student-athletes requires the NCAA and college/university to take into account their athletic and academic campus interactions. Therefore, as Latina/o continue to grow in the NCAA, it is important to understand what best practices can increase GPA and ultimately lead to degree attainment.

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Appendix

Table of Variables

Variable	Description	Measure
Gender	What is your gender identity?	0=Male 1=Female
High School GPA	What was your overall high school grade point average?	1 = No grades given at my school 2 = D or below (< 1.50) 3 = C- (1.50-1.83) 4 = C (1.84-2.16) 5 = C+ (2.17-2.49) 6 = B- (2.50-2.83) 7 = B (2.84-3.16) 8 = B+ (3.17-3.49) 9 = A- (3.50-3.83) 10 = A (3.84-4.00)
First-Generation	First-generation	0 = Not FG 1 = FG
Low-Income	Low-Income	0 = Not LI 1 = LI
Living Situation	Where do you live?	1 = Residence hall 2 = Fraternity/sorority housing 3 = On-campus apartment 4 = Off-campus residence (house, apartment, etc.) 5 = With parent(s)/family/relative(s)
Participate in Class?	Actively participate in class? [How often do you]	1 = Never 2 = Rarely 3 = Sometimes 4 = Often 5 = Very often
Socialization with Athletes	I primarily socialize with other student-athletes.	1 = Strongly disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly Agree
Membership in Clubs and Organizations	In addition to varsity athletics, which student organizations/clubs are you involved in?	0 = Not Selected 1 = Selected
Interactions with Faculty	Meet with a faculty member who is not associated with athletics? [How often do you]	1 = Never 2 = Rarely 3 = Sometimes 4 = Often

		5 = Very often
Visits with Academic Advisor	Overall, I feel that my relationship with the following people has been positive: My academic department academic advisor	1 = Strongly disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neither agree nor disagree 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly agree
Athletic Department Interactions	Overall, I feel that my relationship with the following people has been positive: athletic administrators, athletic advisor, and head coaches.	1 = Strongly disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neither agree nor disagree 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly agree
Team Interactions	Respect on Team	1 = Strongly disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neither agree nor disagree 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly agree

Chapter IV

Expanding the Racial Binary Approach in Intercollegiate Athletics: Latina/o Student-Athletes Persistence compared to Black and White Student-Athletes

Introduction

Research on intercollegiate athletics has been based on a predominantly male and Black/White binary approach, excluding other groups (Oseguera, Merson, Harrison, & Rankin, 2018). In 2016, however, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) reported that 20% of student-athletes had identified as a racial group other than Black or White (Oseguera et al., 2018). Within that 20%, Latina/os made up the largest percentage at 7% of student-athletes who did not identify as Black or White (NCAA Research, 2016). Moreover, Latina/o student-athletes have seen a 29% increase in participation since 2016 and are projected to grow (NCAA Research, 2016). With the increasing participation of Latina/os in intercollegiate athletics becoming more evident, institutions and the NCAA must lead efforts to accommodate their participation.

The purpose of this study is to understand how Latina/o student-athletes' participation in NCAA divisions and faculty culture is related to their odds of intent to persist in their athletic team or drop out of college or university compared to White and Black student-athletes. It is important to examine Latina/o student-athletes' intent to persist, because Latina/os have the lowest Bachelor degree attainment rates compared to other racial groups. In 2015, the United States Census Bureau reported the following Bachelor degree graduation rates: Asian (54%), White (33%), Black (23%), and Latina/o (16%). Additionally, students who are involved in competitive sports can have lower degree completion rates due to athletic demands (Parker, Perry, Hamm, Chipperfield, & Hladkyj, 2015; Johnson, Wessel, & Pierce, 2013). These

statistics raise concern, as Latina/o student-athletes continue to grow, institutions and the NCAA must understand what factors promote persistence.

In this study, I use Student-Athlete Climate Study (SACS) data to examine what factors are associated with Latina/o student-athletes' intent to graduate, consideration of transferring for academic reasons, and consideration of transferring for athletic purposes and compared to White student-athletes. This study used selected areas from Terenzini and Reason's (2005) Comprehensive Model of Influences of Student Learning to address the following research questions:

1. What is the relationship between faculty culture related to student access and the intent to persist for Latina/o student-athletes?

2. How does faculty culture influence consideration of transferring to another college or university due to academic reasons for Latina/o student-athletes?

3. How does NCAA division associate with consideration of transferring to another college or university due to athletic reasons Latina/o student-athletes?

Literature Review

Latina/o Students

Precollege characteristics can affect Latina/o students persistence at 4-year institutions. Compared to non-Latina/o students, Latina/os at 4-year institutions are more likely to be first-generation college students, have lower standardized test scores, and have minimal college preparation in high school (Bridges, Kinzie, Nelson Lairs, & Kuh, 2008). Nuñez (2011) found that first-generation students tend to earn lower GPAs, to be less academically and socially involved in college, and to complete college at lower rates. Additionally, Latina/o students who enrolled at 4-year institutions were less academically prepared than White students (Fry, 2004).

Latina/o students that do graduate from 4-year institutions tend to take longer than White students (Nora, Barlow, & Crisp 2011; Deajardins, Ahlburg, & McCall, 2002).

Literature has also shown that interactions with faculty can influence Latina/o student persistence. For Latina/o students, the college environment can be more important when examining persistence than precollege characteristics (Hurtado & Carter, 1997). For example, there is a positive impact on students who interact with faculty (Hernandez & Lopez, 2004). Faculty play a critical role in providing students with assistance and information needed to be successful in college (Lundberg, Kim, Andrade, & Bahner, 2018). According to Hurtado, Carter, and Spuler (1996) , Latina/o students who interact with their faculty were more likely to persist. However, Latina/o, Asian/American, and Pacific Islander students are less likely to interact with faculty than other racial groups (Stebleton & Aleixo, 2015). Latina/o students, particularly first-generation, are less likely to have meaningful interaction or seek help from faculty (Nuñez, 2011; Anaya & Cole, 2011; Lunderberg, et al., 2007; Torres, Reiser, LePeau, Davis, & Ruder, 2006).

Student-Athletes

Student-athletes often spend more than 40 hours a week on sport-related activities and deal with the mental fatigue, physical exhaustion, and injuries that relate to their participation in college sports (Comeaux & Harrison, 2011; Eitzen, 2009; Wolverton, 2008). Additionally, student-athletes need to balance their full-time academic courses with inflexible practices and competition schedules (Parker et al., 2015; Bentsson & Johnson, 2012; Scott, Paskus, Miranda, Petr, & McArdle, 2008). These athletic demands can limit academic activities for student-athletes, which can lead to lower persistence rates compared to nonathletes.

Generally speaking, persistence for student-athletes is different across all sports and divisions. The NCAA is comprised of three divisions: Division I, II, and III. Division I (DI)

receive the most public attention, have larger schools with more students, and have more athletic

scholarship money available (NCAA, 2019a). Division II tend to be smaller institutions than DI

schools and have fewer athletic scholarships (NCAA, 2019b). Division III schools have the

largest membership of all NCAA division and are not allowed to give out athletic scholarships,

only academic scholarships (NCAA, 2019c). Division I is where revenue-generating sports of

men's football and basketball exist (Hawkins, Carter-Francique, & Cooper, 2016).

According to Rankin, Merson, Sorgen, McHale, Loya and Oseguera (2011), student-

athletes who participate in Division I revenue-generating sports tend to have lower academic

success compared to athletes who participate in nonrevenue-generating sports. Revenue-

generating athletes have to dedicate more time towards their sport (Van Rheenan, 2012). Men's

football and basketball generate commercialization through public visibility, sponsors, and

university donors (Van Rheenen, 2012). This causes colleges/universities to put pressure on a

successful athletic season and leads to student-athletes having limited time to be fully committed

to other activities such as academics (Althouse, 2007). When athletes dedicate more time

towards their sports, they are losing time on their academics.

Research has shown that female student-athletes tend to have higher persistence rates

than males. Le Crom, Warren, Clark, Marolla, and Gerber (2009) found that female student-

athletes decisions to persist in school was largely due to their institutional commitment and

social satisfaction, while male student-athlete persistence was based on making grades to

maintain NCAA elgibility. Le Crom et al. (2009) explained that female student-athletes have a

better balance between their academic and athletic commitments. Female student-athletes have

limited opportunities to pursue their athletic careers beyond college, which helps focus on

academics (Le Crom et al., 2009). Additionally, females participate in non-revenue-generating

sports, which helps to eliminate the commercialization of revenue-generating sports (Simons, Van Rheenen, & Covington, 1999). Lastly, scholars suggest that females tend to have better high school GPA and test scores compared to males, which can lead to higher graduation rates (Simons et al., 1999). These trends can provide insight into why gender is a crucial factor to consider for student-athletes.

Student-Athletes of Color

This section explains how campus experiences are different among White student-athletes and student-athletes of color and the ways in which racial and gender identities are important factors in academic outcomes (Ortagus & Merson, 2015). It is important to look at race because students' experiences of marginalization and discrimination can affect persistence (Hurtado & Carter, 1997). According to Edwards (1982), the "dumb jock" stereotype is systematically created to limit Black student-athletes academic expectations but maintain their athletic eligibility a priority. The "dumb jock" perception is a belief that student-athletes are only admitted to university due to their athletic abilities (Killeya, 2001). Additionally, student-athletes of color must deal with the "dumb jock" and be viewed as "affirmative action beneficiaries," a stereotype which suggests that student-athletes of color are intellectually inferior to Whites and not deserving of a college admission (Comeaux, 2010; Solórzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000). For instance, Comeaux (2010) examined if faculty members had racialized perceptions existed for Black and White student-athletes. Comeaux (2010) used similar graduation pictures of Black and White student-athletes to understand if faculty had different feelings on student-athletes race. The results found that a majority of the faculty viewed the White student-athletes graduating as normal, and the same faculty had no mention of graduation being normal for Black students (Comeaux, 2010). Therefore, it is crucial to understand that

racial perceptions, particularly by faculty, can affect a student-athletes persistence in higher education.

Latina/o Student-Athletes

One reason why Latina/os are overlooked in the NCAA is their participation in non-revenue-generating sports. For example, Latino males predominantly participate in volleyball, water polo, and soccer (NCAA Data Blitz, 2016). Latinas predominately participate in water polo, rifle, softball, cross country, and fencing (NCAA Data Blitz, 2016). However, despite the participation in non-revenue-generating sports, we continue to know a minimal amount about their experiences.

Overall, research examining Latina/o student-athletes participation in the NCAA is limited. Most research on intercollegiate athletics has been based on Black male Division I athletes compared to their White counterparts (Oseguera et al., 2018). The focus on only Black and White student-athlete can lead Latina/os and other racial groups to being left out of studies in intercollegiate athletic (Adler & Adler, 1985). Therefore, this study enhances the literature on student-athletes by incorporating Latina/o student-athletes participation at four-year NCAA member institutions.

<p align="center">**Conceptual Framework**</p>

I used Terenzini and Reason's (2005) Comprehensive Model of Influences of Student Learning (Figure 1) to understand Latina/o student-athlete persistence. While the model was developed to promote the success and persistence of first-year students (Terenzini & Reason, 2005) , I used the model to understand Latina/o student-athletes' persistence. According to Reason (2005), the model is an extension of Astin (1985, 1993), Tinto (1975, 1993), and Pascarella (1985) models of student outcomes, and draws on the model for studying

organizational effects on student outcomes proposed by Berger and Milem, (2005). By
combining components of previous student outcomes models, Terenzini and Reason (2005)
provide a critical lens on understanding how an organizations course size, budget, and other
policies can affect a student's outcome.
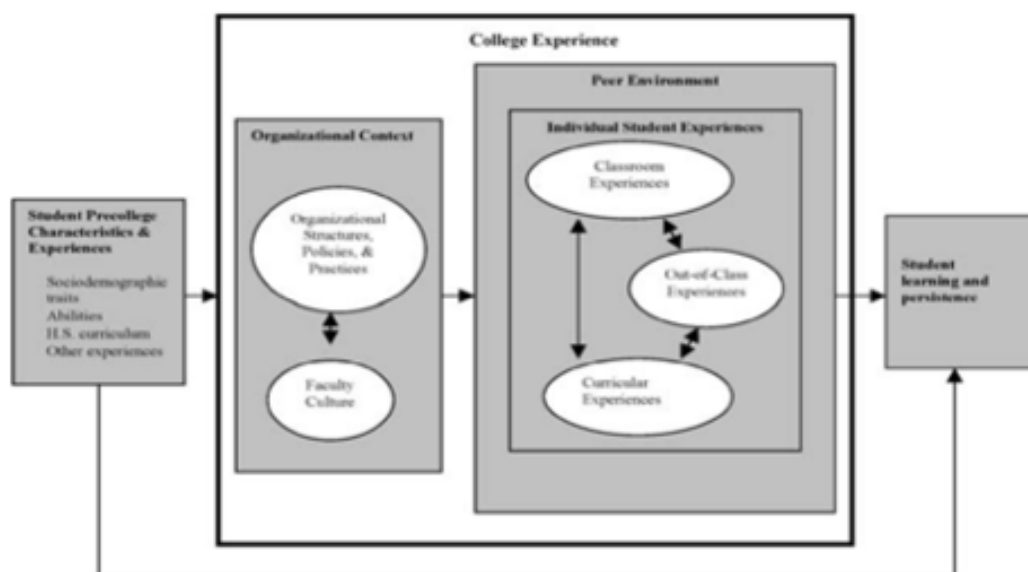
Figure 1: Terenzini and Reason's (2005) Comprehensive Model of Influences of Student Learning

Terenzini and Reason's (2005) model has four sets of constructs: student precollege
characteristics and experiences, organizational context, peer environment, and individual student
experiences. First, a student's precollege characteristics can include their background
characteristics (e.g., sex, race/ethnicity, parents' education, and family income), academic
preparation (e.g., high school GPA, SAT scores), and personal and social experiences (e.g.,
involvement in co-curricular activities and out-of-class activities) (Terenzini & Reason, 2005).
Second, the organizational context asserts what policies, practices, and culture support college
student success (Terenzini & Reason, 2005). Third, the peer environment includes the student's
values, beliefs, and expectations of the student body (Terenzini & Reason, 2005). Fourth,

student experiences are broken down into three principles: a student's general education coursework or major (curricular), a student's classroom experience (classroom), and a student's involvement in extracurricular activities (out-of-classroom) (Terenzini & Reason, 2005). I used Terenzini and Reason's (2005) model and the review of student-athletes literature to inform my analyses and findings.
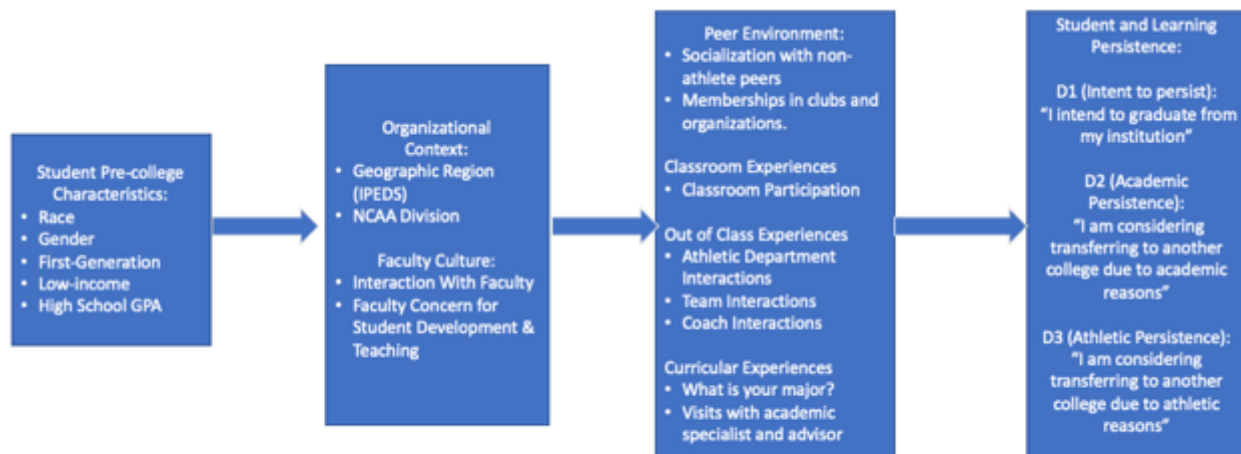
Figure 2: Terenzini and Reason's (2005) Comprehensive Model of Influences of Student Learning (Variables Included)

Data and Methods

Data

This quantitative study used the Student Athletes Climate Survey (SACS) to advance knowledge on persistence for Latina/o student-athletes compared to Black and White student-athletes. SACS data is a national study that assessed how intercollegiate athletics influenced student-athletes' experience (Rankin et al., 2011). SACS responses counted for over 8,000 student-athletes from 150 NCAA institutions (Rankin et al., 2011). The institutions included all NCAA Divisions and sports (Rankin et al., 2011). Additionally, student-athletes were asked to self-identify and mark multiple racial and gender identities (Rankin et al., 2011). Ratio estimation was used to develop weight adjustments on racial and gender variables (Oseguera et al., 2018). Table 1 presents my descriptive statistics for my categorical variables. My sample

included Latina/os, Black , and White student-athletes. Gender was dichotomous, and I used a

dummy variable to represent males "0" and females "1." My total sample included 8266

student-athletes who self-identified as:: White (n = 7446), Black (n = 642) and Latina/o (n =

389). NCAA Division I had the largest share of respondents (n = 4489) compared to Division II

(n = 1385) and Division III (n = 2393).

My total sample of student-athletes included 5187 who identified as females.   Only 737

of the student-athletes were first-generation, and 415 identified as low-income. The Mideast (n =

2007) had the largest student-athlete population. For organizations and clubs, Academic and

Honor Society (n = 1811) had the largest student-athlete population. Table 2 provides

descriptive statistics with the mean and standard deviation of the variables included in my

models.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics for Categorical Variables (N = 8266)

Variable	N	Percent of Sample
Intent to Graduate	7012	85
Intent to Transfer for Academic Reasons	833	10
Intent to Transfer for Athletic Reasons	1023	12
Latina/o	389	5
Black	642	8
White	7446	90
Female	5187	63
Division I	4489	54
Division II	1385	17
Division III	2393	29
First Generation	737	9
Low-Income	415	5
Southwest	1391	17
Plains	758	9
Greatlakes	1650	20
New England	1183	14
Mideast	2007	24
Southeast	1278	16
HMNSS	1486	18
Education	851	10
Business	1549	19
STEM	1554	19
Other	2192	26
Undeclared	635	8
Academic and Honor Society	1811	22
Arts and Entertainment	186	2
Fraternity/Sorority	346	4
Intramural/Club Sports	1786	22
Issue/Politics Club	215	3
Cultural Groups	231	3
Performance or Fine Arts	364	4
Publication or Media Groups	186	2
Recreation/Hobby Groups	461	6
Religious/Spiritual Group	1087	13
Student Government	178	2

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics of Latina/o, Black, and White Student-Athletes in SACS Data (N = 8266)

Variables	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Faculty Student Interaction (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)	4.13	0.72	1.00	5.00
Faculty Concern for Student Development and Teaching (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)	3.86	0.80	1.00	5.00
High School GPA (1 = D or below, 9 = A)	7.69	1.30	1.00	9.00
Primarily Socialize with Other Student-Athletes (1 = Strongly Disagree, 4 = Strongly Agree)	3.30	0.73	1.00	4.00
Participate in Class (1 = Never, 5 = Very Often)	4.02	0.89	1.00	5.00
Visit with Academic Advisor Interactions (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)	4.06	0.87	1.00	5.00
Visit Athletic Advisor Interactions (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)	4.04	0.88	1.00	5.00
Athletic Department Interactions (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)	3.97	0.89	1.00	5.00
Head Coach Interactions (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)	4.14	1.01	1.00	5.00
Team Interactions (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)	4.33	0.84	1.00	5.00

Variables

To answer my first research question I used "I intend to graduate" as my dependent variable. My second research question used "I have considered transferring to another college or university due to academic reasons" as the dependent variable. Finally, "I have considered transferring to another college or university due to athletic reasons" was used for my third research question.

For research questions one and two, faculty culture was a key independent variable and was measured by two continuous variables: faculty-student interaction *(Faculty Student Interaction)* and faculty concern for student development and teaching (*Faculty Concern for Student Development and Teaching*). Faculty-student interaction measures the quantity and

quality with faculty members (Rankin et al., 2011). Faculty concern for student development and teaching refers to the perception that faculty members care about students (Rankin et al., 2011). Organizational context was used as key independent variables for research question three and I included NCAA Divisions (*Division I, Division II, Division III))* as a key independent variable for organizational context. Additionally, I used the geographic locations of the respondents' institutions for organizational context (Rankin et al., 2011). The geographic regions included: *Southwest*, *Plains*, *Greatlakes*, *New England*, *Mideast*, and *Southeast*.

Terenzini and Reason (2005), stated that the peer environment accounts for any efforts or influences from the campus student body. Therefore, I measured peer environment through the following independent variables: socialization primarily with student-athletes and membership in clubs and organizations. Socialization with student-athletes is measured in a Likert scale: 1 (*Strongly Disagree*). 2 (*Disagree*), 3 (*Agree*), and 4 (*Strongly Agree*). Memberships in clubs and organizations being involved in other organizations is measured in a binary scale with "1=Yes" and "0=No." If the athlete was in a club or organization, the choices included: *Fraternity/Sorority, Intramural/Club Sports, Issues/Politics Club, Cultural Groups, Performance or Fine Arts, Publications or Media Groups, Recreation/Hobby Groups, Religious/Spiritual Groups, and Student Government*. These two measurements can help explain if Latina/o student-athletes align with the literature explaining how student-athletes tend to be isolated from the campus community.

According to Terenzini and Reason's (2005), there are multiple criteria's to measure a student's experience. Thus, the classroom experience analyzes how student-athletes participate in class, measured by a likert scale from 1 (*Never*), 2 (*Rarely*), 3 (*Sometimes*), 4 (*Often*), and 5 (*Very Often*). Next, out of class experiences included academic and athletic department

interactions. Tinto (1975) theorized that participating in extracurricular activities such as athletics can help students persist. The NCAA has taken steps to improve the retention of student-athletes by making sure student-athletes have positive academic and social experiences with their athletic department (Melendes, 2006). I measured student-athletes' experiences with their athletic advisor, athletic department , head coach, and their teammates. Curricular experiences looked at student-athletes' majors, which were categorized by Humanities (*HMNSS*), Education, Business, Science Technology Engineering and Technology (*STEM*), Other, and Undeclared. Lastly, the student-athletes' relationship with their academic advisor was measured by a Likert scale: 1 (*Strongly disagree*), 2 (*Disagree*, 3 (*Neither agree nor disagree*), 4 (*Agree*), and 5 (*Strongly agree*). Student-athletes commonly have similar majors due to actual interest, coach's or academic advisor's advice, limited class availability, and an inflexible athletic schedule (Foster & Huml, 2017). My control variables include: first-generation (*FG*), low-income (LI), and high school GPA. Students enter college with their own unique background and characteristics which can help understand persistence for different groups of students (Astin, 1993).

Methods

I estimated logistic regressions using IBM-SPSS version 24. Logistic regressions was used to estimate how various factors can relate to the odds of an occurrence of an outcome (Kin, 2004). I estimated three different logistic regression models to analyze each of the three dependent variables. After estimating three logistic regression models to examine the data for Latina/o student-athletes, then I estimated similar sets of models for White and Black student-athletes, respectively.

Logistic regression was utilized to examine the relationships among my independent variables and the three measures of persistence (Synco, 2013). I reported parameter estimates from the logistic regression models as odds ratios, rather than coefficients, to interpret the relationship between independent and dependent variables. I used *Y* as my dependent variable (*intent to graduate, consider transferring for athletic reasons, and consider transferring for academic reasons*), π serves as the probability of *Y,* β was the regression coefficients for each independent variables and $\in$ the standard error term.

Research Question 1: To address my first research question, I used intent to graduate as a proxy for persistence. I used precollege characteristics: first-generation, low-income, and high school GPA. For organizational context, I included the NCAA division, major, classroom experiences, socialization with athletes and non-athlete peers, academic advisor relationship, and athletic department experiences.

$$p(intent\ to\ graduate) = log\frac{\pi_i}{1 - \pi_i}$$

$$= \beta_0 + \beta_1 Gender + \beta_2 Race_2 + \beta3 Precollege + \beta4 OrgContext + \in$$

Research Question 2: Persistence was also measured in respect to the faculty. Specifically, I evaluated whether faculty culture influences Latina/o student-athletes' consideration to transfer to another college or university. Faculty culture was measured through faculty-student interaction and faculty concern for student development and teaching. I also included precollege characteristics (first-generation, low-income, and high school GPA) and organizational context (classroom experiences, socialization with athletes and non-athlete peers, academic advisor relationship, and athletic department experiences).

$$p(Consider\ Tranferring\ for\ Academic\ Reason) = log\frac{\pi_i}{1 - \pi_i}$$

$$= \beta_0 + \beta_0 + \beta_1 Gender + \beta_2 Race_2 + \beta3 Precollege + \beta4 OrgContext + \in$$

Research Question 3: My third research question tests whether a Latina/o student-athlete's enrollment in a specific NCAA division (e.g., I, II, III) is statistically significant in the student-athlete's decision to transfer (or consider transferring) from one college or university to another.. The model examined precollege characteristics (first-generation, low-income, and high school GPA) and organizational context (classroom experiences, socialization with athletes and non-athlete peers, academic advisor relationship, and athletic department experiences). Additionally, I used NCAA division as my control variable.

$$p(Consider\ Tranferring\ for\ Athletic\ Reason) = log\frac{\pi_i}{1 - \pi_i}$$

$$= \beta_0 + \beta_1 Gender + \beta_2 Race_2 + \beta3 NCAADivision + \beta4 Precollege + \beta5 OrgContext + \in$$

Limitations

While this study expands knowledge on Latina/o student-athletes and challenges the racial/binary approach, it does have limitations. First, Latinx is a term used to move beyond the masculine-centric "Latino" term (Salinas & Lozano, 2017; Sharron-Del Rio & Aja, 2015). I use the term Latina/o to differentiate males and females in their sport participation. Second, my study looks at Latina/os along with the two largest demographics in the NCAA, Black and White student-athletes, it leaves out other racial/ethnic groups that need to be studied. It is important to look at other racial/ethnic groups to create success among all college student-athletes (Harrison, Oseguera, Boyd, & Morita, 2017). Lastly, I want to acknowledge that I used secondary data and the variables did not measure if student-athletes actually transferred out, dropped out, or graduated.

Findings

The logistic regression analysis is organized by the three dependent variables: intent to graduate, transfer due to academic reasons, and transfer due to athletic reasons. My first research question sought to understand if faculty culture is related to intent to graduate for Latina/o student-athletes, and whether interactions with faculty and faculty concern for student development and teaching are significant. The study found (Table 3) that White male student-athletes' odds of intending to graduate were approximately 1.3 times greater than those of Latina/o student athletes ($p < 0.001$) and nearly 1.2 times greater than Black student-athletes ($p < 0.001$). Moreover, for each unit increase in student-athletes' frequency of interactions with faculty, students had a 50% increase in odds of intending to graduate ($p < 0.05$). Faculty concern for student development and teaching had similar results with of 24% higher odds of intending to graduate relative to student-athlete who did not perceive their faculty caring about students ($p < 0.05$). Student-athletes who identified as female had odds that were 1.6 times greater of intending to graduate than male student-athletes ($p < 0.05$). Lastly, student-athletes who interact with their head coach had about a 19% increase in odds of intending to graduate ($p < 0.05$) and a 33% increase in odds of intending to graduate if they interact with their team ($p < 0.05$).

Table 3 Summary of Logistic Regression Model for Intent to Graduate

	OR*		IOR
Latina/o	0.78	***	1.28
Black	0.86	***	1.17
First-Generation	0.96	***	1.04
Low-Income	0.77	***	1.30
Female	1.64	*	
Southwest	2.39	***	
Plains	0.97	***	1.04
Great Lakes	1.14	***	
New England	1.27	*	
Southeast	0.67	*	1.49
Division II	0.64	*	1.56
Division III	0.61	*	1.63
Faculty Student Interactions	1.50	*	
Faculty Concern for Student Development and Teaching	1.24	*	
Primarily Socialize with Other Student-Athletes	0.96	***	1.05
Academic & Honor Societies	1.66	*	
Intramural Sports/Club Sports	1.27	*	
Religious/Spiritual Club	1.24	***	
Participate in Class	1.00	***	
STEM	1.17	***	
HMNSS	1.12	***	
Business	1.20	***	
Education	0.97	***	1.03
Undeclared	0.57	*	1.75
Academic Advisor Interactions	0.99	***	1.01
Athletic Advisor Interactions	0.97	***	1.03
Athletic Department Interactions	2.27	***	
Head Coach Interactions	1.19	*	
Team Interactions	1.33	*	

Note: I included Inverse Odds Ratio for any OR <1
*Note: p ≤ 0.05 * p ≤ 0.01 ** p ≤ 0.001****

The second logistic regression model analyzed if faculty culture is associated with the consideration of transferring to another college or university for Latina/o student-athletes for academic reasons after controlling for race and gender. Table 4 found that compared to White male student-athletes, Latina/o student-athletes had a 14% higher odds of considering to transfer to another college or university due to academic reasons ($p < 0.001$), while Black student-athletes had a 48% increase in odds compared to White Male student-athletes ($p < 0.05$). The more student-athletes interacted with their faculty, their odds of reporting intent to transfer for academic reason decreased by 1.3 ($p < 0.05$). Furthermore, student-athletes who participated in their class had 27% lower odds of transferring due to academic reasons ($p < 0.05$). Gender highlighted how female student-athletes had lower odds of transferring due to academic reasons compared to male student-athletes by 1.9 ($p < 0.05$). It is important to note, that student-athletes who were undeclared with their major had about a 74% higher odds of transferring for academic reasons ($p < 0.05$). Increased student-athletes interaction with their head coaches associated with lower odds of ($p < 0.05$).

Table 4 Summary of Logistic Regression Model for Intent to Transfer for Academic Reasons

	OR*		IOR	SE
Latina/o	1.14	***		0.17
Black	1.48	*		0.13
First-Generation	1.07	***		0.13
Low-Income	0.72	*	1.38	0.16
Female	0.51	*	1.97	0.08
Southwest	0.87	***	1.15	0.14
Plains	0.87	***	1.15	0.17
Great Lakes	0.94	***	1.06	0.12
New England	2.64	***		0.12
Southeast	1.42	*		0.13
Division II	1.54	*		0.11
Division III	1.54	*		0.10
Faculty Student Interactions	0.80	*	1.25	0.07
Faculty Concern for Student Development and Teaching	1.12	***		0.06
Primarily Socialize with Other Student-Athletes	1.17	*		0.06
Academic & Honor Societies	0.52	*	1.94	0.12
Intramural Sports/Club Sports	0.88	***	1.14	0.10
Religious/Spiritual Club	0.72	*	1.39	0.14
Participate in Class	1.27	*		0.05
STEM	0.88	***	1.13	0.13
HMNSS	0.80	***	1.24	0.13
Business	1.17	***		0.11
Education	1.14	***		0.14
Undeclared	1.74	*		0.14
Academic Advisor Interactions	0.91	***	1.10	0.61
Athletic Advisor Interactions	1.06	***		1.05
Athletic Department Interactions	1.05	***		0.06
Head Coach Interactions	0.23	*	4.39	0.04
Team Interactions	0.94	***	1.06	0.05

Note: I included Inverse Odds Ratio for any OR <1

*Note: p ≤ 0.05 * p ≤ 0.01 ** p ≤ 0.001***

Lastly, this study examined if NCAA division is associated with the consideration of transferring to another college of university due to athletic reasons after controlling for race and gender (Table 5). In comparison to White male student-athletes, Latina/o student-athletes had about a 33% higher odds of intending to transfer due to athletic reasons ($p < 0.001$); Black student-athletes had approximately 46% higher odds of transferring ($p < 0.05$). Gender was significant with females student-athletes having lower odds of transferring due to athletic reasons compared to male student-athletes by 1.9 ($p < 0.05$). Additionally, compared to Division I student-athletes, Division II had higher odds with almost 43% ($p < 0.05$), while Division III was approximately 14% ($p < 0.0001$).

The Southeast geographic region was also significant with almost 42% of student-athletes considering transferring due to athletic reasons ($p < 0.05$). Of the five majors included in the model, three were significant predictors for intent to transfer for athletic reasons. Compared to other majors, student-athletes who were STEM and HMNSS were both at 63% ($p < 0.05$) and if they were undeclared they had a 33% ($p < 0.05$) higher odds of intending to transfer due to athletic reasons. Finally, student-athletes who interacted with their head coach had lower odds of transferring due to athletic reasons by approximately 64% ($p < 0.05$) and almost 84% if they interacted with their teams ($p < 0.05$).

Table 5 Summary of Logistic Regression Model for Intent to Transfer for Athletic Reasons

	OR*		IOR	SE
Latina/o	1.33	***		0.15
Black	1.46	*		0.12
First-Generation	0.99	***	1.01	0.12
Low-Income	1.23	***		0.15
Female	0.53	*	1.88	0.08
Southwest	0.93	***	1.07	0.12
Plains	0.92	***	1.09	0.15
Great Lakes	0.88	***	1.13	0.11
New England	1.00	***		0.12
Southeast	1.41	*		0.12
Division II	1.43	*		0.10
Division III	1.14	***		0.10
Faculty Student Interactions	0.85	*	1.17	0.06
Faculty Concern for Student Development and Teaching	1.11	***		0.06
Primarily Socialize with Other Student-Athletes	1.22	*		0.05
Academic & Honor Societies	0.62	*	1.62	0.10
Intramural Sports/Club Sports	0.85	***	1.18	0.09
Religious/Spiritual Club	0.87	***	1.14	0.12
Participate in Class	1.19	*		0.04
STEM	0.63	*	1.59	0.12
HMNSS	0.63	*	1.60	0.12
Business	0.97	***	1.03	0.10
Education	1.14	***		0.13
Undeclared	1.33	*		0.13
Academic Advisor Interactions	0.97	***	1.03	0.05
Athletic Advisor Interactions	1.11	***		0.06
Athletic Department Interactions	0.99	***	1.02	0.05
Head Coach Interactions	0.64	*	1.55	0.03
Team Interactions	0.84	*	1.19	0.04

Note: I included Inverse Odds Ratio for any OR <1
*Note: p ≤ 0.05 * p ≤ 0.01 ** p ≤ 0.001***

Discussion

In this paper, I sought to understand intent to persist or consideration of transferring among Latina/o student-athletes after controlling for race and gender. This study contributes to the literature by providing insights on how student-athletes racial and gender identities influence their academic and athletic experiences. The results from the logistic regression models show that compared to White Male student-athletes, Latina/o student-athletes are 1.3 times less likely to have an intention to graduate, a 14% higher odds of considering transferring due to academic reasons, and 33% higher odds of considering transferring due to athletic reasons. Thus, identifying as Latina/o is statistically significant for student-athletes.

Furthermore, gender was statistically significant across all the logistic regression models. Compared to male student-athletes, female student-athletes' odds of intending to graduate were approximately 1.6 times greater, and were 1.9 times less likely to transfer due to academic and athletic reasons. Consistent with prior research, female student-athletes have different college experiences than males and tend to have greater academic outcomes (Settles, Sellers, & Damas, 2002). In addition, male student-athletes tend report earning lower grades than their non-athlete peers, while female student-athletes are more likely to have similar grades to non-athlete female students (Ortagus et al., 2005; Umbach, Palmer, Kuh, & Hannah, 2006). Therefore, gender identities play a critical role when examining student-athletes' persistence.

My findings indicate that faculty-student interactions are significant and play an essential role in student-athletes' intent to persist or consideration of transferring for academic and athletic reasons. Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) suggested that despite of racial and gender identities, an increase in engagement and interactions with faculty members can have benefits to student-athletes in similar ways to the general student population. Faculty members can serve as mentors

or role models and help students academic success (Wei, Ku, & Liao, 2011). For student-athletes, faculty-student interaction can shape the way they are socialized in a university and can influence a students' academic outcome and persistence (Rankin, Merson, Garvey, Sorgen, Menon, Loya, & Oseguera, 2016; Lamport, 1993; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980, 2005; Tinto, 1993).

Given the context of student-athletes academic demands, their interactions with coaches and teammates was associated with their persistence. Literature has explained how student-athletes regularly interact with their teammates and coaches, rather than non-athlete students, administrators, faculty, and staff (Gabert , Hale, & Montalvo 1999). Athletic coaches often shape student-athletes' academic and athletic college experiences and have a significant influence on their college outcome (Rezania & Gurney, 2014). The role of a coach is to create a positive environment for their student-athletes to succeed academically and athletically (Bell, 2009). Moreover, there has been criticism of student-athletes creating a sperate subculture on campus and not engaging with their non-athletic peers (Shulman & Bowen. 2001). My findings show that student-athletes had greater odds of interacting with their teammates and coaches than any other academic and athletic personnel. These interactions can be attributed to the time teams spend practicing, studying, and traveling with each other (Shulman & Bowen. 2001). Therefore, it is important to highlight the influence that coaches and teammates have on student-athletes' persistence.

Implications

The findings in this study provide implications of practice for the NCAA and colleges and universities. First, mentoring by faculty or staff members can help Latina/o students have a more successful academic experience and expose them to long term-term educational goals and career

aspirations (Sàenz, Ponjuan, Segovia, Del Real, & Viramontes, 2015). Specifically, for Latina/o student-athletes, a mentoring program can help them engage with the campus community. Gaston, Gayles and Hu (2009) stated that student-athletes miss out on learning and mentoring experiences due to activities athletic activities off the field. Therefore, there must be a collaboration with academic and athletic stakeholders to help encourage mentoring for Latina/o student-athletes.

Next, coaches ought to help Latina/o student-athletes pursue academic career opportunities. Many student-athletes view coaches as role models or mentors to guide them through their athletic careers (Heller, Gilson, & Paula-Koba, 2016). Therefore, coaches should be supportive and guide student-athletes in their academic careers. For example, coaches can encourage student-athletes of color to seek opportunities for research with faculty members, internships related to one's field of study, and job opportunities (Harper, 2016). Additionally, coaches must increase awareness of their leadership and shift their athletes focus from athletics to academics (Jayakumar & Comeaux, 2016), thus making efforts to positively influence their student-athletes athletic and academic career.

Future Research

Future research should examine how Latina/o student-athletes get recruited from high school to their college/university. Specifically, looking to understand what role the coach plays in Latina/o student-athletes in shaping their decision. My study offered insight on the coach's influence throughout the student-athletes' college experience, but research should go beyond the scope of this study and examine the coach's influence in the recruitment process. Additionally, research should examine how financial aid can influence Latina/o student-athletes' intent to persist. According to Crisp, Taggart, and Nora (2014) any source of financial aid can influence

Latina/o persistence in college. Approximately 40% of all undergraduate Latina/os come from families that make less than $40,000 a year (Santiago & Sttetner, 2013).   St. John, Hu and Fisher (2011) found that financial aid is an opportunity for Latina/os to go to college and were more likely to persist than their nonfinancial aid counterparts. Therefore, it is important to consider if financial can help Latina/o student-athletes' persist in college.

Conclusion

While Latina/o student-athletes are becoming a growing demographic in the NCAA, little attention has focused on their experiences in intercollegiate athletics. This study provides significant findings to help athletic and academic stakeholders increase postsecondary degree attainment for Latina/o and Black student-athletes. Student-athletes arrive at higher education institutions with dual responsibilities academically and athletically. Therefore, it is important to understand how the faculty, students, and athletic personnel's shape their college experience.

As higher education and intercollegiate athletics become more diverse, it is important to provide a critical analysis of how different demographics can be academically successful. The findings from my study can be useful to the NCAA and colleges/universities who can help create on-going assessment for student-athletes. This paper addressed various racial and gender differences that can help underrepresented student-athletes' persist through college. It is important to understand these experiences to develop practices to support different demographics and increase the awareness of Latina/o student-athletes to close the degree attainment gap.

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Appendix

Table of Variables

Variable	Description	Measure
Intend to Graduate	I intend to graduate from my institution.	1 = Strongly disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neither agree nor disagree 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly agree
Transfer for Academic	I am considering transferring to another college or university due to academic reasons.	1 = Strongly disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neither agree nor disagree 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly agree
Transfer for Athletics	I am considering transferring to another college or university due to athletic reasons.	1 = Strongly disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neither agree nor disagree 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly agree
NCAA Division	NCAA Division	1 = Division I 2 = Division II 3 = Division III
Gender	What is your gender identity?	0=Male 1=Female
Race	What is your race?	0=Not Selected 1=Selected
High School GPA	What was your overall high school grade point average?	1 = No grades given at my school 2 = D or below (< 1.50) 3 = C- (1.50-1.83) 4 = C (1.84-2.16) 5 = C+ (2.17-2.49) 6 = B- (2.50-2.83) 7 = B (2.84-3.16) 8 = B+ (3.17-3.49) 9 = A- (3.50-3.83) 10 = A (3.84-4.00)
First-Generation	First-generation	0 = Not FG 1 = FG
Low-Income	Low-Income	0 = Not LI 1 = LI
Living Situation	Where do you live?	0 = Off-campus 1 = On-campus

Major	What is your major area of study?	1 = I have not yet declared a major area of study. 2 = Agricultural Sciences (Food Science, Horticulture, etc.) 3 = Biological Sciences (Zoology, Physiology, etc.) 4 = Business (Accounting, Marketing, Personnel, etc.) 5 = Communications (Journalism, Public Relations, etc.) 6 = Education (Elementary, Special, etc.) 7 = Engineering, Computer/Information Sciences (Electrical Engineering, Bioinformatics, etc.) 8 = Exercise, Sports, Kinesiology (Athletic Training, Biomechanics, etc.) 9 = Humanities and Fine Arts (Music, Religion, English, etc.) 10 = Physical Sciences and Mathematics (Chemistry, Physics, etc.) 11 = Professional Health Studies (Nursing, Occupational Therapy, etc.) 12 = Social Sciences (Psychology, History, Economics, etc.) 13 = Sport Business (Sports Administration, Sports Marketing, Sports Communications, etc.)
Region	Geographic Region IPEDS	1 = Southwest 2 = Far West 3 = Rocky Mountains 4 = Plains 5 = Great Lakes
Participate in Class?	Actively participate in class? [How often do you]	1 = Never 2 = Rarely 3 = Sometimes

		4 = Often 5 = Very often
Socialization with Athletes	I primarily socialize with other student-athletes.	1 = Strongly disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly Agree
Membership in Clubs and Organizations	In addition to varsity athletics, which student organizations/clubs are you involved in?	0 = Not Selected 1 = Selected
Interactions with Faculty	Meet with a faculty member who is not associated with athletics? [How often do you]	1 = Never 2 = Rarely 3 = Sometimes 4 = Often 5 = Very often
Visits with Academic Advisor	Overall, I feel that my relationship with the following people has been positive: My academic department academic advisor	1 = Strongly disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neither agree nor disagree 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly agree
Athletic Department Interactions	Overall, I feel that my relationship with the following people has been positive: athletic administrators, athletic advisor, and head coaches.	1 = Strongly disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neither agree nor disagree 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly agree
Team Interactions	Respect on Team	1 = Strongly disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neither agree nor disagree 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly agree

Chapter V

Conclusion

Latina/os are increasing represented in the U.S. population, higher education, and the NCAA; thus, policymakers and practitioners must continue to examine their unique experiences and serve this emerging group. It is important to understand the experiences of Latina/o student-athletes to create successful pathways for post-secondary degree attainment. The purpose of this three manuscript dissertation is to add to the limited research Latina/o student-athletes. Each of my manuscripts can provide suggestions for Latina/o student-athletes success to athletic and academic stakeholders.

The series of my studies provided qualitative and quantitative studies to better understand the educational outcomes for Latina/o student-athletes. My first study found that Latina/o student-athletes experience racial stereotypes, but are motivated to get a college degree and make a difference for their family. The results in my second paper suggested that high school GPA and participation in class was significant for Latina/o student-athletes' GPA. It is important to note that identifying as a Latina student-athlete was not significant in the model. Paper 3 found that White student-athletes had higher odds of intending to graduate than Black and Latina/o student-athletes. In addition, Black and Latina/o student-athletes were more likely to transfer for academic and athletic reasons compared to White student-athletes. The results in each manuscript can help practitioners, policymakers, and scholars increase Latina/o student-athletes post-secondary degree attainment. The following sections include recommendations, conclusion, and future research based on the three studies.

Recommendations

With the growing population of Latina/o students participating in the NCAA, higher education institutions must provide related academic support programs. For example, the NCAA needs to provide a public available database where student-athletes data is disaggregated by race, sex, sport, and division (Harper, Williams, & Blackman, 2013). My study provides evidence to suggest that student-athletes from different racial and gender groups have different college experiences. By disaggregating data, the NCAA and higher education institutions can develop policies and programs that can help student-athletes from different demographics (Harper et al., 2013). Second, institutions need to provide cultural support centers for student-athletes of color. Cultural support centers can help increase persistence by serving as a "home away from home" for students of color where they can engage with the campus community (Patton, 2006). Additionally, academic and athletic personnel's can use cultural centers to help students grow and develop positive interactions with their peers and institution (Sutton & McCluskey-Titus, 2010). While intercollegiate athletics is an important part of American higher education, student-athletes of color need to have a supportive environment to persist in college (Oseguera et al., 2018; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

Lastly, parents should inspire Latina/o students to participate in sports at an early age. Specifically, Latina/o parents should take advantage of any opportunities to enroll their children in sports-related activities. For example, school-organized extracurricular activities can positively influence Latino youths' academic success (Chen & Harklau, 2017). In addition, sports can help build leadership skills, develop friendships, and open educational opportunities in college (Darvin, Cintron, & Hancoc, 2017). Thus, Latina/o parents should ensure that their children are participating in sports and working towards positive educational outcomes.

Future Research

The findings in my study can contribute to research on Latina/os and student-athletes, but there are still gaps to be filled. In the future, I plan to examine Latina/o student-athletes high school to college transition to analyze what obstacles they encountered to attend their college/university. Specifically, I will focus on how Latina/o students were recruited for their sport and what influenced their school decision. Furthermore, I plan to research the experiences and perspectives of Latina/o coaches and athletic administrators to inform successful practices for Latina/os who want to pursue athletic leadership roles. Leon & Nevarez (2007) explained how Latina/o administrators can help understand Latina/o students' needs and retain them in college due to their shared background. While research has examined Latina/o academic administrators experiences, it has yet to examine athletic Latina/o leaders.

Finally, there needs to more qualitative studies need to explore the college experiences of Latina/o student-athletes. Qualitative research can provide an individual's perception and experience (Merriam, 2009). Additionally, qualitative research focuses on individuals' personal experiences through meaningful conversations (Lincoln & Guba, 1994). Student-athletes from different racial identities, genders, and sports have different needs throughout their college experience (Rankin, Merson, Garvey, Sorgen, Menon, Loya, & Oseguera, 2016). Thus, it is important to incorporate qualitative approaches to get an in-depth understanding of how to support Latina/o student-athletes.

Conclusion

The goal of my studies was to provide insight into the experiences of Latina/o students participating in intercollegiate athletics. My findings reinforce the importance of understanding Latina/os outcomes while being a student-athlete. By understanding Latina/o student-athletes'

athletic and academic experiences, research can improve outcomes not just for Latina/os but also for all students of color.

Understanding the relationship between racial and athletic identities for Latina/o student-athletes can help identifying factors for academic success. Student-athletes tend to have a different college experience than the rest of their non-athletes peers. However, student-athletes must obtain a college degree while playing their sport. Thus, the NCAA and academic stakeholders must work together to ensure that student-athletes are successful athletically and academically.

As a Latino whose educational experiences was largely shaped by athletics, I am truly honored and privileged to conduct this research on behalf of my community. I believe that athletics and academics can change people's lives, and it is my hope to make that a reality for others.

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