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AN EXPLORATION OF INTERACTIONS BETWEEN INSTITUTIONAL AGENTS AND COLLEGE STUDENTS WHO ARE UNDOCUMENTED IN THE U.S.

by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the awareness, knowledge, and skills of institutional agents who interact with college students who are undocumented, to inform professional development and practice. Through a survey and interviews, participants revealed familiarity with students who are undocumented and discussed the support provided to them. All interview participants understood the experience of assisting students who are undocumented, as evidenced by six major themes: (a) an understanding of student financial needs, (b) recognizing students' anxiety, (c) providing consistent guidance, (d) establishing supportive collaborations, (e) gaining foundational knowledge, and (f) sharing professional development with others. Participants described the overwhelming financial needs of students who are undocumented as a barrier to their educational persistence. Participants also faced policy and legal limitations and lack of funding, which prevented them from assisting all students. The collaborative nature of higher education meant participants often had to rely on other professionals at their institutions to navigate policies and procedures. Participants expressed an essential responsibility to share information and engage in dialogue with other faculty and staff due to misinformation surrounding this population. The study concludes with suggestions for practice and further research.

This dissertation is dedicated to my dear friend

Danielle N. Smith.

I hope you are celebrating in heaven!

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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LIST OF ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS

CRT   Critical Race Theory

DACA   Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals

DREAM ACT   Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act

ISRT   In-State Resident Tuition Rate

LatCrit   Latina/o Critical Race Theory

USRC   Undocumented Student Resource Center

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

<u>Introduction</u>

One of the factors that influence college students' success is their interactions with faculty and student affairs professionals. Whether inside or outside the classroom, the development, persistence, and success of students, especially underserved populations, are affected by student-faculty interactions (Nuñez, 2009). Equally important is the student interaction with student affairs professionals, which also shapes their experience (Sheldon, Garton, Orr, & Smith, 2015). Numerous researchers, such as Astin (1993), Pascarella and Terenzini (2005), Tinto (2006), and Kuh (2009), and have explored both formal and informal interactions between faculty, staff, and students. In response, institutions have established professional development for faculty and staff that serves to enhance interactions that support students and set them up for success. For example, faculty may attend "orientations and one-time workshops" at campus teaching and learning centers (Plank & Mares, 2013, p. 1). Additionally, student affairs professionals may participate in conferences, webinars, and courses on meeting student needs. LGBT Ally training sessions provide faculty and staff awareness, education on LGBT students' experiences, and advocacy resources (Poynter & Tubbs, 2008; Woodford, Kolb, Durocher-Radena, & Javier, 2014). However, education for faculty and staff on the awareness, needs, and challenges of students who are undocumented in the U.S. is scarce (Perez, Cortés, Ramos, & Coronado, 2010; Stebleton & Aleixo, 2015).

The interactions that institutional agents, that is, faculty and staff, have with students is critical to their retention in college (Tinto, 2006). Tinto (2006) writes that student retention rates are also commonly used in state- or institution-sponsored accountability programs. Therefore, it

is important for students' experiences and graduation rates that institutions adopt measures to ensure faculty and staff are addressing all student needs. For example, undocumented college students in the U.S. face several unique economic, legal, and social obstacles (Perez et al., 2010; Teranishi, Suárez-Orozco, & Suárez-Orozco, 2015). Terriquez (2014) reported that community college students who are undocumented in California often have interrupted or incomplete academic journeys as they "display five times higher odds for" withdrawing from school (p. 1311). Therefore, it is imperative that faculty and staff understand the issues faced by students who are undocumented and are able to provide support and resources. The benefit of supporting students who are undocumented extends beyond higher education institutions to the country, as talented individuals will graduate as highly skilled workers or entrepreneurs who contribute to the economy (Pérez, 2014).

Undocumented immigrants are defined as foreign-born individuals who have not been granted legal permission by the U.S. government to reside in the country (Passel & Cohn, 2009). Many undocumented individuals arrived in the country as minors and were raised by their parents primarily in the U.S., where they graduated from high school (Seif, 2016). However, without a legal status, they are not eligible for federal financial aid, which helps with the cost of college or university tuition (Perez et al., 2010). Since the late 1990s, many undocumented youth have organized and advocated for themselves and their peers through legislative hearing presentations, social media and web series, and community and student organization involvement (Seif, 2016). These acts have raised their profile, and the passage of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program motivated and encouraged many undocumented high school graduates to register for the program and pursue higher education.

Enacted in 2012, DACA was an executive order which provided temporary protected status to individuals who met several prerequisites (Consideration of deferred action for childhood arrivals, 2018). DACA applicants must have arrived in the U.S. without a visa prior to their 16th birthday and graduated from a U.S. high school (Consideration of deferred action for childhood arrivals, 2018). While it is not a path to U.S. citizenship, DACA benefits include work authorization, the ability to obtain a driver's license, and the chance to attain an occupational license in certain states (Capps, Fix, & Zong, 2017; NILC, 2015). Research indicates that DACA's benefits allowed individuals to obtain better jobs and ultimately enroll in college (Capps et al., 2017). In fact, there were between 230,000 and 241,000 individuals with DACA status enrolled in college between 2014 and 2017 (Capps et al., 2017; Zong, Soto, Batalova, Gelatt, & Capps, 2017).

Both DACA recipients and undocumented individuals comprise "more than 450,000 or approximately 2 percent of all students in higher education in the U.S." (Feldblum, Hubbard, Lim, Penichet-Paul, & Siegel, 2020). The top five states for DACA and undocumented student college enrollment are California, Texas, Florida, New York, and Illinois (Feldblum et al, 2020). While DACA and undocumented students are a small percentage of students, faculty and higher education staff share an integral role in extending guidance and information to all enrolled in colleges and universities (Contreras, 2009; Nienhusser, 2014; Stebleton & Aleixo, 2015; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2015). The obligation of staff to serve, guide, and meet the academic and social needs of students extends to those who are undocumented, since their needs may not always be taken into account by academic services or institutional initiatives (Gildersleeve, Rumann, & Mondragon, 2010).

The education and support of faculty and staff who work with this population have become evident through professional development programs and institutional resource centers. For example, a college in Arizona hosts the Undocumented Student Ally Program, a professional development session for faculty and staff (Cisneros & Cadenas, 2017). Also, UCLA houses the Undocumented Student Program within their Resource Center, which provides support to students who are undocumented (Mission, n.d). Lastly, professional organizations such as the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) use webinars and conferences to educate higher education professionals regarding this population of students (Nienhusser & Espino, 2017).

In this research the term *undocumented* refers to students who are DACA recipients or similarly situated students, which are individuals without a legal status in this country (Stebleton & Aleixo, 2015). The terms are used interchangeably, despite the distinctions, as members of both groups are enrolled in higher education institutions. Also, the term *institutional agents*, introduced in Stebleton and Aleixo's (2015) article, is used interchangeably with faculty and staff, student affairs professionals, or higher education personnel.

Statement of the Problem

Studies of students who are undocumented on college campuses have provided evidence that the support of faculty and administrators is crucial to their persistence in higher education (Bjorkland, 2018). Gonzales, Suárez-Orozco, and Dedios-Sanguineti's (2013) study demonstrated that faculty and staff play a role in assisting students who are undocumented with managing their emotional distress and remaining in their educational programs. Additionally, Stebleton and Aleixo (2015) found that faculty and staff provided welcoming behaviors that

allowed students who are undocumented to feel comfortable on campus. However, research has not been widely conducted about faculty and staff and the support they provide to students who are undocumented. Limited research exists about faculty members and staff in admissions, career centers, financial aid, and academic advising offices, to name a few, and how they interact with students who are undocumented (Nienhusser, 2014; Stebleton & Aleixo, 2015).

Currently, staff are not adequately trained on the unique needs of students who are undocumented, despite the importance of academic, cultural, and personal support (Perez et al., 2010; Stebleton & Aleixo, 2015). This creates an opportunity to assess the awareness, knowledge, and skills of professionals who advise, guide, counsel, and provide information to students who are undocumented. Furthermore, the visibility of students who are undocumented is increasing, and institutions seek to meet their needs through training programs for faculty and staff (Cisneros & Lopez, 2016). Therefore, there is a need to explore how faculty and staff who have been interacting with students who are undocumented provide assistance.

The problem that this research sought to address was the lack of awareness, knowledge, and skills of professionals who interact with students who are undocumented. Research demonstrates that the unique needs of this population are not addressed through training (Perez et al., 2010, Stebleton & Aleixo, 2015). Chen and Rhoads (2016) reported that faculty and staff experienced colleagues' opposition to this group and heard others make misinformed comments. Southern (2016) reported that staff who identified as allies experienced feeling unsupported, isolated, and overworked in their support of students who are undocumented. Therefore, to inform training and professional development of faculty and staff and ensure its relevancy, it is important to further study the extent to which professionals lack awareness, knowledge, and skills when working with this population of students.

Lastly, this topic is also important in that the experiences that faculty and staff have with students who are undocumented affect the students' college experience. Ultimately, interactions with all campus staff, who traditionally provide support and advocacy, influence the educational participation of all students (Gildersleeve & Ranero, 2010).

Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework was selected to inform this research. In a dissertation, the conceptual framework may be described as a "system of concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs, and theories that supports and informs research" (Maxwell, 1996, p. 25). Generally, it is "a picture of the territory you want to study, not of the study itself" (Maxwell, 1996, p. 25). Critical Race Theory (CRT), Latina/o Critical Theory (LatCrit), and the concept of multicultural competence served as the foundation of this study and provided a lens through which to analyze findings. Drawing from CRT, LatCrit, and multicultural competence, this study explored the awareness, knowledge, and skills of institutional agents who interact with college students who are undocumented. A brief summary of each of the theories is included in this section.

The first element in the conceptual framework is critical race theory (CRT). It originated from "a collection of activists and scholars engaged in studying and transforming the relationship among race, racism, and power" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, p. 3). Black, Latino, and Asian legal scholars created CRT to understand societal issues and examine the relationship between the law and race (Patton, McEwen, Rendon, & Howard-Hamilton, 2007). It is the concept that society may be viewed through racial hierarchies, with a final goal of social justice as it aims to change the relationship among race, racism, and power (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). The multidisciplinary theory holds that (1) racism exists, (2) racism works for the majority

population, and (3) race is socially invented and used when convenient (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017).

The theory has evolved from its background in civil rights to applications in K-12 and higher education (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Solórzano and Bernal, 2001). CRT has been used as a lens through which to study both undocumented college students and higher education staff attempting to meet their needs (Chen & Rhoads, 2016; Person, Keeton, Medina, Gonzalez, & Minero, 2017).

Developed as an expansion of CRT, LatCrit expanded on race and racism and focuses on Latina/o culture, immigration, language, and the way Latinos experience this reality (Perez Huber 2010; Valdes, 1996). While CRT views social justice from a perspective based on race or a black/white binary, LatCrit is a lens through which to examine the intersection of various forms of oppression, including race, gender, and class, that affect Latinos (Solórzano and Yosso, 2002).

LatCrit is relevant to this study since 60% of the undocumented individuals in the U.S. originate from Mexico and 20% from Central and South America (Nienhusser, 2015). The Migration Policy Institute also reports that DACA recipients are also overwhelmingly Latino, with most hailing from Mexico, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras (Migration Policy Institute, 2018). Feldblum et al. (2020) reported that 65 percent of DACA students are Latino. As such, this lens may help faculty and staff understand the struggles faced by undocumented Latino students due to their immigration, race, or ethnicity (Villalpando, 2004).

Multicultural competence is the third concept included in this study. Pope and Reynolds (1997) introduced multicultural competence into student affairs in the 1990s when they adapted it from the field of counseling psychology. Their model has slightly evolved over the years, and today "multicultural competence is a distinct category of awareness, knowledge, skills, and

action essential for efficacious student affairs work, and this competence has the capacity to assist student affairs practitioners in creating diverse and inclusive campuses" (Pope, Reynolds, and Mueller, 2019, p. 35).

The multicultural competence framework outlines expectations of faculty or staff: they must grow in their awareness and knowledge of self and others, comprehend structural barriers faced by students in higher education, and advance advocacy and action skills to eliminate inequities and structural barriers and create multicultural change (Pope, Reynolds, and Mueller, 2004). Howard-Hamilton, Cuyjet, and Cooper (2016) write that multicultural competence may be practiced by faculty through classroom applications and that it extends to the entire community, for example, to institutions as they develop trainings and policies.

CRT, LatCrit, and multicultural competence concepts were used as a lens to study faculty and staff interactions with students who are undocumented. They were selected since the concepts assist with examining faculty and staff understanding of institutional power, oppression, and action against inequity. The understanding of power and privilege is important to understanding barriers, institutional structures, and advocacy. The conceptual framework guided survey and interview questions regarding faculty or staff awareness of any outright discrimination or microaggressions experienced by students who are undocumented (Villalpando, 2004). Additionally, the theories guided questions that explored legislative policies that may or may not maintain the secondary status of students who are undocumented (Villalpando, 2004).

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this research was to explore the awareness, knowledge, and skills of institutional agents who interact with college students who are undocumented, to inform professional development and practice. The design of this study allowed for an examination of institutional agent awareness and knowledge of the personal needs and barriers experienced by students who are undocumented. Additionally, the study reviewed the guidance or support provided to meet student needs. Lastly, professional development of institutional agents and awareness, knowledge, and guidance provided to students are explored.

The results of this research contribute to the literature and provide recommendations for strategies for advising and interacting with students who are undocumented. Specific strategies are identified for institutions and faculty and staff development programs related to students who are undocumented. The increased enrollment of students who are undocumented on U.S. college campuses, a changing political and legal landscape, and ambiguity as to future policies require that higher education professionals receive thorough training to best support this population. The overall exploration of the institutional agent and student interactions help explain the experiences of the individuals charged with supporting students and identifying their challenges and successes.

Delimitations and Limitations

According to Mertler (2019) delimitations are boundaries applied by a researcher to limit the focus of a study. In this study, the researcher sought participants who have interacted with students who are undocumented. Specifically, the faculty and staff must have had experience with advising, counseling, teaching, or providing information to students who have disclosed

their status as undocumented. The faculty and staff interactions could have been positive or negative, and they must have had at least one experience. To ensure that participants met the criteria listed above, they were drawn from institutions that participate in the TheDream.US scholarship programs.

The limitations included elements that influenced research results and are not controlled by the researcher (Mertler, 2019). The limitations include the information gathered from faculty and staff who work with students who are undocumented and was restricted by their interactions, memory, and truthfulness. Furthermore, the researcher could not control the types of interactions that were reported, as faculty and staff had varied backgrounds and positions.

Assumptions

In this research, the sample drew from institutions that participate in TheDream.US scholarship programs. It was assumed that students who are undocumented or have DACA status had identified themselves to the sample. The first phase of the study was a survey, and it was expected that faculty and staff who completed the survey had experience assisting or advising one or more students who identify as undocumented and that they were truthful in their answers. The individual, anonymous nature of the survey allowed respondents to feel more comfortable in responding to their views on self-awareness, knowledge, and skills related to their experience with students who are undocumented.

The qualitative interviews of a small group of participants allowed in-depth exploration of faculty and staff interactions with students who are undocumented. The primary expectation was that participants provided honest accounts of their experiences. The researcher had to take

into account Janesick's (1994) recommendation to promote trust, rapport, and true communication with study participants so they were more comfortable sharing their stories.

Research Questions

Faculty and staff may not know how to best support students who have disclosed their identity as DACA recipients or students who are undocumented. Faculty and staff may lack the experience or training needed to successfully assist students who are undocumented in their educational journey (Perez et al., 2010; Stebleton & Aleixo, 2015.) An exploration of faculty and staff awareness and knowledge will inform institutions and individuals who create professional development programs.

This research was investigated through the main research question: What are the experiences of institutional agents who interact with students who are undocumented? Sub-questions include:

1. What awareness and knowledge do institutional agents have of the personal needs and barriers experienced by students who are undocumented?

2. What guidance and/or support, if any, do institutional agents provide to students who have disclosed their undocumented status?

3. How do training and/or workshops support institutional agents who work with students who are undocumented?

Significance of the Study

There is a need for this research, as studies have demonstrated that students want faculty and staff to be better prepared to meet their needs. In Suárez-Orozco et al.'s (2015) article,

students who are undocumented recommended that staff learn about their issues, receive training, provide empathy, and respect their privacy regarding their status. An exploration of what faculty and staff are currently aware of and know informs institutions on education and competencies that must be increased or corrected.

Institutions have begun to address the needs of students who are undocumented through implementation of student resource centers, staff training, and professional development programs (Cisneros & Cadenas, 2017). Despite these additions, professional staff may not be adequately prepared to support students. The literature demonstrates that staff may lack proper training to work with this population and may add to the confusion experienced by the students (Oseguera, Flores, & Burciaga, 2010). This study reviewed the awareness, knowledge, and guidance provided by institutional agents who work with students who are undocumented to better inform professional development and training programs.

Moreover, there is an increased enrollment and visibility of students who are undocumented. Cisneros and Cadenas (2017) estimate that 5-10% of DACA-eligible youth attend college. As previously stated, the number of DACA recipients enrolled in colleges and universities has risen from 2014 to 2017. Feldblum et al. (2020) reported that two percent of college students were DACA recipients and undocumented individuals. Once in college, students who are undocumented may join student organizations and engage in protests and advocacy efforts, leading to additional awareness of issues and students. In DeAngelo, Schuster, and Stebleton's (2016) study of California DREAMers, many of the undocumented participants engaged in activism in high school and, upon college enrollment, were further involved in these efforts through a campus organization. This population of students may continue to grow and remain in the country's political spotlight.

While this study does not directly examine institutional policy, it explores how institutional agents interpret and implement policies and procedures. The information gathered from this study clarifies the successes and areas for institutional improvement from the perspective of staff. The results of this research add to scholarly research, help improve practice, and may also influence decision makers (Creswell, 2009). In conclusion, the significance of this study is that it will inform institutions and individuals who develop professional training for all faculty and staff who may interact with students who are undocumented.

<u>Role of the Researcher</u>

The role as researcher is to provide an explanation for the institutional agents' understanding of the barriers and diverse needs of college students who are undocumented. Additionally, the researcher seeks to explore how institutional agents provide guidance or support, if any, to this student population. This researcher's attention to students who are undocumented arose through an interest in social justice and access to higher education, and in familiarity with the immigrant experience.

The researcher is a first-generation student of an immigrant father and Puerto Rican mother. She was born in the United States of America and was the first one of her generation to attend college, on both sides of her family. Growing up, she could recall numerous members of her family, albeit older ones, mentioning paperwork that needed to be filled out so that they could obtain their green cards. Thus began her early exposure to the plight of immigrants.

Two main points may have influenced the researcher's interpretation of the collected data. The first point relates to the researcher's interactions with family members that had been undocumented. Secondly, in her professional roles, students who are undocumented have

disclosed their status to the researcher. In one instance, a student discovered they could no

longer apply for financial aid after learning their status and had to exit the college. At another

institution, the researcher was familiar with several students who were concerned about finding

employment upon graduation from a certificate program or with an associate degree due to their

status. In another professional role, the researcher was able to watch a highly visible student

Dreamers group lead an on-campus demonstration and also met students who identified as

DACA recipients through work with student organizations. These instances remind the

researcher of the privilege granted as a U.S. citizen as well as the responsibility to engage in

social justice and access to education for others.

Interest in this topic arose from the researcher's own life experiences and as an

institutional agent working with students. Janesick (1994) writes that one must continually

identify one's own biases, as they often interact with the values and ethics of a research project.

The researcher is able to recognize that an examination of one's own biases is important

throughout this study, and for interpretation of participant stories. A reflective journal was kept,

helping the researcher understand how interpretation was influenced by personal experiences.

<u>Definition of Terms</u>

The following terms are used in this study:

1) Citizenship

The term *citizenship* denotes an individual who meets any of the following criteria: born in

the U.S, parent is a U.S. citizen, naturalized as a U.S. Citizen, born in Puerto Rico, Guam, or the

U.S Virgin Islands (IRS, 2018). In this study, the term citizen or citizenship will describe

anyone meeting the above criteria.

2) Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)

The *Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)* program allowed undocumented immigrants, who met certain requirements, to apply for consideration of deferred action and work authorization (Consideration of deferred action for childhood arrivals, 2018).

Upon receipt of DACA approval from the U.S government, individuals are often referred to as having received DACA and employment authorization (Consideration of deferred action for childhood arrivals, 2018). *DACAmented students* is also a term used in the literature to describe individuals granted DACA consideration by the U.S. government (Nienhusser, 2018).

3) DREAM, DREAMers

The *Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act* was introduced in 2001 to grant a legal status to individuals who entered the U.S. as minors, graduated from high school in the U.S., and lived in the U.S. for at least five years (Nguyen & Serna, 2014). Recipients of state *DREAM* Acts are often called *DREAMers* (DeAngelo & Schuster, 2016).

4) Immigrant

The term *immigrant* has several meanings. First, the term refers to an individual who is a permanent resident of the U.S. (Department of Homeland Security, 2018). Secondly, the term refers to a person who entered the U.S. without evaluation by U.S. authorities (Department of Homeland Security, 2018). Lastly, the term refers to a person who receives temporary admittance to the U.S. through immigrant visas (Department of Homeland Security, 2018).

5) Institutional agents

The term *institutional agents* was introduced in Stebleton and Aleixo's (2015) article to identify professionals who serve and support students. This study utilizes Stebleton and Aleixo's

term to denote faculty, instructors, support staff, para or professional higher education or student services staff members. The term institutional agents is used interchangeably with faculty and staff, student affairs professionals, or higher education personnel.

6) In-State Resident Tuition (ISRT)

Several states have passed policies that provide both out-of-state residents and students who are undocumented the opportunity to pay the same tuition as an in-state student. This policy is labeled as *in-state resident tuition (ISRT)* (Flores, 2010). This policy was enacted to provide financial relief for students who are undocumented, in addition to students with any visa status, since they are not eligible for federal financial aid (Conger & Chellman, 2013).

7) Interaction

The term *interaction* denotes any experience among students and professional staff. In the literature, the word interaction is used primarily to describe student-faculty formal or informal interactions (Stebleton & Aleixo, 2015); however, institutional agents may have dual roles of both faculty and administrator.

8) LatCrit

LatCrit is a "branch of critical race theory that considers issues of concern to Latino/as, such as immigration, language rights, and multi-identity" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, p. 178).

9) Multicultural Competence

Multicultural competence is "a distinct category of *awareness, knowledge, skills*, and *action* essential for efficacious student affairs work, and this competence has the capacity to assist student affairs practitioners in creating diverse and inclusive campuses" (Pope, Reynolds, and Mueller, 2019, p. 35).

10) Naturalization

Naturalization grants U.S. citizenship to individuals born in other countries, to permanent residents or non-citizens with U.S. armed forces service, or to children born outside of the U.S. to a U.S citizen (Citizenship through Naturalization, 2018).

11) Social Justice

Social justice is defined as a "goal and a process" whereby all members of social groups are able to fully and equitably participate in all aspects of society (Adams & Bell, 2016, p. 3). Additionally, social justice involves an equitable distribution of resources and the safety and security of all members of society (Adams & Bell, 2016).

12) Undocumented/Undocumented Alien

Undocumented refers to foreign-born individuals who have not been granted permission by the U.S. government to reside in the country (Passel & Cohn, 2009). The U.S. Internal Revenue Service (IRS) defines individuals who entered the U.S. illegally, or legally, however, without current documentation to remain in the U.S, as undocumented aliens (IRS, 2018). Additionally, undocumented refers to students who are DACA recipients or similarly situated students, which are individuals without a legal status in this country (Stebleton and Aleixo, 2015).

13) Undocumented Student Resource Centers (USRCs)

Undocumented Student Resource Centers (USRCs) take several formats. Some are centers with their own staff, others are merged with offices that provide services to international or multicultural students (Cisneros & Valdivia, 2018).

14) Visas

Visas are the legal authorizations provided to foreign individuals to enter the U.S. prior to their arrival. There are various types of visas ranging from temporary stays to permanent residency (Department of Homeland Security, 2015).

Summary

Faculty and staff serve students with various backgrounds and identities, including students who are undocumented. However, they may or may not be prepared to effectively support this population of students, as they may not be aware of the student needs or the barriers they experience. Additionally, they may not have undergone any training or professional development pertaining to this group of individuals.

Chapter 1 introduced the problem, purpose, research questions, and significance of this study regarding faculty and staff and their experiences serving college students who are undocumented. It also included an overview of the conceptual framework of CRT, LatCrit, and multicultural competence. Delimitations, limitations, and assumptions surrounding the study were also addressed. Furthermore, definitions of the many terms associated with the population of students who are undocumented were also included.

Chapter 2 explores the conceptual framework of CRT, LatCrit, and multicultural competence as they have been applied in studies about faculty and staff working with students who are undocumented. Also included is a review of literature related to the barriers experienced by students who are undocumented. A review of institutional agent support and professional development and Undocumented Student Resource Centers completes the chapter. Chapter 3 describes the methodology of this study. A review of the methods used, rationale, data

collection, analysis, and limitations are included. Chapter 4 includes the findings of the study, in

thematic sections followed by sub-themes. Lastly, Chapter 5 includes a discussion of the

findings, practical applications, and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter begins with a background on federal policies, such as the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, that directly affect individuals who are undocumented. Next, the conceptual framework and relevant research is expanded on. The chapter also reviews the unique experiences and the challenges facing students who are undocumented given their status, politics, finances, and support systems. Little attention has been paid to the institutional agents who provide assistance and resources to students who are undocumented; this is addressed by demonstrating that institutional agent support arises in both student narratives and recommendations provided by the research on this subject. The chapter ends with a review of recent research for institutional support of students who are undocumented.

Federal Policy

The Migration Policy Institute reports that approximately 50,000 undocumented immigrants graduate from high schools in California, Texas, and Florida each year (Zong & Batalova, 2019). Nationwide, the number of undocumented immigrants that graduate from high schools is close to 100,000 (Zong & Batalova, 2019). Many of these secondary school graduates arrived in the U.S. as minors and were mostly raised in the U.S. (Gonzales, 2011; Seif, 2016).

In the 1982 U.S. Supreme Court case Plyler v. Doe, the court determined that undocumented children in grades K-12 should not be penalized because of their parents' undocumented status (Perez, Cortes, Ramos, & Coronado, 2010). Students in K-12 were therefore allowed continuous enrollment in K-12. This accessibility, however, was not legally

granted for college students with an undocumented status and was addressed by two laws. In 1996, the Federal Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) was passed and prevented undocumented aliens from receiving public benefits including federal financial aid (Macías, 2017). The federal Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act, (IIRIRA), also signed into law in 1996, bans undocumented individuals from accessing in-state post-secondary education benefits (Macías, 2017; Division C, 1996). A number of states have disregarded IIRIRA, due in part to its vagueness, and have enacted legislation for in-state resident tuition (ISRT) rates for students who are undocumented so that they may have access to a more affordable higher education (Serna, Cohen, & Nguyen, 2017). Currently, 20 states provide ISRT, and 13 states allow the awarding of state financial aid to students who are undocumented (Higher Ed Guide, 2020).

In 2001, the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act was introduced to grant a legal status to individuals who entered the U.S. as minors, graduated from high school in the U.S., and lived in the U.S. for at least five years (Nguyen & Serna, 2014). The DREAM Act would have provided undocumented individuals, DREAMers as they are commonly called, a path to citizenship or permanent residency, however, several versions of this legislation did not pass through Congress. Many students who are undocumented mobilized nationally for its passage (Seif, 2016). As the federal government was not able to reach a consensus on this issue, many states instituted their own versions of the DREAM Act which provided eligibility for in-state tuition rates, certain scholarships, or state financial aid for students who are undocumented (Crone, 2015). To some extent, state DREAM Acts assist with college affordability for students who lack access to federal loans and grants.

Introduced in 2012, the federal policy titled Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), provided work authorization, a social security number, and, in some states, a driver's license to those who met eligibility requirements (Crone, 2015). However, DACA does not provide a path to either citizenship or permanent residency; instead, the policy affords individuals who fulfill specific requirements a legal presence in the U.S. (Crone, 2015). In its first year of implementation, approximately 430,000 individuals received DACA status out of 570,000 applications (Nienhusser, 2015). As of 2017, DACA recipients were enrolled in college at similar rates to U.S. adults of comparable ages (Zong et al., 2017). Currently, DACA is only accepting renewal applications from current holders (Deferred Action, 2018). As such, the future of the program is uncertain.

Upon high school graduation, due to their undocumented status, academically successful students face many challenges when applying to and enrolling in college. Federal policy has been stagnant on DACA and undocumented issues as there has been no comprehensive immigration reform. A summary of all of the federal policy affecting college students who are undocumented is found in Table 1. The table briefly summarizes the policies and legislation discussed in this section, that is, Plyler v. Doe, PRWORA, IIRIRA, DREAM Act, and DACA. Additionally, the shifting state policies or state DREAM Acts that affect students who are undocumented applying to or enrolled in college also vary greatly among states.

Table 1 Federal Policies Affecting College Students who are Undocumented

Policy	Timeline	Outcome
Plyler v. Doe	Decided in 1982	Allows undocumented children to attend grades K-12 (Perez, Cortes, Ramos, & Coronado, 2010; Plyler v. Doe, 1982).
Federal Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA)	Passed in 1996	Prevents undocumented individuals from receiving public benefits including federal financial aid (Macías, 2017).
Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA)	Passed in 1996	Bans undocumented individuals from accessing in-state post-secondary education benefits (Macías, 2017; Division C, 1996).
Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act	Introduced in 2001; Was not passed	Introduced to grant a legal status to individuals who entered the U.S. as minors, graduated from high school in the U.S., and lived in the U.S. for at least five years (Nguyen & Serna, 2014).
Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)	Introduced in 2012; Rescinded in 2017; renewal applications currently accepted	Provided work authorization, a social security number, and, in some states, a driver's license to those who met eligibility requirements (Crone, 2015). Does not provide a path to either citizenship or permanent residency, it does afford individuals who fulfill specific requirements a legal presence in the U.S. (Crone, 2015).

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework used in this study is comprised of Critical Race Theory (CRT), Latina/o Critical Theory (LatCrit), and multicultural competence. As CRT and LatCrit theories explain inequities faced by oppressed individuals and long-standing institutional structures that perpetuate racism, they may be applied when studying the perspectives of institutional agents working with students with marginalized identities. For example, CRT could be used as a way for institutional agents to understand the realities that underrepresented students are experiencing and allow the agents to comprehend the students' inequities due to organizational structures (Patton, Harper, & Harris, 2015). LatCrit assists with understanding the discrimination Latina/o students experience due to their race, language, gender, sexuality, class, and immigration status (Valdes, 1996). Additionally, multicultural competency is included in the framework, as the awareness, knowledge, skills, and actions of institutional agents are important to understanding their experiences working with DACA recipients or students who are undocumented.

A partial list of the reviewed research and the theories used are listed in Table 2. The table allows the reader to view how the theories align with past research on faculty, staff, and students who are undocumented. This table also provides evidence that the conceptual framework is relevant to this overall topic, as the concepts have been used in various studies.

Table 2 A Partial List of Reviewed Research, Theories, Population, and Method

Author(s)	Theory	Population	Method
Perez Huber (2010)	CRT, LatCrit, Racist nativism	U	Qual
Lizardy-Hajbi (2011)	CRT, Institutional theory	F,S	Qual
Chen (2013)	CRT, Critical pedagogy, Theory of resilience, Feminist theory	F,S	Qual
Patton & Bondi (2015)	CRT	F,S	Qual
Chen & Rhoads (2016)	CRT, Transformative resistance	F,S,U	Qual
Hubain, Allen, Harris, & Linder (2016)	CRT	GS	Qual
Person, Keeton, Medina, Gonzalez, & Minero (2017)	CRT, Community Cultural Wealth	F,S,U	MM
Muṅoz (2016)	CRT, Lat Crit	U	Qual
Shelton (2014)	CRT, LatCrit, Resilience	U	Qual
Shelton (2018)	CRT, LatCrit	U	Qual
Lara & Nava (2018)	CRT, LatCrit	U	Qual
Wells (2019)	LatCrit	S	Qual
Iverson & Seher (2017)	Multicultural Competence	GS	Quan
Nienhusser & Espino (2017)	Multicultural Competence	S	Qual
Hesse (2018)	Multicultural Competence	S	MM
Holliday (2018)	CRT, LatCrit, Validation Theory, Transformational Resistance, IUC, Multicultural Competence	F,S	Quan

F=Faculty, GS=Graduate Student, S=Staff, U=Undocumented student
Qual=Qualitative, Quan=Quantitative, MM=Mixed Methods

Critical Race Theory

Critical race theory (CRT) originated from "a collection of activists and scholars" who intentionally "engaged in studying and transforming the relationship among race, racism, and power" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, p. 3). CRT also contains an "activist dimension" and sets

out to "ascertain how society organizes itself along racial lines and hierarchies but transform it for the better" (p. 8). Originating from the legal arena, CRT was influenced by European philosophers, African American writers, and the Black Power and Chicano movements (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Scholars such as Derrick Bell, Alan Freeman, and Richard Delgado wrote about the racial subtleties that were permeating society in the 1970s despite the advancements of the civil rights era (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). With CRT, Bell (1995) asserted that legal and institutional racism were recognized by scholarship.

The philosophy of CRT is demonstrated in the theory's principles and application to various topics. The first tenet of CRT postulates that there is no antidote for racism: it is a normal part of our society, and as such it is difficult to resolve (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Secondly, through interest convergence, the causes of the majority group, that is, white individuals, are advanced through racism (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Bell hypothesized that the interests of white people, the majority, are only advanced if it serves their interest, thus there is an interest convergence (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Thirdly, racism is socially constructed as an invention that individuals learn (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Lastly, CRT holds that different minority groups are racialized by society based on the economy's needs and condition (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017).

The ideology of CRT is further detailed through four major themes surrounding discussions about race and racism. Delgado & Stefancic (2017) identify interest convergence, material determinism, and racial realism as their first theme, which corresponds to the notion that race is not "biological" yet society "can allocate power and status" (p. 21). Additionally, it brings forth the idea that change takes place due to self-interest of the majority group (Delgado

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& Stefancic, 2017). The next theme, revisionist interpretations of history, communicates "minorities' experiences" in interpretation of past events (p.25). The critique of liberalism, the third theme, places the onus on liberalists to question laws and rights to ensure "equality of opportunity" in addition to a "fair process" (p.29). The fourth theme, structural determinism, invites society to examine the concept "that our system, by reason of its structure and vocabulary, is ill equipped to redress certain types of wrong" (p.31). The themes are applied to this research as racism and structural barriers exist and must be viewed from varying perspectives. Lastly, the issues that arise from CRT may be explored through several methodologies, such as storytelling, narrative, allegory, use of first-person, and creativity (Bell, 1995).

While it began as a legal theory, the notion that racism is embedded in society allows CRT to also be applied to education (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) applied CRT to explore social and school inequity through the intersection of race and property rights. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) posited suggestions to support their views on social inequity and school inequity: inequity is determined by race, property rights affect one's place in society, and inequity is understood through the intersection of race and property. Ladson-Billings and Tate's (1995) suggestions tie into Delgado and Stefancic's (2017) tenets of CRT. In one example, the notion of property rights is explained as the urban, poor school lacking resources for students due to lack of tax monies collected, thus creating inequitable experiences for those students due to institutional and structural racism (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Through their work, CRT was used in education settings to

explain how race, property rights, and social structures affect the quality of instruction and availability of resources.

Solórzano and Yosso (2002) stated that CRT places racism at the center of teaching and learning and strives to eradicate racism and restrictions based on gender, class, sexual orientation, language, and national origin. The authors used the storytelling technique of CRT in their study, which provides a way to hear the voice of and bring attention to oppressed individuals as well as provide proof of oppression (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Much of what they found through research of a teaching program stereotyped or identified as illegal, students of African American, Chicana/o, Latina/o, Asian American, and Native American descent based on their appearance, socioeconomic status, or surname (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). They set out to create counter-stories from existing literature, their own professional and personal experiences, and focus groups and interviews with Chicano/a undergraduate and graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and faculty. The authors created a counter-story, or story that used non-majority voices with examples based on research and real-life experiences. This allowed for community building among oppressed groups and provided context to those in the majority to understand and transform traditional belief systems. This study demonstrates that the voice of the non-majority is important in informing institutional agent awareness.

The property rights, social structures, and embedded racial hierarchies in society help explain the term Predominately White Institutions (PWIs) in higher education (Bourke, 2016). Bourke (2016) writes that minority students may place a higher value on degrees from PWIs and that those institutions therefore have a superior place in society compared to minority-serving

institutions. Minority students' preference for PWIs is another example of how race and social structures are entrenched in our society.

When studying the perspective of administrators working with students who are undocumented, CRT also provides a framework for examining thoughts and actions from a perspective based on educational inequity (Ladson Billings & Tate, 1995) and a disruption of racist knowledge (Patton et al., 2015). Critical race theorists, according to Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) engage in themes of "voice" and "naming one's own reality" throughout their work. These are important underpinnings, as institutional agents may work in a system that is biased and may have the opportunity to use their position to support or contradict institutional racism. Educational inequity and racism harms students who are undocumented, among others.

Equally important, the demographics of institutional agents who engage with students that are undocumented may influence their work. For example, CRT may be used when studying the gap between K-12 teachers and students by reviewing the demographics of classroom teachers (Howard & Navarro, 2016). Additionally, teacher influence is paramount to the educational experience. Bell hooks writes that in her experience "the prevailing pedagogical model is authoritarian, hierarchical in a coercive and often dominating way, and certainly one where the voice of the professor is the 'privileged' transmitter of knowledge" (p. 85). Howard and Navarro (2016) cite two studies that find educators must be conscious of their own race when engaging in teaching since it affects their biases and ultimately, student learning.

In her dissertation, Lizardy-Hajbi (2011) utilized a phenomenological approach to interview 19 staff members from two-year colleges and four-year public and private universities in the South, Southwest, Mid-West, and West. Using a CRT and Institutional Theory framework,

she examined the effects of state and institutional policy on student affairs professionals'

capacity to assist and support students who are undocumented (Lizardy-Hajbi, 2011). Also

included in the study was a comparison between states with and without in-state resident tuition

(ISRT) policies. Several states have passed policies that provide both out-of-state residents and

students who are undocumented the opportunity to pay the same tuition as an in-state student.

The author found that institutional agents were motivated to assist students who are

undocumented because of their own privileged status, professional experience, intersectionality

of oppression, and empathetic nature (Lizardy-Hajbi, 2011). Furthermore, the challenges they

faced in providing support were related to their professional roles and workloads, lack of

leadership/institutional support, and finances. Interestingly, the ISRT policies did not offer much

difference among support provided across institutions. The author concluded that institutional

agents were able to hear the stories of students who are undocumented, and this caused them to

understand students' plights and serve as a catalyst for change. A factor that may have

influenced the results was that the study included ten participants who were immigrants or had

family members who recently immigrated. However, the study serves to demonstrate the

importance for institutional agents to hear about the lived experiences of students they support

and also understand their own privilege and intersectionality of identity. This research ties into

this study in that institutional agents may hear directly from students who are undocumented

about their challenges and must therefore understand their own being in order to assist others.

Similar to Lizardy-Hajbi (2011), Chen and Rhoads (2016) utilized CRT in their

qualitative ethnographic and case study design. They interviewed 23 institutional agents,

identified as allies, about the institutional circumstances that impacted their work with students

who are undocumented at a large research university in California. Their research questions asked about the factors that influenced allies' involvement with students who are undocumented, how they addressed the student needs, and the institutional conditions that obstructed their work (Chen & Rhoads, 2016). The authors found that as students who are undocumented began organizing themselves into a collective group, institutional agents became empowered to join their activism. Institutional agents also reported opposition from their colleagues who were misinformed about the racial makeup of students who are undocumented and from those who harbored anti-immigration sentiment (Chen & Rhoads, 2016). Additionally, the author's reported that student activists working in tandem with institutional agents led to the development of a tuition installment plan to benefit all university students. Furthermore, faculty began creating courses surrounding immigration issues (Chen & Rhoads, 2016). Insight into the institutional agents' background or ethnicity may have been helpful in determining reasons for their motivation but was not included in this study (Chen & Rhoads, 2016). In this study, CRT helps explain how students who are undocumented are oppressed and powerless given institutional structures and must advocate for themselves. This study also provides evidence that there is much misinformation about immigration and students who are undocumented. CRT informs this study as institutional agents assist students who are undocumented who face dominant institutional structures and public misinformation about their situation.

More recently Person, Keeton, Medina, Gonzalez, and Minero's (2017) study incorporated CRT into a framework to explore the experiences of students who are undocumented and institutional agents at a Hispanic-serving regional university in Southern California during DACA and DREAM Act activism. The purpose of this mixed methods study

was to understand the obstacles, resilience, and motivation of students who are undocumented and to collect recommendations on how the university could better support the students (Person et al., 2017). Institutional agents participating in a focus group indicated limited availability and services for students who are undocumented and a need for information and training as it relates to this population of students. While this study was conducted at one university with a small sample size, the findings support the impact that institutional resources may have for students, faculty, and staff. A CRT lens allows for the institution to be evaluated for the power and influence it has over underrepresented groups (Person et al., 2017).

Chen and Rhoads's (2016) study provides evidence on how allies working in conjunction with students are paramount to creating an inclusive and just campus community. Additionally, Patton and Bondi's (2015) qualitative study explored how white faculty and administrators on a college campus defined and served as allies. The participants, who all identified as male, included five administrators and seven faculty members. Using a CRT lens, three themes emerged: (1) challenging the status quo; (2) risks, sacrifices, and contradictions associated with ally work; and (3) what it means to be an ally and engage as one (Patton & Bondi, 2015). Participants revealed that they saw themselves as teachers and learners and were cognizant of the language they used in the classroom. One faculty member indicated he integrated social justice into all of his classroom lessons, while another advocated for someone during the hiring process. Through their introduction of intentional subjects, teaching style, and philosophy, the faculty provided examples of how they worked as allies on an individual level as opposed to challenging the status quo. The participants, however, did not address their own positionality in society and at their institutions. They did receive recognition as allies, yet they did not address their

privilege or any sacrifices (Patton & Bondi, 2015). This research, albeit focused on an individual level, does demonstrate that faculty must engage in awareness and self-reflection of their own behavior to ultimately affect greater change. Furthermore, institutions of higher education may help lead this effort through training and development.

Hubain, Allen, Harris, and Linder (2016) studied the experience of students of color with faculty in student affairs and higher education graduate programs across the U.S. Through focus groups and interviews, 29 African American, Latina, Asian American, and multiracial students reported issues of tokenism and a shortage of in-depth conversations about race facilitated by faculty across 21 graduate programs (Hubain et al., 2016). Outside of class, the same students reported isolation and microaggressions in interactions with peers and faculty (Hubain et al., 2016). The researchers also discussed how the racist experiences reported by the students may have been unintentionally delivered by the faculty, which reinforces one of CRT's principles that racism is embedded in society. The authors also found it essential for faculty to comprehend the experiences of diverse groups and engage in dialogue about race and racism in the classroom with all students (Hubain et al., 2016). Incorporating social justice dialogue and intersectionality into the faculty experience was also explored in Patton and Bondi's (2015) study. These two studies, from differing perspectives, indicate the need for institutional agents to be conscious of their biases and how they are helping or hindering the collegiate experience of students who are underrepresented, such as students who are undocumented.

Latina/o Critical Theory

In 1995, LatCrit theory emerged from collaborative work among legal scholars attending what would subsequently become known as the Annual LatCrit (ALC) conference, which focused on CRT and Latina/os (Bender & Valdes, 2012; Valdes, 1996). LatCrit expands from CRT and focuses on the experiences of Latina/os and how their language, generation status, gender, sexuality, and class identities interact with race (Valdes, 1996). The immigrant experience is also recognized along with race and other identities in LatCrit (Perez Huber, 2010). Similar to CRT, LatCrit focuses on activism and intentionally includes the voice of law students in publications and at the annual conferences (Bender & Valdes, 2012). While CRT addresses the subtle forms of racism experienced by African Americans after the Civil Rights era and racism embedded within institutional structures, LatCrit focuses on the discrimination experienced by Latina/os due to their race, language, gender, sexuality, class, and immigration status. The theory concentrates on the intersectionality of oppression and illustrates the multifaceted Latino identities (Valdes, 1996; Bernal, 2002).

Critics of CRT cited the need for intersectionality and inclusion of other groups affected by racism (Valdes, 1996). LatCrit theory is able to address identity through the connection of various 'isms' that plague society (Solórzano & Bernal, 2001). However, because of its inclusion of class, gender, and sexuality, critics argue that it does not solely focus on Latina/os (Aoki & Johnson, 2008). Another critique is that LatCrit research is too broad and the presence of Chicanos, the largest Latino group in the U.S., is largely excluded from LatCrit (Aoki & Johnson, 2008). On the contrary, proponents argue that LatCrit assists with analyzing

marginalized groups outside of the Black/White binary paradigm from which civil rights issues have historically been reviewed (Perea, 1997).

LatCrit was introduced to higher education in studies on the barriers faced by Latina/os conducted by Solórzano, Delgado Bernal, Villalpando, Yosso, and Ceja (Villalpando, 2004; Hernandez & Ortiz, 2016). They used LatCrit in frameworks to explore racial and other discrimination patterns as well as disparities between policies and practices in higher education (Villalpando, 2004). Villalpando (2004) wrote that the use of both CRT and LatCrit in higher education allows for not only the analysis but also the removal of the subtle and overt barriers faced by Latino students. Because of the work of researchers studying Latinos in higher education, LatCrit is also applicable to understanding the experiences of Latino immigrant students who are undocumented in this country. The use of LatCrit in various studies highlights it as an important lens through which institutional agents can understand the experiences of Latina/o students who are undocumented (Wells, 2019).

Due to the increase in the number of students who are undocumented enrolling in colleges, Perez Huber (2010) sought to discover ways that racist nativism, class, and gender revealed themselves in the paths of their study participants. The author's widely cited qualitative study on 10 low-income, undocumented Chicana students in California utilized a CRT and LatCrit framework. Nativism, a framework which emerged from LatCrit, was also included in this study. The term refers to a strong opposition to foreigners and a nationalistic identity, where the foreigner is regarded as a perceived threat (Perez Huber, 2010).

Perez Huber (2010) found that race and immigration status crossed the student narratives and that their challenges were all directly related to their legal status in this country and others'

views of them as immigrants. They faced dominant perceptions of their status as a result of their driving restrictions, language skills, and public perceptions that they received special services or were a threat to the country (Perez Huber, 2010). The opinions held by those they encountered at the universities added to their fear due to their non-native, marginalized status, as described in their stories. As reported in Hubain, Allen, Harris, and Linder's (2016) study, it is important for institutional agents to engage in conversation about race and racism with students and attempt to understand their experience.

While the study was conducted with a specific ethnic group of undocumented Latina/os, Perez Huber (2010) asserts that awareness and education of the intersectionality of Latina/o identities involves dismantling negative perceptions. It is important to note that Latina/o students may also internalize the nativist narrative that they do not belong in this society; this may affect their motivation to complete their education. The awareness and knowledge of faculty, staff, and other students of Latino/a identity and influencing factors is paramount to begin to understand the experience of students who are undocumented and change one's behavior.

Muñoz (2016) also used a LatCrit perspective in her research, which aimed to educate professionals on the difficulties faced by students who are undocumented and also inform resources and policies. Furthermore, institutional agents can use their understanding of the student experience when engaging in dialogue, either in class or when working with them one-on-one. Through her qualitative study of seven self-identified Latina/o "undocumented and unafraid" college students, Muñoz (2016) explored students' reasons for revealing their undocumented status to faculty, staff, and others. She identified three themes: biographical

construction of legal status, the fluidity of fear, and empowered disclosure to reclaim self. In

reference to the first theme, students indicated family socialized them to keep their identity

hidden, as it could be dangerous to their livelihood. Secondly, their fear decreased as they

gained knowledge and confidence through their activism. Thirdly, they were in a position to use

their status to educate others about immigration, which was a salient part of each student's

identity.   One of the participants indicated that while gender, race, class, and privilege are

spoken about in the classroom, legal status is often ignored (Muñoz, 2016). This is pertinent to

this research study, whose participants are identified as a resource for students who are

undocumented, and it is expected that participants will have an awareness of students' legal

status. While Muñoz's sample included participants across seven states, it was specific to those

who self-identified as undocumented and activist and is therefore not representative of the many

students who are undocumented but fearful of disclosing their status for fear of deportation of

themselves or their family members.

In Shelton's (2014) qualitative dissertation that was used in a subsequent article (Shelton,

2018), the author selected CRT and LatCrit, with a resilience perspective, as the framework in

analyzing students' identities and stories with dedication to social justice. The research was

guided by the question, "How do undocumented Latin@ college students demonstrate resilience

as they navigate higher education?" Participants were 16 undocumented Latino students who all

attended PWIs in the United States. Interviews revealed that personal and environmental factors

impacted their resilience to conquer their educational challenges. Personal challenges

experienced by the students included fear and limitations. Moreover, their resilience was built

through their interactions with supportive individuals both on and off campus. Overall, they

overcame challenges through having future goals, navigating the system, asking for support, and being politically active. One unique experience that participants addressed was the difficulty in negotiating their identities between their birth and American cultures (Shelton, 2014). This causes them to often interchange identities and feel like they are outsiders. The limitation of this research, as identified by the author, is that participants hailed from states that were considered relatively open to students who are undocumented, and they may have felt safer opening up than if they had lived in more restrictive states (Shelton, 2014). Nonetheless, relevant to this research, Shelton (2014) reflects on participant feedback to remind professionals that they must understand oppression at all levels, make a determination to act, and have an ethic of care.

Using a CRT and LatCrit framework, Lara and Nava (2018) conducted a study to understand the factors that influenced students who are undocumented to purse a graduate education. Snowball sampling was used to recruit the mainly Mexican participants, 10 male and 10 female, who were graduates of two large public institutions in southern and central California. The students in their research had enrolled in graduate school after DACA was authorized, however, the study focused on their pre-DACA graduate school application and matriculation decision-making process. The context of family marginalization, guided pathways, and social activism emerged as the themes of the study. Students reported that they were not able to pursue better career opportunities in fields such as engineering and biology with only a bachelor's degree and that family and peer support led them to apply to graduate programs. Additionally, they wanted to engage in personal and social change, as they had experienced marginalization, racialization, and oppression first-hand in accessing higher education. Although this study focused on a small number of high-achieving students who are undocumented, Lara and Nava

(2018) concluded that there is a need for faculty, staff, and institutional support of students who are undocumented who seek out entry into graduate programs. The increase in the number of students who are undocumented obtaining bachelor's degrees, coupled with an uncertain future due to government policies, requires that administrators and institutions offer assistance, programs, and resources for students' personal and academic success (Lara & Nava, 2018). The comfort level of institutional agents working with this population is important due to currently enrolled students who are undocumented and their potential enrollment growth.

In her dissertation, Wells (2019) asked staff and administrators to describe their experiences assisting students who are undocumented and to report pertinent training and resources. This qualitative study, which employed a LatCrit lens, focused on college administrators in states with high Hispanic populations. The 11 participants from nine colleges in the southern U.S. worked in small private and public institutions, mid-size public institutions, and large public institutions. They represented departments in areas such as Disability Services, Leadership, International Students, and Rights and Responsibilities. Overall, participants disclosed a limited awareness of and understanding of undocumented student needs. The first theme, American Dream, arose as agents reported that students wanted better lives for themselves. Secondly, the theme of mental health concerns was a result of the emotions students who are undocumented communicated to participants. The third topic, Available Opportunities (Not), related to administrator's reporting a lack of opportunities available for students who are undocumented due to their status, which led to many closed doors and/or barriers (Wells, 2019, p. 73). The political climate after the 2016 election served as another theme, as students were concerned about deportation after DACA was rescinded. Lastly, the institutional agents all

recognized the impact of family support for students who are undocumented. Study participants

shared that they would have liked some training on working with students who are

undocumented. While some had life experiences that helped them, many administrators stated

that training on inclusivity or different backgrounds would have been helpful to them to increase

their knowledge about this population. This finding, similar to Person et al.'s (2017) study,

provides additional significance for the research on institutional agents who work with students

who are undocumented.

In López and Matos's (2018) research, LatCrit, CRT, and sense of group position theory

were incorporated into a study that reviewed state and local level immigration policies. They

wanted educators and policy leaders to become familiar with the needs of students and families

impacted by anti-immigrant polices by connecting the relationship between education and

immigration (López & Matos, 2018). Through a review of literature, the authors concluded that

education policy is gradually becoming immigration policy for students who are undocumented

and children of immigrants. Additionally, they assert that the effect of immigration policies

spreads to young people regardless of immigration status due to profiling and stereotyping, and

to those individuals responsible for teaching young students. Institutional agents must not only

provide support but interpret and enforce DACA-related policies and practices (López & Matos,

2018). As demonstrated through Shelton (2014) and Lara and Nava (2018), support of students

who are undocumented is paramount to their educational success.

CRT and LatCrit Summary

The use of CRT and LatCrit helps validate the student experience as well as educate others regarding the oppression and public perceptions faced by Latino students who are undocumented. The use of CRT and LatCrit can help institutional agents examine their role in serving students who face inequities due to their immigration status and/or institutional racism. Institutional agents should also be aware of the identity intersectionality faced by students who are undocumented, as the agents assist with services and resources (Chen, 2013). Cognizance of one's own marginalization is also needed to be an effective advocate (Chen, 2013) and understand one's biases (Patton & Bondi, 2015).

In the field of education, Solórzano and Bernal (2001) developed five premises that originated from CRT and LatCrit frameworks:

1) *The centrality of race and racism and intersectionality with other forms of subordination.*

This premise ties into the first tenet of CRT that race and racism are normal and intersect with other forms of oppression (Solórzano & Bernal, 2001).

2) The challenge to dominant ideology.

Institutional agents are in a position to question prevailing philosophies and advocate for students. Equality for all, meritocracy, and color-blindness in higher education are challenged through CRT and LatCrit frameworks (Solórzano & Bernal, 2001).

3) The commitment to social justice.

These frameworks work toward abolishment of racism, sexism, and poverty through power provided to underrepresented groups (Solórzano & Bernal, 2001).

4) The centrality of experiential knowledge.

The experiences of students are legitimized and important for teaching others about oppression in education (Solórzano & Bernal, 2001).

5) The interdisciplinary perspective.

The CRT and LatCrit frameworks analyze race and racism using interdisciplinary views (Chen, 2013; Solórzano & Bernal, 2001). To understand racism, sexism, and classism, the research in various fields, such as women's studies, sociology, ethnic studies, history, and law are utilized within these frameworks (Solórzano & Bernal, 2001).

This research uses CRT and LatCrit in analyzing the data collected from institutional agents who witness subordination of students who are undocumented based on race, class, and immigration status. It is important to view their perspectives using multiple lenses. The reviewed studies provide evidence that institutional agents require additional training, that students look to them for support, and that immigration policies affect education.

Multicultural Competence

Pope and Reynolds (1997) introduced multicultural competence into student affairs in the 1990s when they adapted it from the field of counseling psychology. Their past tripartite model included awareness, knowledge, and skills as components of multicultural competence (Pope & Reynolds, 1997). The "attitudes, values, biases, and assumptions each of us carries with us… influence our world view" and describe an individual's multicultural awareness (Pope, Reynolds, & Mueller, 2004, p. 12). Multicultural knowledge pertains to "our intellectual understanding or content knowledge about various cultural groups and specific multicultural constructs" (Pope et

al., 2004, p. 13). Lastly, applications of multicultural skills are important to "our interactions, interventions and our daily lives" (Pope et al., 2004, p. 13). Their model has slightly evolved over the years and today, " multicultural competence is a distinct category of awareness, knowledge, skills, and action essential for efficacious student affairs work, and this competence has the capacity to assist student affairs practitioners in creating diverse and inclusive campuses" (Pope, Reynolds, and Mueller, 2019, p. 35). Their current model includes multicultural action to "more explicitly emphasize principles of social justice advocacy, such as interrupting institutional oppression and promoting structural change" (Pope et al., 2019, p. xvii). Pope et al. (2019) maintain their original tripartite model included the ideas of social justice action and advocacy as the role of social justice in higher education began to emerge.

The use of the multicultural competence framework outlines expectations for institutional agents. First, they must grow in "their awareness and knowledge of self and others and of the relationship of the two" (Pope et al., 2019, p. 6). Secondly, educators should comprehend "systems of oppression and inequities to create a deeper understanding of structural barriers within higher education" (p. 6). Lastly, they must "develop the advocacy and skills essential to eradicate the structural barriers, eliminate the inequities, and create multicultural change on campus and society" (p. 6). This self-reflection, understanding of why barriers are created, and action for change should take place in all areas of student affairs. This is an on-going process that requires intentional reflection and conscious effort by institutional agents. Howard-Hamilton, Cuyjet, and Cooper (2016) also contend that multicultural competence extends to the entire community, for example, to institutions as they develop trainings and policies, and to faculty through classroom applications.

Prior to Pope and Reynold's introduction of the framework to student affairs and faculty, counseling literature revealed that achieving multicultural competence could be accomplished in different and evolving manners. In the 1940s and 1950s, educators were dedicated to revealing differences among groups to improve their respect and communication (Adams, 1997). Allport (1954) introduced his contact hypothesis, which postulated that prejudice was reduced by both education and exposure to others who were different. A few years later, Allport (1958) added on to this idea by specifying that it was the equal contact between majority and minority groups, along with institutional support and compassion for others, that was needed to reduce bias.

The exploration, development, and growth of multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills in counseling psychology have increased in literature and graduate education since the 1970s and 1980s (Sue, Arredondo, & McDavis, 1992; Pope et al., 2019). Sue et al. (1992) and Pedersen (1998) described multicultural competence as the awareness, knowledge, and skills needed by counselors to work with diverse clients. This competence is established through multicultural counseling, which is where two or more individuals, each holding unique perspectives about their social environment, engage in a helping relationship (Pedersen, 1998). Talbot (2003) defined multiculturalism to include the knowledge and skills to comfortably communicate with individuals from other cultures. Sue and Sue (2008) built upon Pedersen's three stages of multicultural development and highlighted the importance of personal development in multicultural competence (p. 48). It is important to note that there is also no standard definition of the word multicultural (Pope et al., 2019). Within counseling literature and due to the advent of social justice pedagogy, much of the evolution of multicultural theory took place in response to the social movements that began to emerge (Adams, 2016).

The current multicultural competence quadripartite model faces criticism for a number of reasons. To begin, there are tensions among which efforts bring forth change, multicultural competence, or social justice efforts (Pope et al., 2019). Additionally, another criticism is that multicultural competence focuses on individuals in a capacity to enact change as opposed to oppressed individuals (Pope et al., 2019). One critical factor is that there is a focus on student affairs professionals; therefore, the reality of oppressed individuals is not as emphasized as it could be, leading to less social justice transformative change (Racial Equity Tools, n.d.; Reason & Watson, 2011). Those with power in the relationship, the privileged, are essentially the focus of the multicultural competence construct (Chizhik and Chizhik, 2002). Pope et al. (2019) point out their model of multicultural competence has always included an expectation of the individual to not only enhance his or her awareness and knowledge but to work for what is recognized today as social justice change. Reason and Watson (2011) write that the construct put forth by Pope et al. brings us closer to merging social justice and multicultural competence. However, Pope et al. (2019) assert dualistic thinking limits, embracing both multicultural competency and social justice.

Pope et al. (2019) built upon counseling frameworks such as the American Counseling Association (ACA) Advocacy Competencies and the Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies (MSJCC) to develop student affairs competencies. These are outlined in the Dynamic Model of Student Affairs Competence, originally developed by Pope and Reynolds in 1997 and later revised in 2004. The 2019 model, seen in Figure 1, includes eight student affairs competencies:

- Administration and Leadership;
- Multicultural Competence, Social Justice, and Inclusion;
- Helping, Supporting, and Advising;
- Assessment, Evaluation, and Research;
- Teaching and Training;
- Ethics, Law, and Policy;
- Theory and Translation; and
- Technology

Figure 1 The Revised Dynamic Model of Student Affairs Competence

(Pope et al., 2019, p. 34)

While not the first list of competencies developed for student affairs, the original model is unique due to its acknowledgment of multiculturalism as a condition for student affairs work, included as a separate category and integrated into the other competencies. The open area in the model denotes this fluidity as the competencies all influence each other (Pope et al., 2019).

The Dynamic Model of Student Affairs Competence creates an opportunity for professional self-assessment (Pope et al., 2019). The authors assert that student affairs professionals should have a basic level of multicultural awareness, skills, knowledge, and action to meet the needs of a diverse group of students and colleagues. The tool allows for student affairs professionals who advise, guide, counsel, teach, and provide information to students who are undocumented to evaluate their own awareness, knowledge, and skills as they relate to working with a diverse group of stakeholders. Additionally, "Infusing multicultural awareness, knowledge, skills, and action into the administration and leadership competency involves ensuring that student affairs professionals examine the daily and ongoing administrative practices within student affairs for evidence of any multicultural or social justice efforts" (Pope et al., 2019, p. 115).

Students who are undocumented face racism, prejudice, microaggressions, and structural inequities due to their immigration status. Currently, staff are not adequately trained on these students' unique needs despite the importance of academic, cultural, and personal support (Perez et al., 2010; Stebleton & Aleixo, 2015). This topic is important since there is a need for positive undocumented student and faculty or staff interactions on college campuses (Stebleton & Aleixo, 2015; Nienhusser, Vega, & Carquin, 2015). Therefore, this construct relates to the purpose of

this research, which is to explore the experiences of institutional agents advising and interacting with college students who are undocumented on U.S. college campuses.

A review of the literature reveals that multicultural competence of students, faculty, and staff has been studied in several manners. One study, by Iverson and Seher (2017), measured the change of students' multicultural competence at the beginning and end of their graduate study. The assessment tool used was Pope and Reynolds's (1997) Multicultural Competence for Student Affairs-Preliminary 2 Scale (MCSA-P2) designed for higher education settings. Participants were students involved in a diversity course at two separate universities. One course included counseling students, focused more on personal and individual perspectives, and met more frequently, as it had an intense structure and took place on weekends. The second class focused on the institutional and administrative viewpoint and had only student affairs graduate students. The research questions asked were (1) What is the level of multicultural competence (as measured by the MCSA-P2) of graduate students enrolled in two student affairs professional programs at two points in their graduate preparation—beginning and upon completion of the degree program? and (2) How might a purposeful diversity curriculum facilitate change in students' multicultural competence? The findings of the study revealed that the students had minimal interest in taking action such as attending workshops to learn about other groups or their individual commitment to fighting racism due to their questionnaire responses (Iverson & Seher, 2017). In a question about goals relating to multicultural knowledge and awareness, the second group's participants actually had a decrease pre-to post-study. The authors did conclude that the diversity curriculum was beneficial for students; however, it does not include any statistical relationships. Additionally, other limitations of the study are that it did not test any relationships

between the two groups, the diversity of each group varied, and only two institutions were included in the study. However, this study is important to this research, as it demonstrates that professionals may not be receiving the relevant awareness or knowledge through their graduate education programs. Therefore, it is important to measure what they are learning at their institutions and through experiences. This is especially true if we look at the influencing role institutional agents have with interpreting DACA and other polices, as explored in López & Matos's study (2018).

Nienhusser and Espino (2017) proposed the undocumented/DACAmented status competency (UDSC), which included multicultural competency and informal theories, as a conceptual framework in their study of institutional agents. The purpose of their research was to study how institutional agents' practice reflected the tripartite model of UDSC (i.e., awareness of, knowledge of, and skills regarding undocumented/DACAmented students). The authors interviewed 45 community college agents who were mostly senior-level administrators. Due to institutional permissions, it was difficult for them to recruit entry-level administrators. Two states were selected that offered post-secondary education benefits and two were selected based on contrasting public policies. The majority of institutional agents sampled indicated that the students had unique needs which varied from those of other underserved student populations. One-on-one interactions were found to provide a better understanding of undocumented/DACAmented students, as the agents did not have learning opportunities through professional associations. Past multicultural training, though not specific to this population of students, also provided useful skills to the agents. More than half of the participants indicated that multicultural competence was important to their work with the students. They reported they

were prepared to assist the students who are undocumented due to their belief of being a multiculturally competent practitioner. This provides support for Pope et al.'s (2019) philosophy for student affairs professionals.

In his dissertation, Hesse (2018) asked, to what extent does a professional development seminar impact admission counselors' multicultural awareness, knowledge, and terminology of students who are undocumented? Two multicultural counseling competencies found in Pope and Reynolds's model – awareness and knowledge – were associated with the conceptual framework developed for this study's intervention, a professional development seminar (Hesse, 2018). Though a concurrent triangulation mixed methods design, quantitative data was collected through pre-and post-survey responses to a professional development seminar, and qualitative data was collected via focus groups. The 16 participants included admissions staff in Maryland's public two-year and four-year colleges, and two private state universities. A few participants served as both faculty and advisors on their campuses. They were all invited to attend a four-hour session that included a lecture on past and present undocumented student policies, role-playing, and guest speakers. The post-event surveys indicated that the mean of the multicultural competence measure increased after the activities. While the study was limited to admissions staff, participants indicated that advisors, faculty, and others should be involved in professional development related to students who are undocumented to holistically study the student experience. This recommendation also supports the purpose of this research and ties into research by Nienhusser and Espino (2017) and Person et al. (2017) that shows how training is useful for working with this population of students.

Holliday's (2018) dissertation also incorporated a conceptual framework that included CRT, LatCrit, Validation Theory, Transformational Resistance, IUC, and multicultural competence. The knowledge and attitudes community college institutional agents held toward students who are undocumented or undocumented immigrants were explored in this mixed methods study. A total of 274 survey respondents and 24 interviewees comprised the sample, recruited from 32 North Carolina Community Colleges. The quantitative portion found a positive correlation between knowledge, attitude, and level of direct contact with students who are undocumented. The lowest knowledge and attitude ratings were computed for adjunct faculty; however, they participated in limited numbers. The previously mentioned research demonstrates that multicultural competence may be used as part of conceptual frameworks in studies concerning institutional agent interactions with students who are undocumented.

Summary

The use of the multicultural competence concept as part of the conceptual framework ties into the purpose of this study, that is, to explore the experiences of institutional agents advising and interacting with college students who are undocumented on U.S. college campuses. The awareness, knowledge, skills, and action taken by institutional agents either guides students or impedes their success. It is essential that institutional agents are cognizant of their own marginalization to be an effective advocate (Chen, 2013). They must understand their own biases, as noted in Patton and Bondi's (2015) study. One participant stated it was important for him, as an instructor, to also learn from the class. The knowledge of laws is important, as they

must interpret them. Ultimately, they must be able to be comfortable interacting with the students to act on their behalf or serve as allies.

To summarize, CRT, LatCrit, and multicultural competency will be used in exploring the experiences of institutional agents working with college students who are undocumented. The conceptual framework is represented visually in Figure 2. A short summary of each is included and the figure shows how the theories include action as part of their goals. It is important to note that CRT, LatCrit, and multicultural competence theories are not without criticism. CRT and LatCrit are not specific to this population of students and stronger frameworks related to higher education must be developed (Bjorkland, 2018). However, a number of researchers have used CRT to explain the powerless position in society of students who are undocumented. Additionally, while helpful in understanding the immigration experience, LatCrit was not established to assist with understanding the undocumented student population.

CRT

Examines the relationship among race, racism, & power
Viewed through institutional power, dominant power groups, and microagressions (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017).

LatCrit

Extends from CRT

Racial oppression intersects with language, class, gender, sexuality, immigration status of Latina/o groups

Oppression & discrimination is experienced by Latina/os (Valdes, 1996, Perez Huber, 2010)

Multicultural Competence

Focused on Higher Education
Multicultural competence is achieved through awareness, knowledge, skills, and action (Pope, Reynolds, & Mueller, 2019)

CRT Social Justice = Action

LatCrit focuses on activism

Multicultural Competence skills are used to work to undo oppressive institutional structures

Figure 2 Conceptual Framework

<u>Barriers Faced by Students who are Undocumented</u>

"To understand how to effectively serve this unique student population within a higher education institution, it is important to understand the barriers and struggles that these students commonly encounter" (Person et al., 2017, p. 259).

Research has demonstrated that students who are undocumented face systemic and personal barriers to access and persistence in higher education. Perez et al. (2010) write that legal barriers, such as state tuition policies and federal financial aid programs, prevent students

who are undocumented from accessing societal benefits. Suárez-Orozco et al. (2011) also mention that the students who are undocumented face challenges due to the stress of their status and low-income background. Additional obstacles due to discrimination, anti-immigration attitudes, and deportation concerns overshadow the students' lives (Perez et al., 2010).

Suárez-Orozco et al. (2015) name three categories of student experiences and the barriers they face: (1) national and state policies, (2) campus-level challenges, and (3) student-level challenges. The government's policies on deportation, the political and legal climate, and state financial aid policies that affect college affordability comprise the first level. Campus-level obstacles faced by students who are undocumented include personal finances, discrimination, feelings of invisibility, and lack of resources (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2015). Lastly, student-level challenges relate to family separation, time constraints due to work, concerns about deportation, and health challenges such as anxiety, depression, and well-being.

The difficulties faced by students who are undocumented, outlined by Perez et al. (2010) and Suárez-Orozco et al. (2015), all intersect, with many of them affecting personal development. The feelings, behavior, and associations of students who are undocumented are influenced by socioemotional experiences such as shame, discrimination, and overall stress (Perez et al., 2010; Rondón, 2018; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2011). Their anxiety concerns about deportation and finances, along with a sense of not knowing what is next, influence students' emotional state and their interactions. This section of the chapter will review personal barriers faced by students who are undocumented.

Personal Barriers

Fear and Disclosure

College students who are undocumented may fear that others will discover their status. Research has indicated that many students who are undocumented are fearful and anxious of being identified on campus; they do not want their legal status to be compromised (Huber & Malagon, 2007; Contreras, 2009; Perez et al, 2010; Muñoz, 2016; Rondón, 2018). Additionally, the fear and anxiety felt by students is also a result of discovering their own status and discrimination they experience (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2015; Torres & Wicks-Asbun, 2014). In fact, many students who are undocumented do not discover their status until the ages of 16 to 18, a pivotal time as they navigate adulthood (Gonzales, 2011).

In Contreras's (2009) interviews of 20 Latino and students who are undocumented, from different institutions in Washington State, the students disclosed that they lived in a state of fear; they were hesitant to disclose their status and lived in the shadows. After the enactment of DACA, studies demonstrated that fear was still prevalent. In a nationwide survey of 909 students, Suárez-Orozco et al. (2015) found that anxiety, deportation, and detention concerns were present among this group. The qualitative study conducted by Muñoz (2016) identified the fluidity of fear as one of its top findings, that is, fear both prevented and influenced students' sharing their identities. As they fear deportation for themselves and their families, the students have issues with trusting faculty members or student affairs professionals (Contreras, 2009; Stableton & Aleixo, 2015).

Conversely, Seif (2016) declared that many students who are undocumented disclose their status to others as they seek support and information. Through observation of legislative

hearings, viewings of YouTube videos, reading blogs and news articles, and interviews with

students who are undocumented, the author was able to find numerous examples of students who

are undocumented who were open about their status. Seif (2016) found that students who are

undocumented support one another and engage in advocacy due to their public disclosure and

self-definitions of who they are. Similarly, Muñoz (2016) discovered that students' activism

alleviated their fears and increased their confidence as they learned how to navigate the system.

Lastly, students in her study revealed that they could educate others about immigration due to

their status. While there are students who are fearful of revealing their status, others use their

status to advocate and educate others.

Discrimination

Students who are undocumented may experience discrimination by institutional agents.

Over 67% of the students in Suárez-Orozco et al.'s (2015) study spoke about recent acts of

discrimination toward them due to their status. Researchers have also found that students who

are undocumented or foreign born experienced negative classroom behaviors (Stebleton, Rose-

Banik, Greene, & DeAngelo, 2017). Stebleton et al. (2017) interviewed 103 immigrant students

across the U.S. and reported that students heard faculty make biased and insensitive remarks and

saw them treat students differently because of their race. A more recent study also highlights the

difficulty students experience when institutional agents learn their status. In Rondón's (2018)

phenomenological research, one of the participants revealed that institutional agents became less

welcoming upon learning his undocumented status. The unfair interactions experienced in

addition to the campus climate thus affect the anxiety faced by students who are undocumented,

permeate their everyday life with stress and discomfort, and make them leery of whom they can trust. As such, these students may not take advantage of resources for fear of being identified.

Self-esteem

The self-esteem and overall mental well-being of students who are undocumented is affected by their experiences and emotions. In Gonzales, Suárez-Orozco, and Dedios-Sanguineti's (2013) review of four qualitative studies, many participants learned that they were undocumented at a pivotal point in their lives, and this led them to question their identity and future goals and worry about how others perceived them. Furthermore, the use of the term "illegal" in the media and in politics also affects the self-esteem of students who are undocumented (Gonzales et al., 2013; Torres & Wicks-Asbun, 2014). Both Gonzales et al. (2013) and Torres and Wicks-Asbun (2014) agree that the term implies that illegal individuals do not belong, therefore, the messages lead to fear, shame, embarrassment, loneliness, distrust, and the inability to connect with others. As these feelings are internalized by students who are undocumented, they become part of their identity and influence their mental well-being (Gonzales et al., 2013; Torres & Wicks-Asbun, 2014).

Economic Background

Financial concerns and the low-income background of students who are undocumented are also significant barriers to their pursuit of education. In 2009, Passel and Cohn reported that unauthorized individuals in this country typically make below the median household income. Gonzales, Terriquez, and Ruszczyk's (2014) analysis of the first nationwide survey of DACA recipients, the National UnDACAmented Research Survey (NURP), also recorded that three

quarters of the 2,381 respondents received free or reduced-price lunch in high school due to their family's low-income background. The UndocuScholars Project suggests that 61.4% of students who are undocumented have annual family incomes of $30,000 or less and over 72% must work while in school to assist their family (Teranishi, Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco, 2015). In her dissertation, Chen (2013) also disclosed that everyone in her sample had an annual household income of less than $45,000. More recently, Golash-Boza and Valdez (2018) conducted five focus groups with a total of 35 California students who are undocumented and found a majority of their parents had an annual income of less than $25,000. Due to the low-income background of students who are undocumented, college affordability is a major concern (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2015).

Before the passage of the California DREAM Act, which allows students who are undocumented to qualify for state aid and private scholarships, Person et al. (2017) reported that paying for college was the main barrier faced by this population of students. Similarly, Stebleton and Aleixo's (2015) study, which took place in a Midwestern university and was conducted prior to the state's DREAM ACT implementation, also reported financial concerns as a barrier to college enrollment. In more recent times, Rondón (2018) also cites the cost of tuition and low-economic backgrounds as challenges to higher education. If individuals who are undocumented are able to enroll, their fear and anxiety may only be increased as they struggle to pay for college. Despite the passing of ISRT in some states, federal tuition assistance in the form of Work Study, Pell grants, and student loans is non-existent for students who are undocumented, as they are ineligible to apply for this aid (Pérez, 2015).

Tuition costs

While granting in-state tuition rates to students who are undocumented does not guarantee their college completion, proponents say it does allow for educational access and therefore a chance at economic success. In Flores's (2010) quantitative study of 126 Latino undocumented high school and college students or recent college graduates, the author revealed that in-state tuition policies increased the likelihood of college enrollment by undocumented individuals. She reported that nine states had positive enrollment effects once tuition policies were put into place for students who are undocumented (Flores, 2010). In another study, college matriculation increased for noncitizen Mexicans and undocumented Hispanic students offered in-state tuition rates (Thangasamy and Horan, 2016). In their study, Darolia and Potochnick (2015) suggested that enrollment was increased due to the passing of in-state tuition policies for 18-to-24-year olds. However, Darolia and Potuchnick (2015) and Conger and Chellman (2013) pointed out that students who are undocumented are less likely to enroll at higher-cost, four-year institutions due to the lack of financial aid and necessity of employment. Additionally, Chen's (2013) study pointed out that many students attend part-time due to cost.

Despite enrollment in a lower-cost community college, however, students in Rondón's (2018) study were financially stressed. By comparison, Golash-Boza and Valdez's (2018) study also found students who are undocumented to be financially stressed even though they were eligible for state aid and there were supportive on-campus measures in place such as undocumented student groups and supportive institutional agents at their four-year institution. The cost of tuition and living expenses were a large obstacle for the students in this study (Golash-Boza & Valdez, 2018). Access to education is thus limited for students who are

undocumented due to their low-income background, financial costs, living expenses, and the need to work.

Summary

Figure 3 shows a summary of the challenges faced by college students who are undocumented in the U.S. The challenges prevent many students from completing their college degree. The conceptual framework for this study is included in the figure, as it aligns with the institutional and personal obstacles experienced by students. From a CRT viewpoint, government policies, discrimination, systemic structures and/or microaggressions may be barriers to student economic and educational success. Institutional agents may help or hinder these barriers. Additionally, students' fear due to their immigration status is also a factor that influences their experiences and arises from a LatCrit perspective. The lack of awareness, knowledge, skills, and action undertaken by institutional agents may limit the support they are provided. These obstacles also promote feelings of anxiety that affect student self-esteem as they attempt to navigate a journey that is unclear with limited guidance.

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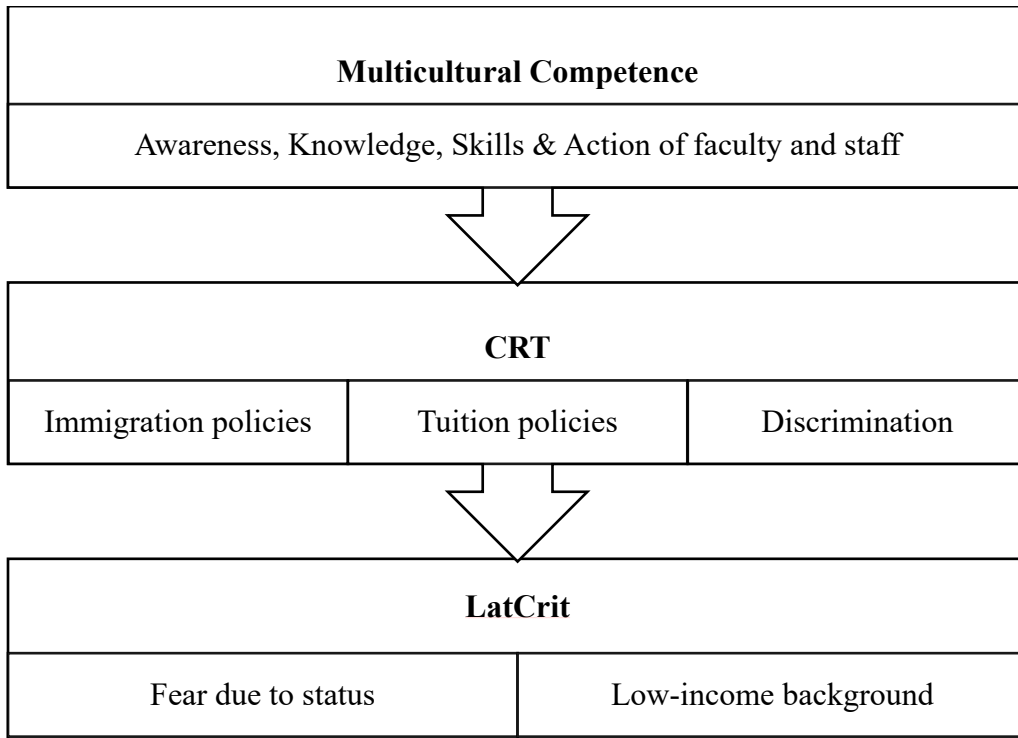
Figure 3 Summary of the Challenges Faced by Students who are Undocumented

Institutional Agent Support

College students who are undocumented may have personal and institutional support that guide their educational experience. For instance, student affairs professionals often "engage with those who embrace different social identities and come from different backgrounds" (Griffin, 2017, p. 82). Throughout the literature, family, parents, student organizations, the internet, mentors, faculty, staff, peers, campus support programs, and civic engagement arose as support systems named by undocumented Latino students attending institutions in this country (Huber & Malagon, 2007; Contreras, 2009; Perez et al, 2010; Stebleton & Aleixo, 2015). Huber and Malagon (2007) identified four areas as factors for degree attainment: role of family, campus

climate, role modeling and mentorship, and financial aid. Mentorship was also listed in Contreras' (2009) study. The research cited provides evidence of the personal support that may be provided to college students who are undocumented.

It is imperative that institutional agents are aware of institutional resources and policies as well as the personal and educational needs of students who are undocumented to provide appropriate guidance. In a mixed methods study conducted by Person, Keeton, Medina, Gonzalez, and Minero (2017), the authors found that 33% of the 55 surveyed Mexican students who are undocumented felt institutional agents knew their educational and personal obstacles. Nevertheless, the same study revealed that institutional agents have limited information to serve this population of students (Person et al., 2017). Furthermore, a segment of institutional agents may not even be aware if their institution has a position or policy surrounding students who are undocumented. In a 2011 study by the National Forum, 17 percent of financial aid professionals were not aware of any institutional policies regarding students who are undocumented (Barnhardt, Ramos, and Reyes, 2013; Burkhardt, Ortega, Vidal Rodriguez, Frye, Nellum, Reyes, & Hernandez, 2011). The individuals in admissions and registrar areas were also uninformed about institutional practices. In the same study, 50 percent of participants were not cognizant of any institutional guidelines.

Despite the unawareness or inattention to policies and practices concerning students who are undocumented, a number of studies have illustrated the role institutional agents provide to the students. For instance, Stebleton and Aleixo's (2015) study found institutional agents were essential in providing support and information to this group of students. In their study of nine Latino students who were undocumented and attending a PWI, qualitative data revealed that the

students felt validated by welcoming behaviors exhibited by institutional agents, which allowed them to open up and share their stories. The researchers learned that while some faculty were surprised about learning a student's status, others, especially those who shared lived experiences of race/ethnicity, were more likely to be supportive (Stebleton & Aleixo, 2015). In another study of foreign-born students, including those who identified as undocumented, the researchers made a similar conclusion, that is, positive faculty behaviors corroborated students' feelings of acceptance (Stebleton et al., 2017). In both studies, faculty addressed the immigrant experience in class or had assignments surrounding immigration issues (Stebleton & Aleixo, 2015; Stebleton et al., 2017). Responses from the sampled students were favorable, as the discussions or assignments related to their feelings of acceptance (Stebleton et al., 2017). Thus, institutional agents must consciously address the immigration experience in and outside of class to provide students who are undocumented a welcoming environment.

Studies of students who are undocumented have provided evidence that support of faculty and administrators is crucial to their persistence (Bjorkland, 2018). The studies cited above provide evidence of the important role faculty have in helping students who are undocumented feel valued and accepted in the classroom. This ties in to hooks's (1994) assertion that students are more likely to participate in classroom discussions if they believe it is related to their situation. Ladson-Billings and Tate (2009) state that many teachers hold a view that classrooms should be color-blind or race neutral. The above studies demonstrate the importance of bringing in varied perspectives to assignments or discussions. In this case, these acts helped a marginalized population feel validated. Accordingly, the importance and impact of supportive

behavior and resources correlates with positive academic performances for students who are undocumented (Perez, Espinoza, Ramos, Coronado, & Cortes, 2009; Stebleton & Aleixo, 2015).

<center>Institutional Context</center>

While faculty and staff are grouped together as institutional agents in this research, each group has varied professional development related to diverse students. Faculty training for working with diverse students covers "curriculum content and designs, instructional materials and resources, teaching techniques, and assessment procedures that are responsive to their cultural heritages and personal experiences" (Gay, 2010, p. 141). In student affairs, professionals learn how to view students holistically through "graduate preparation programs," "staff development programs," and "professional development competencies" (Magolda & Carnaghi, 2017, p. 537). Interestingly, Magolda and Carnaghi (2017) write that much of the available professional development refers to "diversity training where one learns about 'the other' yet misses the opportunity to examine one's own assumptions and privilege" (p. 542).

The training of student affairs professionals and faculty concerning undocumented student assistance is left predominantly to each institution to plan and implement, with most programs geared to those working in admissions and financial aid areas. Oseguera, Flores, and Burciaga (2010) argue that fluctuating state and institutional policies are inadequately communicated to those that most frequently engage with students who are undocumented. One example to counteract that argument is found at the City University of New York (CUNY). Since 2008, CUNY has offered institutional support for front-line personnel in admissions, financial aid, and the registrar's office (Nienhusser, 2014). Through workshops, meetings, and

trainings, information regarding ISRT policies is distributed to the campus community (Nienhusser, 2014). Monthly meetings between senior leaders were also reported as well as a conference that focused on student barriers (Nienhusser, 2014). In addition, staff and students receive information via manuals and websites dedicated to undocumented student eligibility. The various programs provide much-need information to institutional agents working with students who are undocumented.

One state, however, has created a statewide training program to provide information on ISRT. In 2011, the Illinois DREAM act was signed into law and established a DREAM Fund Commission (Illinois Dream Act, 2012). The commission is responsible for scholarships for the state's undocumented high school graduates. It also explicitly created a training program for high school counselors, college admissions, and financial aid staff. The Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) is charged with disseminating information on its website. A review of its website revealed a host of information for students and educators from nonprofits and community organizations via links to other sites. Most relevant to this proposal is the Sharing the Dream conference sponsored by the Illinois Association for College Admission Counseling. The day-long event covers advocacy, best practices, and recommendations to support students who are undocumented (College Advising, n.d.). Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU) also developed the Undocumented Student Project, which offers a six-hour training program for staff. Upon program completion, participants earn a sticker that they may display on their office door (Mendoza, 2016). This public display of support is comparable to what LGBT Safe Space training participants receive to display their commitment to serving as an ally (Poynter & Tubbs, 2008).

In a case study about a student attending a small, private, suburban liberal arts college, Barnhart, Ramos, and Reyes (2013) describe the school's initiative to develop staff training about financial aid procedures for students who are undocumented. Essentially, the institution is transparent about its embracement of global boundaries. Through this lens they admit students who are undocumented and train admissions and financial aid staff on application of said policy. While it was not clear if the institution was in a state with ISRT, the training program for staff may have been more feasible to offer due to its small size. However, similar to Oseguera et al. (2010), the authors also reported that other student affairs professionals were missing academic advising and career counseling direction to best support students who are undocumented (Barnhart, Ramos, & Reyes, 2013).

Conversely, dissertation research on an institution with an UndocAlly program did not reveal positive results. UndocAlly training programs provide institutional agents with tools to understand the undocumented student experience and provide support (Sanchez & So, 2015). Through her dissertation, Mouris (2018) evaluated how student affairs professionals served and supported students who are undocumented. Through 12 interviews at a public four-year institution in the U.S., she ascertained two major findings. First, there was no process for administrators to follow on how to best support and serve students who are undocumented. Their learning was self-initiated as there was no formal on-boarding for student affairs professionals. While there was an UndocAlly training program, participants reported that it covered basic information but did not cover application of knowledge in different situations. Institutional agents also worked in a climate with inconsistent department initiatives and no organizational directives. They also reported that they did not have data to help them identify

this population. Secondly, Mouris found that not only did professionals lack the knowledge and skills to work with this population, they were not held accountable by the university. While this study was conducted at only one institution, it serves to emphasize that training must also align with institutional values.

Another example of institutional support is found in the Undocumented Student Program (USP) at the University of California Berkeley, the first university program dedicated to this population of students (Sanchez & So, 2015). The USP program began serving students in 2012 and had over 118 students pass through in its first year, exceeding initial expectations (Sanchez & So, 2015). By 2014, USP had provided approximately 380 students with academic and legal services (Sanchez & So, 2015). The program has a five-year strategic plan that includes increased funding to support housing, graduate students, and food security. This program has been at the forefront of university initiatives for students who are undocumented due to its location and number of students served.

Similar to USP, the DREAMzone professional development program for higher education staff provides awareness, education, and tools to meet the needs of college students who are undocumented in Arizona (Cisneros & Cadenas, 2017). Researchers studied whether the program advances institutional agents' self-efficacy and abilities when working with college students who are undocumented (Cisneros & Cadenas, 2017). Cisneros and Cadenas (2017) found that in the short term, they were equipped to work with students who are undocumented, but additional testing suggested that institutional agents did not feel qualified in the long term due to their inability to make changes to the campus climate. Colleges and universities must then make training and support part of their institutional strategies so that institutional agents

may best serve all students (Cisneros & Cadenas, 2017). While different in size, both the USP program and DREAMZone offer examples of how universities are assisting students who are undocumented and institutional agents.

Institutional policy and programs affecting students who are undocumented may be informed through self-assessment tools. In a study on California institutions with established undocumented student centers, private scholarships, or other inclusive activities, Southern (2016) utilized a framework for institutions similar to the Campus Pride index. The Campus Pride Index is an evaluative tool used by colleges to see how they impart inclusive and supportive campuses for LGBTQ students (Southern, 2016). Southern's (2016) study used the tool for student affairs reflection on how their institution addresses the academic and socioemotional needs of their students who are undocumented. In their study of community colleges, Nienhusser and Espino (2017) proposed the undocumented/DACAmented status competency (UDSC) as a framework institutional agents could use when working with this population of students. Through the model, which includes awareness of, knowledge of, and skills regarding undocumented/DACAmented students, institutional agents were asked about their practices. The two tools demonstrate the growing awareness of the role of institutional agents and higher education institutions to provide academic and personal support to students who are undocumented. Additionally, any support provided must be continually evaluated, as future government policy is uncertain.

Additional literature provides recommendations for institutional agents that include development of supportive and inclusive policies and programs to facilitate an understanding of social justice (Chen & Rhoads, 2016, Muñoz, 2016). To foster student development, one

recommendation for faculty is to join forces with academic and student affairs (Stebleton & Aleixo, 2015). The strength of two units working together will push forward institutional changes.   Lastly, institutional agents are encouraged to partner with community agencies for relevant information and resources (Chen & Rhoads, 2016). Missing from the literature is how this should all be undertaken given different institutional sizes and cultures.

Further understanding of specific programming on how institutional agents gain competency when working with immigrant students and how they learn of resources is important in assisting other similarly engaged agents. In the context of states and institutions, practices may differ based on politics and organizational culture. Additionally, knowing how institutional agents have navigated their campuses, or worked with comparably positioned donors and faculty (Muñoz, 2016) is crucial in a time of political uncertainty as it relates to this group of students. Nienhusser (2014) asserted that limited research exists on how student affairs professionals interpret rules related to in-state tuition for students who are undocumented. Therefore, institutional support is necessary to assist students who are undocumented with the tools needed to not only enroll but to persist in higher education.

<u>Summary</u>

Students who are undocumented have had to navigate their educational journey with a lack of immigration reform. Furthermore, many barriers in this country are due to financial insecurity and long-standing institutional systems put in place to advance majority interests. Despite these challenges, many individuals who are undocumented aspire to and work toward a college degree.

Institutional agents play an important role in advocating for the needs of students who are undocumented. Their role empowers students' self-efficacy, acceptance, validation, and activism. However, they must guide students given the intersectionality of their salient identities. It is pertinent that institutional agents work in supportive environments themselves and that institution-wide support for both staff and students is available. Nevertheless, continued professional development of institutional agents is needed on students who are undocumented. All must make a concerted effort to support this population of students who are impacted by fear, financial struggles, and a precarious position in society due to oppression and power.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The objective of this study was to learn about the experiences of institutional agents working with college students who are undocumented. Using a phenomenological approach, the overall experiences of institutional agents are explored through an interpretation of their stories. Initially, this study was proposed using mixed methods research. However, due to the lack of quantitative participation, that component was not used as originally intended, and more emphasis was placed on the qualitative interviews.

Chapter 3 includes the study's research questions and rationale for the methodology. Additionally, the chapter describes the sample selection process, participants, instruments, and data collection procedure and analysis. Lastly, issues of validity and limitations of this research are discussed.

Research Questions

Institutional agents may not know how to best support students who have disclosed either that they are DACA recipients or that they are undocumented. Institutional agents may lack the experience or training needed to successfully assist students who are undocumented in their educational journey (Perez et al., 2010; Stebleton & Aleixo, 2015.) The exploration of the awareness and knowledge of institutional agents who have worked with students who are undocumented, examined in this research, will inform institutions and professional development programs.

This research was investigated through the main research question: What are the experiences of institutional agents who interact with students who are undocumented? Sub-questions include:

1. What awareness and knowledge do institutional agents have of the personal needs and barriers experienced by students who are undocumented?

2. What guidance and/or support, if any, do institutional agents provide to students who have disclosed their undocumented status?

3. How do training and/or workshops support institutional agents who work with students who are undocumented?

Rationale

This study focused on qualitative methodology to examine the experiences of institutional agents who interacted with students who are undocumented. Qualitative research, per Denzin and Lincoln (2011), "is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. Qualitative research consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible" (p. 3). Merriam & Tisdell (2016) write that qualitative study allows for an understanding of "how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences" (p. 15). Johnson & Christensen (2017) describe qualitative approaches as useful to explain phenomena, examine human behavior, and view how individuals construct their perspectives. Qualitative methodology is therefore suitable for studies that explore the experiences, skills, and actions of a group of people. The participants' perspectives are important in answering research questions. Thus, this method was

appropriate to study and understand the experiences of institutional agents working with students who are undocumented, to include their personal insight and day-to-day actions taken to support students.

Preissle, Denzin and Lincoln, and van Manen contributed to qualitative research definitions, and all were "interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed; that is, how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p.15). The overlapping characteristics of qualitative study, among the various researchers, is that "the focus is on process, understanding, and meaning; the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis; the process is inductive; and the product is richly descriptive" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 15). While no one theory addresses the phenomenon of working with students who are undocumented, this study's theoretical framework, research questions, and methodology provided a process from which to gather and interpret data on participants' experiences. Through interviews, the researcher gathered participants' own words on their awareness, knowledge, and support of students who are undocumented. Lastly, through the analysis of the collected narratives, the researcher engaged in inductive reasoning, that is, the building of themes (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 17). The researcher, therefore, determines how participants are understanding or making meaning of their experiences.

Patton (2015) writes that "the personal and interpersonal nature of qualitative inquiry is its great strength" (p. xiv). Another advantage of qualitative research is that it allows for interpretation of people's experiences and how they assign meaning (Johnson & Christensen, 2017; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Additionally, qualitative approaches study issues in depth and

with much detail, albeit in a small sample size, without categories of analysis (Patton, 2015).

Criticism of qualitative methodology pertains to how data is collected: information is gathered primarily from interviewees' viewpoints, studies do not take place in natural settings, and interviewer bias may influence answers (Creswell, 2014). Despite these shortcomings, this method was considered appropriate to collect rich and deep information from institutional agents who directly interacted with students who are undocumented.

<div align="center">

Research Design
</div>

The research design for this study was a hermeneutical phenomenological approach. Edmund Husserl is credited with inaugurating the phenomenological movement at the start of the 20th century, as a "new way of doing philosophy" (Moran, 2000, p. 1). Husserl (1964) claimed that the study of human thought and action required different methods than those used for science or physical objects. Moran (2000) writes that phenomenology was therefore seen as a practice, "to get to the truth of matters, to describe phenomena, in the broadest sense as whatever appears in the manner in which it appears, that is, as it manifests itself to consciousness, to the experiencer" (p. 4). Patton (2015) argues phenomenological approaches explain "how people experience some phenomenon – how they perceive it, describe it, feel it, and talk about it with others" (p. 115). Moreover, Creswell and Creswell (2018) write that "a phenomenological study describes the common meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept" (p. 75). Laverty (2003) writes that it "is descriptive and focuses on the structure of experience, the organizing principles that give form and meaning to the life world" (p. 27). Phenomenology, therefore, describes how humans experience a part of their lives, from their own perception.

The specific phenomenon that this study explored is the overall experience of institutional agents working with students who are undocumented. This includes the awareness and knowledge of institutional agent practices as told in their own words. Narratives of their day-to-day work, the emotions they felt, and their descriptions of the students they work with provide information to understand the institutional agent experience. Additionally, through the design of the study, institutional agent opinions and viewpoints explained commonalities among their professional work. Johnson & Christensen (2010) describe the unity individuals experience in a phenomenon as "an essence, or invariant structure, of the experience (a part of the experience that is common or consistent across the research participants)" (p. 446). The essence of supporting this population of students is common across institutional agents; it is exemplified through identification of barriers, opportunities, and expression of sentiments. Phenomenology is, therefore, appropriate to describe and interpret these factors across institutional agents.

Phenomenological research may also be characterized as descriptive or interpretive, depending on the underlying philosophy and approach to methodology. Husserl's approach focused on "understanding of beings or phenomena," however, Heidegger's hermeneutical phenomenology "is concerned with the life world or human experience as it is lived" (Laverty, 2003, p. 24). Van Manen (2016) also argues that "all description is ultimately interpretation" (p. 180). Hermeneutical research is therefore "interpretive and concentrated on historical meanings of experience and their developmental and cumulative effects on individual and social levels" (Laverty, 2003, p. 27). Therefore, it also considers what is known from the researcher's past experiences. Due to the researcher's background in student affairs, an interpretive focus was determined to best explore institutional agent experiences. For Heidegger, "meaning is found as

we are constructed by the world while at the same time we are constructing this world from our own background and experiences" (Laverty, 2003, p. 24). Laverty (2003), van Manen (2016), and Patton (2015) all posit that hermeneutic phenomenology allows for understanding through a researcher's explanation of the experience being studied.

Another difference between the philosophers Husserl and Heidegger found in hermeneutic phenomenology is that it does not promote bracketing, or the setting aside of biases and assumptions (Laverty, 2003, p. 28). Titelman (1979) writes that hermeneutical tradition utilizes the researcher's experience and understanding of a phenomena as a method for serving "as a bridge or access for elucidating and interpreting the meaning of the phenomenon" (Titelman, 1979, p. 188). The researcher's own experience was important for the exploration and analysis of the data: the student services background assisted in understanding the act of working with students, in identifying subject matter phrases, and in subsequent interpretation related to this topic.

Hein and Austin (2001) ascertain that phenomenological research does not follow a particular methodology, selected procedure serves only as a guideline, and those used depend on "the purposes of the researcher, his or her specific skills and talents, and the nature of the research question and data collected" (p. 3). Van Manen (2016) does outline a way to explore the research in the absence of a fixed set of procedures. His approaches for the hermeneutical tradition include six activities that are interrelated, and not completed in isolation:

> (1) turning to a phenomenon which seriously interests us and commits us to the world;
>
> (2) investigating experience as we live it rather than as we conceptualize it; (3) reflecting
>
> on the essential themes which characterize the phenomenon; (4) describing the

phenomenon through the art of writing and rewriting; (5) maintaining a strong and

oriented pedagogical relation to the phenomenon; (6) balancing the research context by

considering parts and whole. (p.31)

An interpretation of the institutional agent stories is developed through the researcher's

experience in higher education, interest in the topic, and analysis of the narratives collected.

Setting

This study examined the experiences of institutional agents who advise and interact with

students who are undocumented at U.S colleges and universities. To ensure that the experiences

of individuals explored aligned with the research questions, colleges or universities that served as

TheDream.US partners served as the primary setting for this study. Institutions that partner with

the TheDream.US are open to students who are undocumented or have received temporary

protected status; there are currently 70 partner colleges in 16 states and in Washington, D.C.

(Our Partner Colleges, 2020). TheDream.US serves not only students who are undocumented,

but low-income, first-generation students. The institutional criteria were important for the

research questions, participants, and methodology.

Participants

Creswell and Clark (2018) state that qualitative sample size should allow for the

emergence of meaningful themes to explain quantitative results. However, the data collected,

analysis, and resources must be sufficient to complete a study, and the number of interviews

therefore varies per study (Merriam, 2009). Patton (2015) further expounds that "there are no

rules for sample size in qualitative inquiry" (p. 311).

Survey data was collected from a total of 18 respondents, and qualitative data was collected from 9 participants. All participants had interactions with students who have disclosed their status as undocumented or DACA recipient. The participants for this study were intentionally recruited from the Scholars' Partner College Directory listed on TheDream.US website. The directory, as of January 2020, included 275 institutional agents at the colleges that partner, or may have formerly partnered, with TheDream.US. Two additional agents were added to TheDream.US list in March 2020. An institutional representative is designated a Scholar Advisor, and he or she answers applicant and student questions (Our Partner Colleges, 2020).

Participants must have specifically had experience with advising, counseling, teaching, or providing information to students who are undocumented. It should be noted that faculty were included in the directory and intentionally included, as they may serve dual roles as advisors or student organization advisors.

The intentional recruitment of institutional agents from specific campuses calls for purposeful sampling (Creswell & Clark, 2018). Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) write that purposeful sampling is when a researcher wants to select a sample that represents a specific group or unique cases for the focus of a study.

Permissions

A proposal for this study was submitted to the university's Institutional Review Board (IRB) in February 2020, for review and approval. Due to the low quantitative response rate, the study was modified to focus on the qualitative phenomenological design. A revised IRB was submitted and approved in March 2020 and again in April 2020 (APPENDIX A).

Instruments

Questionnaires

To collect descriptive information and to determine who would be contacted for an interview, a survey, also called a questionnaire, was sent out to the sample of 277 institutional agents. A survey is a qualitative instrument that allows for the collection of attitudes, beliefs, and behavior that participants self-report (Johnson & Christensen, 2017; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Through this self-reported approach, participants were given the opportunity to provide demographic information, indicate their training and level of awareness and understanding of the needs of students who are undocumented, and evaluate the support they provide. Due to the sensitive nature of the topic, the survey instrument was chosen as it was advantageous for keeping participants anonymous.

Upon review of the Explanation of Research, the next survey question, as seen in Appendix E, collected data to ensure the participants met the study's eligibility criteria. Question 2 asked participants if a student disclosed his or her identity as undocumented or a DACA recipient through an interaction. If the answer was yes, respondents were prompted to answer Question 2(a), which asked for the ethnic background of the majority of students that they served. Since LatCrit is used in the theoretical framework, and due to the majority of students who are undocumented originating from Latin America, answers to that question confirmed that institutional agents worked with Latino students.

Question 3 asked respondents to identify if they have attended a training or staff development session related to students who are undocumented. If respondents answered yes,

they were filtered to Question 3(a), which asked if a one-hour, half-day, full-day, or other session was attended.

The second section of the survey included questions and responses in what is referred to as a Likert scale (Johnson & Christensen, 2017). In Questions 4 through 11, participants were asked to respond with "Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, or Strongly Agree." A middle rating was included, as Johnson and Christensen (2017) write that leaving out a middle option may annoy a participant or be viewed as aggressive. Responses to all questions are listed from negative to positive order in a non-leading manner (Johnson & Christensen, 2017). Additionally, the wording of the questions used the terms "DACA recipient" and "undocumented students," as a review of the USRC's websites revealed they are more commonly used than "students who are undocumented."

Questions 4, 5, and 6 asked respondents to indicate their level of familiarity regarding the needs of students who are undocumented, barriers experienced, and resources available to the students at their campus. Questions 7 and 8 asked them to evaluate their knowledge about federal and state legislation surrounding students who are undocumented. Lastly, Questions 9, 10, and 11 asked participants to identify whether they have actively provided support to students who are undocumented. They were asked if they had referred students to on-campus or off-campus resources or had sought information on how to best meet the student needs. Grouping the content by more than one question ensures that the intended concepts of awareness, knowledge, and skills are measured.

The last section of the survey contains Questions 12 through 15, which are demographic in nature. This section was placed at the end as they are easy to answer (Johnson & Christensen,

2017; Nardi, 2006). As seen in Appendix E, Question 12 asked about state of employment.

Question 13 asked the type of institution they are employed at, with Question 14 asking about

their role as faculty, staff, or graduate assistant. Question 15 asked respondents to indicate the

functional area that best described their department of employment. Questions 12 through 15

allow for descriptive statistics of institutional agents by state, type of school, and functional area.

The descriptive statistics are useful for comparing answers across categories.

Interviews

      This instrument was chosen as it allowed for rich explanation of institutional agent

experiences when working with students who are undocumented. According to Patton (2014),

interviews provide direct feedback from unobservable items, such as others' descriptions about

activities, their opinions, feelings, and knowledge. The interview tool also allowed participants

to answer the same open-ended questions, which allowed for ease of data comparison and

reduced interviewer bias (Patton, 2015).

      Following a phenomenological approach, the interview instrument included questions

that were open-ended, adaptable, and used as a guide to explore agents' experiences (Merriam,

2009). The instrument included a protocol of semi-structured interview questions, meaning the

prompts were flexible so that the participant could respond from their perspective (Merriam,

2009). Van Manen (2016) states that "the interview process needs to be disciplined by the

fundamental question that promoted the need for the interview in the first place" (p. 66).

Therefore, the research question informs the direction of the interview.

      To demonstrate alignment of the research questions with the interview questions, Table 3

is included below. The main research question and sub-questions are included in the table.

The interview protocol followed was the same for all participants. The full protocol is included in Appendix F.

The first question asked participants minimum demographic information, that is, in what department is their position situated, and the length of time they had been in their current position. Patton (2015) advises that interviews begin with straightforward questions that are easy to answer. Patton (2015) also writes that "the interviewee needs to become actively involved in providing descriptions as soon as possible instead of becoming conditioned to providing short-answer, routine responses to uninteresting categorical questions" (p. 446).

The next question asked participants about their overall experiences working with students who are undocumented. The questions were asked in the present tense as Patton (2015) writes that those are easier to answer compared to past or future questions. Participants were encouraged to respond descriptively, meaning they were probed to provide details (Patton, 2015).

The second question encouraged participants to respond descriptively, as it asked for a specific example in which they had to assist a student who is undocumented. This was followed by probing questions, such as, what type of issue arose? How was it resolved? Patton (2015), states that "probes should focus on eliciting greater details" (p. 445). Van Manen (2016) also cites a need for researchers to keep participants focused and avoid generalizing.

Interview questions 3, 4, and 5 concern the awareness of participants regarding the personal and institutional barriers that students who are undocumented may experience. Interview questions 6, 7, and 8 are more personal in nature. Question 6 asks participants to describe how their own awareness and knowledge influences their support of students. Question

7 asks participants to evaluate their own strengths and weakness in providing support. Question

8 asks, how do you stay up to date on policies related to students who are undocumented?

Subsequent questions asked participants to discuss their training experiences and provide

recommendations for future sessions.

Table 3 Research Questions Aligned with Interview Questions

Research Questions	Interview Question
Main question: What are the experiences of institutional agents who advise and work with students who are undocumented?	1, 2
Q1: What awareness and knowledge do institutional agents have of the personal needs and barriers experienced by students who are undocumented?	3, 4, 5
Q2: What guidance and/or support, if any, do institutional agents provide to students who have disclosed their undocumented status?	6, 7, 8
Q3: How do training and/or workshops support institutional agents who work with students who are undocumented?	9, 10, 11

Data Collection

Questionnaire

The 275 contacts listed in the Scholars' Partner College Directory, found on

TheDream.US website, were sent an initial email message, on March 9th, 2020, introducing them

to the study (Appendix B). Two additional institutions were added to TheDream.US partnership

in March 2020, and the two contacts were sent the survey in April 2020, which brought the total

sample up to 277. The message included the purpose of the study, the number of questions to be

answered, and time needed to complete the survey. A follow-up email was sent out the next day,

which directed participants to the Qualtrics survey link. Two follow-up email messages were

sent out to prompt additional responses. A total of 18 participants completed the survey.

The survey was delivered using Qualtrics, a platform that allows for online surveys to be created and distributed (UCF Qualtrics Overview, n.d.). The survey was not connected to an email address, and the survey link did not collect an IP Address or location. That feature was disabled in Qualtrics (Qualtrics, n.d.). Additionally, while contacts were loaded into Qualtrics, participants could opt out of survey reminders via a link at the bottom of the email message.

The last survey question asked participants to include their contact information if they would be willing to participate in a follow-up interview. If they were willing to participate, they could click on a separate link where they had the option of entering contact information. This allowed contact information to be completely separate from respondent's initial survey responses (Fowler, 2014). As questions may be considered personal, it was important that participants only revealed their name and contact information if they felt comfortable being contacted for a follow-up interview.

Qualitative

Out of the 18 survey participants, 11 indicated they would be willing to participate in a follow-up interview. Interviews were completed with 9 participants. The researcher emailed each individual to confirm that they were still interested in participating in a follow-up interview and to inquire about a date/time. The participants were able to decide on the use of audio recording, webcam, or video conferencing technology for the interview (Salmons, 2012). Eight interviews were conducted in late March and 1 interview took place in April.

All participants were emailed the explanation of benefits in a final confirmation message. At the beginning of each interview, the researcher reviewed the purpose of the study and time needed, and reminded participants of their option to disengage at any point during the interview

(Creswell & Poth, 2018). Additionally, participants were informed their names would not be used and there was no financial compensation provided for participation. Lastly, they were informed that they would receive a transcript of the interview, which they should review for clarity and accuracy.

Each participant was assigned a random pseudonym. The pseudonym was used to save the audio/video downloads, transcription files, and any notes. The data was kept in a password-protected file and password-protected laptop. Upon transcription of the data, the identifiable contact information and audio/video recordings were deleted.

Data Analysis

All data analysis involves preparing, exploring, analyzing, and representing the data, as well as interpreting the results (Creswell & Clark, 2018). The survey data was uploaded to SPSS, and descriptive statistics were run to report on frequency of institutional agent positions, type and state of institutions, and training attended. The mean, median, and mode of the awareness, knowledge, and skills constructs were also run.

After qualitative data collection, the researcher prepared the interview data for transcription with assistance from Otter.ai. Otter.ai is a computer program that allows for audio files to be uploaded and transcribed (Otter.ai, n.d.). To ensure that the interviews were correctly transcribed by the program, the researcher found it necessary to listen to each interview audio while reviewing the transcript. After all transcripts were completed, the researcher emailed them back to the respective participants. They were instructed to review the transcripts for clarity and accuracy of information provided.

A number of computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) programs are listed in the literature to help with exploring and analyzing data (Creswell & Clark, 2018; Patton, 2015). However, Bernard, Wutich, and Ryan (2017) state that data analysis may be completed "with cards or with computer software. There is no right way to do it. What matters is that the process feels comfortable and productive" (p. 112). Computer-assisted software was not utilized in this study. The researcher gained immersion with the data through listening to audio files, reviewing transcripts multiple times, and taking notes. In reviewing the data, the researcher kept in mind that hermeneutical analysis does not specify what needs to be discovered but rather wants to "find out what a certain phenomenon means and how it is experienced (van Manen, 2016, p. 29).

Max van Manen (2016) describes phenomenological themes as structures of experience, that is, how elements of life are lived (p. 79). He understands the process of making meaning of experiences as "insightful invention, discovery or disclosure—grasping and formulating a thematic understanding is not a rule-bound process but a free act of 'seeing' meaning" (p. 80). The identification of themes does not "completely unlock the deep meaning, the full mystery, the enigmatic aspects of the experiential meaning of a notion," however, van Manen recognizes that it provides structure to the data analysis process (p.80).

In reviewing data and developing themes, three approaches were used: "1) the wholistic or sententious approach; 2) the selective or highlighting approach; and 3) the detailed or line-by-line approach" (van Manen, 2016, p. 94).   With the theoretical framework and research questions as a lens, the researcher first read through each transcript multiple times while attempting to make meaning of overall and holistic institutional agent experiences. This process

began when the researcher first listened to the audio to make sure the entire interview was captured, and then while editing the transcript and ensuring that it accurately reflected the dialogue. Next, the researcher read and highlighted phrases on each transcript, and made notations for each transcript in a notebook. The selected phrases categorized what institutional agents went through in their work with students who are undocumented and were related to the research questions. Lastly, the larger phrases were broken into smaller segments, again to search for additional detail that revealed further information on topics related to the institutional agent experiences. At this point, themes were identified for each of the phrases. Throughout analysis the researcher interpreted participant meanings that were explicitly stated and others that were implied. Additionally, the researcher was reflective of "theoretical commitments, personal background and experiences, gender, race, and presuppositions and biases about the phenomenon of interest" (Hein and Austin, 2001, p.14).

During the data analysis process, the researcher referred to notes taken for each interview, which also served as the reflective journal. During the third step of analysis, the researcher kept track of themes for each interview in a notebook. A document was created which included the more detailed phrases from each of the transcripts with columns for corresponding research questions, participant name, and themes. The categories or themes across transcripts were reviewed to come up with a common list and definition of each. The thematic information was also transferred from the notebook to a spreadsheet to demonstrate how it was quantified. Processes were completed multiple times until the researcher felt comfortable explaining the data to a peer reviewer.

Validity

The credibility or validity of qualitative research is difficult to ascertain. Patton (2015) writes that this is due to the researcher's judgement and biases and to the rigor of the study. This research involved an interpretation of participant's words and experiences; therefore, it was important to implement strategies to enhance its credibility. Triangulation, member checks, peer review/examination, and adequate engagement in data collection were used in this study.

Triangulation involves using multiple investigators, sources of data, or data collection methods to strengthen information and provide confidence in the findings (Denzin, 1978; Johnson & Christensen, 2009; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). While multiple interviews were used, there were similarities among the participants, most notably that they worked with a specific student population and reported many of the same experiences. However, both quantitative and qualitative instruments were used in the study, therefore, data from both could be compared with each other. While the data was not identical in the sample size, it provided information on the awareness, knowledge, and skills of institutional agents that was corroborated by the qualitative interviews. The researcher acknowledges that both methods were used in a complementary fashion (Patton, 2015, p. 663).

Member checks or respondent validation involve asking a few participants for feedback on interpretations (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In reviewing the transcripts, the researcher determined where some sentences began and others started due to pauses, filler words, and pace of speech. The researcher asked all participants to review their transcripts for clarity and accuracy. Six of the participants returned the interview transcripts, but only one included a few

minor corrections. Another participant, the seventh, was sent a few phrases to review and they were sent back with one minor correction.

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) include peer review/examination as one strategy to enhance validity. This involves discussing the process, data, findings, and interpretations with colleagues. The researcher shared the process, data, findings, and interpretations with one peer, a professional colleague who had earned an EdD in Educational Leadership. To ensure that relevant themes were identified, the peer reviewed the selected phrases and themes independently of the researcher to ensure that both were in agreement. A follow-up discussion examined the plausibility of the findings (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

The researcher attempted to establish trust with the participants so that they would be forthcoming in their answers to interview questions. All except one of the interviewees turned on their laptop camera to reflect an in-person interview. The researcher employed a conversational tone and approach; however, another validity strategy for this research was adequate engagement in data collection. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) define it as "adequate time spent collecting data such that the data become 'saturated'; this may involve seeking discrepant or negative cases" (p. 249). After the first interview, the researcher used more probing questions to ensure sufficient data was gathered. As data collection progressed, the researcher heard similar comments related to awareness, knowledge, skills, empathy, barriers, and needs of the students throughout the interviews. Since the researcher was open to participant's experiences, there was no advance identification of findings or themes, thus there was no need to look for discrepant or negative cases to disprove findings.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

The purpose of this research was to explore the awareness, knowledge, and skills of

institutional agents who interact with college students who are undocumented, to inform

professional development and practice. Chapter 4 presents a summary of participants and

findings from the survey and interview research. Demographic information is included for both

samples. This chapter is organized with each research question followed by emergent and sub-

themes.

Participants

Survey Participants

Data collected from a survey and interviews were analyzed to address the research

questions. A total of 18 individuals responded to the survey sent to a sample of 277.

Frequencies and percentages for the institution type participants are employed at are presented in

Table 4. In this survey sample, nine (50%) respondents were at four-year public institutions, five

(27.8%) were at four-year private institutions, and four (22.2%) were at two-year public

institutions.

Table 4 Participant Institution

Institution	Frequency	%
2-Year Public	4	22.2
4-Year Public	9	50.0
4-Year Private	5	27.8
Total	18	100.0

Frequencies and percentages for participants' roles are presented in Table 5. Eight

(44.4%) participants were in mid-level staff positions and six (33.3%) were in senior-level roles.

One (5.6%) faculty member is also included in this sample. Lastly, three (16.7%) participants

who indicated 'other' are employed at counseling centers or responded that they recently retired.

Table 5 Participant Role

Roles	Frequency	%
Staff: Mid-Level	8	44.4
Staff: Senior-Level	6	33.3
Faculty	1	5.6
Other	3	16.7
Total	18	100.0

The eighteen participants were employed across various departments, as listed in Table 6.

Five (27.%) worked in financial aid offices, three (16.7%) were in academic advising areas, two

(11.1%) were in multicultural student departments, one (5.6%) was in health services, and one

(5.6%) worked in international student programs. Six (33.3%) participants were employed in

areas marked as 'other.' Areas reported in the 'other' section include mental health counseling,

grant programs, student services, and provost's offices.

Table 6 Participant Department

Department	Frequency	%
Academic Advising	3	16.7
Health Services	1	5.6
Financial Aid	5	27.8
Int'l Student Programs	1	5.6
Multicultural Student Programs	2	11.1
Other	6	33.3
Total	18	100.0

Ten states were represented among participants, as seen in Table 7. California had the most participants, that is, five (27.8%), followed by three (16.7%) each in Florida and Illinois. The remaining states, Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, New York, Oregon, Texas, and Virginia were represented by one participant each.

Table 7 Participant State

States	Frequency	%
AZ	1	5.6
CA	5	27.8
CO	1	5.6
FL	3	16.7
IL	3	16.7
NV	1	5.6
NY	1	5.6
OR	1	5.6
TX	1	5.6
VA	1	5.6
Total	18	100.0

As seen in Table 8, most participants, 16 out of 18 (88.9%), had attended some type of training related to students who are undocumented. Table 9 has the breakdown of full-day, half-day, or one-hour training sessions participants attended. A total of eight (44.4%) participants reported attending one-hour training sessions, four (22.2%) indicated attendance at half-day sessions, and three (16.7%) attended full-day sessions. In the 'other' survey field, three (16.7%) participants filled in responses such as "webinars" and "trainings of varied lengths."

Table 8 Participant Training

Attended Training	Frequency	%
Yes	16	88.9
No	2	11.1
Total	18	100.0

Table 9 Length of Training Attended

Type of Training	Frequency	%
Half-day	4	22.2
Full-day	3	16.7
One-hour	8	44.4
Other	3	16.7
Total	18	100.0

Survey participants were also asked to write in the ethnic background of the majority of students that have disclosed their identity as undocumented individuals or DACA recipients. Table 10 shows that eight (44.4%) participants indicated that the majority of the students they work with are 'Latino, Latin, Latinx.' However, Hispanic, Hispanic/Latino, Mexican or Central American, and Mexican or Hispanic/Latinx were all written in to describe the students.

Table 10 Ethnic Background of Students

Ethnic background	Frequency	%
Hispanic	5	27.8
Hispanic/Latino	3	16.7
Mexican or Central American	1	5.6
Latino, Latin, Latinx	8	44.4
Mexican or Hispanic/Latinx	1	5.6
Total	18	100.0

Survey participants also answered questions designed to measure their awareness, knowledge, and skills. The mean, median, and mode in Table 11 show similar results in each category, and there is not much difference within each construct. The negative findings for skewness, also in Table 11, meant that most of the scores were at the high end of the answer scale (Lomax & Hahs-Vaughn, 2012).

Table 11 Measure of Central Tendency and Skewness and Kurtosis Statistics

	Awareness Total	Knowledge Total	Action Total
Mean	12.6	7.8	12.6
Median	12.0	8.0	12.5
Mode	12.0	8.0	12.0
SD	1.8	1.5	1.9
Skewness	-.763	-.813	-.215
Kurtosis	1.6	1.9	-.902

Interview Participants

Interviews were completed with nine participants, who were all assigned random pseudonyms. A summary description of participants is found in Table 12. Participants represented three public institutions on the West Coast, three in the Midwest, two in the Southeast, and one on the East Coast of the United States. Most participants, seven out of the nine, were senior level professionals. The gender reported on Table 12 was not asked in the survey or in the interviews and was based on the researcher's observation. Seven of the nine participants were female and two were male and they represented departments such as Multicultural or Diversity centers, Student Affairs, and Undocumented Student Resource Centers. Through the interviews, which averaged 45 minutes, the researcher learned that participants had between three and over thirty years' experience in higher education.

Table 12 Description of Interview Participants

Participant	Type of Institution	Location	Position	Gender
1-Raul	4-year private	West Coast	Staff: Senior Level	Male
2-Jason	4-year public	East Coast	Staff: Senior Level	Male
3-Diana	4-year public	Southeast	Staff: Mid-Level	Female
4-Monica	4-year public	Midwest	Staff: Senior Level	Female
5-Eliana	4-year private	Midwest	Staff: Senior Level	Female
6-Zara	4-year public	Midwest	Staff: Senior Level	Female
7-Victoria	2-year public	West Coast	Staff: Entry Level	Female
8-Danielle	4-year public	West Coast	Staff: Senior Level	Female
9-Maria	4-year public	Southeast	Staff: Senior Level	Female

The researcher gained immersion with the data by listening to audio files, reviewing transcripts multiple times, and taking notes on the transcripts. In reviewing the data, the researcher kept in mind that hermeneutical analysis does not specify what needs to be discovered but rather wants to "find out what a certain phenomenon means and how it is experienced" (van Manen, 2016, p. 29). With the research questions and theoretical framework as a lens, the researcher read through each transcript multiple times to search for descriptions of the phenomena of working with students who are undocumented. These descriptions served as themes.

<u>Research Question One</u>

What awareness and knowledge do institutional agents have of the personal needs and barriers experienced by students who are undocumented?

This question addresses the understanding that institutional agents have of the needs and barriers of students who are undocumented on a personal and school level. Participants described the anxiety students faced due to financial struggles, family challenges, and mental

health concerns. Also, participants discussed the consciousness of being empathetic in their interactions, especially as they recognized their limitations related to laws and policy.

Understanding of Financial Needs

Throughout the interviews, all nine participants mentioned that they were cognizant of students' financial hardships. The lack of financial resources was also a barrier for students, and participants could only do so much to assist, given state and federal financial laws and institutional funding.

Jason's experience is in student success and retention, and there are approximately 200 Dream Scholarship recipients at his four-year public university. He reported that the scholarship recipients received academic support, which was open to all students, and in many cases were doing well academically. However, in three different instances, he spoke about his frustration in meeting the student's financial needs. He explained there was nothing he could do to assist: "We had a difficult time because no extra funds could be used for the students. So, no state funds can be used for them specifically, nothing we offer could be offered just to the [undocumented] students." And, when asked to identify an institutional barrier, he repeated it was the lack of funding the institution or government can provide: "Again, I just think the financial, you know, we can't give them money, we can't give them any state funding, we can't do anything separate for them that we wouldn't do for other students." It was also a negative experience for Jason to not give students all that they needed, to even return home for a break. He articulated:

Some of them would have financial problems I couldn't do anything about. There's just, there is no money. We would try to get the foundation to cover some things. But when

they [the students] would say, 'Oh, I can't go [home] on spring break or I can't go home for Thanksgiving,' but we could coordinate something on campus ….That was, that was kind of tough. That was a, that was a negative for me.

Conversely, students who are undocumented and enrolled at Victoria's West Coast, two-year institution were eligible for state financial aid based on their low-income status. She explained how students' socioeconomic status added to their struggles and influenced the services provided. Victoria understood the students' situation:

If the families are struggling, the last thing that students are worried about is school, if they need to work because they have to put food on the table or rent or whatever. The first thing that's going to go is school, and it's totally understandable. So, we try to do as much as possible to ensure that they can kind of do both, whatever it is that they need with their families, but obviously stay at [NAME OF COLLEGE]. But if not, they know that they can always come back.

Victoria was able to offer the students a list of resources of where to get food, clothes, and financial assistance for rent.

Diana, a mid-level administrator at a public four-year university, speaks to the differences between undocumented students and students with DACA status at her institution. She explained that DACA recipients have some financial assistance but undocumented individuals cover all their own costs. For students with either status, however, there are not enough funds, and this adds to student stress. Diana clarified:

However, not all of them have, the scholarship called the Dream Scholarship, and not all of them have that scholarship. So therefore, a lot of them have to pay out of pocket or go

through other resources, financial resources to pay for their school. So by the start of the

semester for some of those students it can be very stressful because they don't know if

they will have all the money to come to come to school.

Additionally, the Dream Scholarship is not guaranteed each year, and DACA status for many

students is currently in a precarious situation. Diana recognized the complexity of their position:

So their situation is so complicated that you think to yourself, we create this pathway for

these students, this is going to be across the board, and it's going to go well, but no, that's

not necessarily the case. Because even though they're DACA, and even though some of

them have the Dream Scholarship, the situation is different for each one, because they

may not be able to renew their DACA next year.

Lastly, Diana speaks to the fact that politics have changed the DACA program, and in turn

students are affected, as they may not have been able to renew their DACA status in time, which

led to job losses and additional economic pressure.

Elaina, who recently retired from a private university in the Midwest, often saw students

struggling to cover the costs of tuition and their books. Part of her role was to seek resources for

low-income and undocumented students. As a senior-level staff member, she would also work

with her colleagues to help meet students' needs, for example, by making additional copies of

books available to students. She stated it was important for her to work: "[By] encouraging other

departments, asking, Have you considered making a mini library, getting all those examination

copies together, ripping out the tests, but having the books available for the students because

they can't afford it?" Another suggestion she had was to begin the process of educating students

about college earlier, in primary school, so that they were in the right mindset, and would learn

about identifying resources such as scholarships early on in their process. This was important to her due to the number of children who are undocumented in her local community.

Raul, a senior-level administrator at a four-year private university on the West Coast, described his experience with a student who had received incorrect information and was not sure if financial support would extend for another semester. He was in a state that allowed students who are undocumented to qualify for in-state financial aid. Raul explained that he did not know how the student had arrived at that situation, whether it was that they had skipped a semester or had not taken a full course load. The student ended up not having financial aid awarded for his last semester and Raul had to "strongly" advocate for the student to receive the financial support. Through his position, Raul was able to work with financial aid and help the student with his situation, which ended favorably. However, this is not always the case. Zara, a senior-level staff member at a private university in the Midwest, describes a bleaker position for her students. She explained that most of her students did not receive financial assistance from family members. She lamented: "And what legal job opportunities can they have? Not so much. A lot of times it's just - 'I need money now,' 'I need to start working to be in school,' 'I need to pay off school,' 'I need funding'." She stressed the importance for students to take advantage of the school's resources to help their professional future, if not their immediate needs.

Maria echoed many of the same sentiments as other participants. Working at a four-year public university, she spoke to the choice students need to make between working to make ends meet and additional responsibilities:

A lot of the students are working if not full time, part time, right? And that can be a distraction from their academics, right? They can't focus. We have a lot of students that

are under-enrolling because they must work full time, they have responsibilities to their

family, they have to take care of their younger siblings. It's that type of situation that we

find and then the, the financial issue. They don't have enough money to take the amount

of courses that they want. Even the students on scholarship still struggle to come up with

funding if there's a difference between their tuition and the scholarship.

When asked about institutional barriers that students face, Maria responded that institutional

barriers were related to laws, which in turn affect finances. Maria described the experience as

challenging:

The barrier would be the laws and the federal situation. It's very frustrating for us not to

be able to help the students in the ways that we would want to all the time, and that's

challenging. And even though the students understand, right, they understand their

status, they understand a lot of them understand what it means. It's still hard to deal with.

Monica, a senior staff member at a four-year public university in the Midwest, was the

one staff member designated to assist students who are undocumented. She had to assist students

navigating processes that determine their eligibility for in-state tuition. Monica told a story of a

student who found themselves in a situation where their paperwork had not been processed or

had been lost and spent two years paying out-of-state tuition. Despite some states providing in-

state tuition rates for students who are undocumented, many are not aware of this benefit. She

explained that her role is to contact students to ensure they are taking advantage of this resource:

Sometimes students, for some reason, didn't fill out the affidavit, they didn't know about

it, and they are being charged out-of-state tuition. I try to email the students at the

beginning of the semester letting them know - You may qualify for in-state tuition and,

Did you fill out the affidavit? Did you submit your high school transcripts? And

sometimes they come to me for that, because they're like, "Oh, I received your email and

it says this. And I wonder, am I being charged out-of-state tuition?"

Danielle also works on the West Coast, at a four-year public university, also in a state

that provides financial aid to students who are undocumented. However, similar to Diana, she

spoke about the differences between statuses and resources provided to students:

But for students that don't have [state status], that don't have DACA, that don't have

anything, those are the students that we want to see how we can help. Because there is no

state aid. There is no financial aid, no federal aid, there is nothing that can supplement,

that they can utilize to be able to pay for school. So that is where the scholarships come

into play and in our center has put together a booklet, with scholarships where citizenship

is not required.

Recognizing Students' Anxiety

The needs of students who are undocumented are varied, and listening to students express

anxiety about financial challenges, housing issues, family, or mental health concerns was part of

the institutional agent experience. Six of the study's participants specified that family members'

immigration status was a major stressor for their students more than once. The remaining three

participants spoke about students' family concerns once. Family was not seen as a detriment to

student's educational pursuits, but rather as a source of concern. Participants expressed that

students worried about their family's status and their whereabouts due to immigration raids that

could lead to their deportation. Additionally, five participants expressed a need for mental health

support for students who are undocumented. Accordingly, family and mental health concerns are identified as sub-themes.

Family Concerns

Jason had been in his current role about a year and a half; however, in his previous role he had been the first administrator to work with newly admitted Dream Scholarship recipients. Interestingly, he disclosed that he had never really considered leading such a program and had an initial steep learning curve. Through reading of admissions applications and essays, Jason was able to learn about the Dream Scholarship recipients and their families. He talked about how changes to the political climate also affected students as ICE agents picked up student family members. His students were primarily from out of state, thus they were many miles away from home. He reflected:

> But I think some of our working with our undocumented students, we work with them one on one because they experience everything from being worried about what was going on with their parents while they were in school. Being worried, when we remember this is 2016 and look who comes along later and upsets the whole balance of DACA. That threw them kind of into a tizzy. So, a lot of the work that I did, and the other advisor, a lot of it was just listening, trying to work with them, calm them down. Several students would occasionally have a mother or father picked up by ICE and they want to leave campus right away and go help their parents...That just working through the real life sort of stresses of being thousand miles away from their parents and having their family kind of interrupted.

Here is where Jason's advising and counseling skills are useful, as he has to sooth student nerves and help them focus on their education. Additionally, Raul, an experienced professional, also noted that in the past he had students whose homes were raided and had family picked up by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents.

Per Danielle, students who are undocumented deal with more than the average student. She lists their stressors as academic under-preparedness and uncertainty about family status:

> Yeah, our students deal with so much more than your typical student. They're not only dealing with that they may not have had that math class that they needed, or they may not have learned, because the schools that they come from are under-resourced. But in addition to that, in this climate, they're also dealing with a lot of other stressors. Of coming to school, going back home. Are their parents there? Or their siblings there? Students, also that come from mixed-status families, how are they treated within their family circle, right? I mean, there's a lot of stuff that they're dealing with. And we have to address it all and kind of like an onion, peel it and look at the layers because although we want to help them, and we are there for them, we support them, we don't know what they are going through. We just don't know. There's a lot that they're going through.

Danielle was warm and inviting and wanted to support students by addressing all their issues. Her remarks also serve as a reminder that despite the obvious stressors, there's still more that students may experience that is not visible to institutional agents.

When asked about the personal needs of students, Eliana responded that there is a need to educate students and families on how the education system works in the U.S.:

Yeah, I would say students definitely need a thorough understanding of the collegial

system and higher education. Because a lot of families, they are going by either

somebody in their family's experience, which we all know could vary from individual to

individual. It's not a cookie-cutter type of situation, or they're going by the types of

educational experiences in their home country, which is also completely different.

She shared a story of her family member who was indebted to another family member for paying

for their degree and how that family dynamic played out differently than it would in the U.S. She

worried that students who are undocumented and their families would fall into traps if they did

not understand how the system worked in the U.S.

The uncertainty of family status, due to politics, comes up again in Diana and Victoria's

interviews. The commonality of this experience is addressed by Diana:

We also have students that are facing right now, the fact that their parents are in a very

tight legal situation, because even though the students have dropped out, the parents

don't. So, they're also facing some emotionally, some stress in regard to that, because

they don't know what's going to happen with their parents next year, or how they're

going to be able to move forward if their parents are deported. So things like that are

very common right now. And it has to do a lot with the way the politics are going with

this particular program.

Victoria was a former student at the institution in which she works, and like many of the students

frequenting the USRC, she was also undocumented during her studies. She had even advocated

for the center's establishment as a student and was part of its founding group. Victoria

understands the fear and uncertainty surrounding family status and connects it with student behavior. Students may act out due to stress, putting their academics in jeopardy. She explained:

> The fear that, even if they are citizens, and their parents are being deported, right family separation, that could mean that they are either quiet or are angry all the time in your classroom. And so it doesn't mean that they're the bad kid. Or, or the lazy kid, right? They are dealing with all of these things. And then once you get involved, what does that look like for you? And how do you not burn out?

The fear that students have and their mental exhaustion can be transferred to administrators, especially ones such as Victoria, who knows first-hand the students' struggles.

Mental Health Concerns

In this study, participants sensed students who are undocumented "felt helpless" and "isolated" given their circumstances and needed counseling services to help them cope. However, stigmas toward getting assistance and lack of information prevent this population from seeking counseling. Additionally, counseling services at many institutions often have to refer students out due to demand for services. Five participants explained their actions to connect students with mental health services.

According to Monica, besides financial needs, the second most pressing issue for students who are undocumented is their emotional well-being. She lists anxiety, depression, suicidal ideation, and stress at home as mental health factors these students must deal with daily. Like many other large universities, her institution offers counseling services for students, which are highly in demand. In addition, students are often not aware of counseling services or that it may even be necessary for them. She supported her counseling services:

It's a matter of referring the students, offering them to be walked there if it's necessary. And then finding resources outside of campus because our counseling services office is already understaffed and overworked, but our counseling services office is also very good at trying to find outside resources when they cannot help the students. But, you know, there are many students that don't come to me to say I need help, or they don't realize that they need it, or they don't know how to make that initial, I guess walk-in to the counseling services office because it's always scary.

Obtaining mental health services can be a challenge for students who are undocumented due to associated costs, surrounding stigmas, and availability on a college campus. Victoria brought up these issues as they arose for her students. Furthermore, often institutional agents are the individuals students approach about these concerns, not their families. Victoria recognized that students need to feel comfortable "with someone who understands the struggles and the challenges and the things that students who are undocumented face. If they're a person of color. All of those factors, I think, definitely make it really challenging for the students." She also asserted that students often avoid the topic with their families:

We've talked to a lot of families, and there's usually not ever one person who's seeking mental health. Some of my students are [seeking counseling], they don't tell their parents or their families because they don't want to be told 'I'm crazy,' or you know, just the crazy aspect or you don't need that. And so one is stigma and two, I think, is identifying that you need support. I don't think that we, I don't think that we talk about what even it looks like, right? There are certain identifiers of, for example, depression, you sleep a lot, and you have low motivation, but maybe that to someone who's looking in the

outside, it's like, they're just lazy. So how do we even identify those things? So, parents

don't know how to identify that for their kids. And the kids don't know how to identify

that for themselves….It's complicated.

Lastly, Danielle's comments pertained to educating parents about services available to

students. When asked how she assists students, she also mentioned a program run for parents

where they are also oriented to the institution. She talked of the importance of "trying to be there

for the students and their families":

> So we invite parents to come to campus to learn more about what their students are
>
> doing, what college life is like, what they expect. We do several sessions, you know, on
>
> admissions, financial aid, and scholarships. We also ask our staff in the Counseling
>
> Center to come and talk with them about mental health, mental illness, things of that
>
> nature.

Research Question Two

What guidance and/or support, if any, do institutional agents provide to students who have

disclosed their undocumented status?

This question addressed the specific actions taken by institutional agents to support

students who are undocumented. Participants revealed that they provided daily guidance to

students who are undocumented in the same manner as they did to other college students; they

answered questions and provided resources. However, they experienced a different set of

questions, specifically those related to DACA status. Additionally, participants disclosed that

they were cognizant of being empathetic to students who are undocumented, as they often could

not resolve their issues. For many participants, listening to the students was the best support they could provide to them. Furthermore, the participants collaborated with their peers to provide resources. They provided support to students as they advocated for themselves or for physical spaces. Lastly, they recognized the importance of ensuring welcoming campus offices.

Providing Consistent Guidance

The daily experience of all nine institutional agents included answering student questions about DACA status, financial assistance, scholarships, and other resources. It was important for participants to be able to answer the questions knowingly, and all reported relying on email list servs, websites, legal counsel, TheDream.US, and non-profits for up-to-date information. Participants expressed the importance of listening to students in order to provide answers, comfort, or encouragement. Additionally, four participants spoke about the support they provided through physical on-campus spaces. Lastly, four participants spoke about their role in empowering students to be advocates for themselves.

Responding to Questions Effectively

Diana describes her office, in multicultural affairs, as the designated campus resource to provide information to all students who are undocumented, including DACA recipients. Her goal is to help Dream scholarship recipients progress through their academics and graduate from the institution. She stated that she is responsible for helping students find the resources they might need in their journey and works with them on a daily basis. When asked about the typical questions that students had, Diana responded they were mostly related to financial aid:

A lot of times we are asked, "Is my scholarship going to be able to pay for my summer

classes?" "Will I have enough money to finish my degree?" And questions like that.

Some of the other questions that also come up are "Do you have to have a lawyer or

something like that, or who we can go to [for legal counsel]?" Because they are adjusting

or they're having uncertainty with their status. So, a lot of times there are personal

questions that need to be answered. And most of the time, it is a financial aid question.

Diana expressed thoughtfulness in that she often had to decide how she was going to present

facts to students and with what degree of empathy. Since some students were dealing with a lack

of resources and ineligibility for funding, she had to refer to policies that prevented assistance,

but had to do so in an empathic manner. However, she experienced tense times when she was

not able to assist:

You hear these stories and there's not nothing you can do no matter what you try to do.

So it creates a heavy burden on someone because you know what the end result is going

to be. So in that may not necessarily be a good outcome for them. So at the end of the

day, it becomes very stressful.

Similarly, Jason described questions related to legal status and financial resources. He

also admitted that much of his previous role included knowing the student's status,

understanding the institutional culture, and recognizing the need for funding. He explained:

A lot of it I think is just understanding – What is their status, what does that mean? How

important is that to your school? Whether or not it is. Financial issues – I think that's a

huge thing for all students across the nation, they're working with this trouble with

financials that just is crushing. Otherwise, you know, it's just following the law and

making sure that they're up on renewing their documents, that they get their work permits, and things like that, but, once you've gone through it, you understand. "Reapply for DACA you get your work permit, if it is expired, you can't work." These are kind of things that are just set out.

Maria also worked in a student affairs office and saw students who are undocumented every day. She was also the main point of contact for Dream Scholarship recipients. Her institution has 150 students with Dream Scholarships, and she estimated close to 500 undocumented students. While the office served all enrolled students, it was a "one-stop shop for all undocumented students" that provided resources, since staff knew the challenges students faced. Students who are undocumented visited her office primarily for financial assistance, and Maria made sure that they were taking advantage of available services.

Serving as the coordinator of the center for undocumented students, Victoria supervised six front-line, paid student interns. Each student has specific responsibilities related to marketing the center, keeping up to date on pertinent information, running a book loan program, outreach to high schools, providing volunteer opportunities, and making undocumented students who visited feel comfortable. The center was student led, and the interns were responsible for its daily activities:

> They answer day-to-day things, for example, how do you fill out the in-state affidavits request form? Or, any questions about DACA. Sometimes they ask, Do I still apply? Where can I do it for free? Are there grants? So those kinds of things the students are able to handle, but anything else that's a little bit more complicated or that they're just unsure that they want to confirm, they come to me for those kinds of things.

Student interns clarified responses with Victoria or referred more complicated questions to her so that she can provide the appropriate support to the student who is undocumented. She is also the one responsible for collaborating with other departments such as Admissions and Records.

Danielle was responsible for a portfolio of departments that included oversight for the Undocumented Student Center on her campus, which she helped to establish. The staff saw students who are undocumented daily and provided programming, assistance, and referrals. Danielle remarked:

> [Students] do come to me, I visit the center often. And I also meet with students and the staff on a regular basis to kind of just see how they are, what kinds of things we're doing well in, what kinds of things we need to improve, just to get a feel for where they are, and if they feel comfortable in the space, and you know what their needs are.

For her, guidance meant being attentive to students who are undocumented and setting realistic expectations for them. Danielle remarked:

> And it is just a matter of, of me listening to this voice and doing everything that you can to help them. Be honest, be candid about what you can do and do not overpromise. And because a lot of times we have the tendency to say "It's gonna be okay." You know, sometimes it is not.

Monica also brought up the importance of listening to students. When asked about daily interactions, she explained:

> I meet with students one on one whenever they want to talk to somebody, they just don't know who to talk to, or who to open up about their status, they can come and see me in

my office. And, you know, sometimes it's just about listening to what they have to say.

And just by listening, they sometimes come up with their own solutions.

Monica also observed that she usually saw the same students. She described the students as

Latinx and observed that non-Latinx students at her institution spoke about their status even less:

> A majority of the students that come and see me or reach out to me via email are Latinx
>
> students. The Asian, Black, and White undocumented students sometimes never reach
>
> out to me unless they have a dire question, a dire need, then they will reach out to me
>
> once to get their question answered, or to find that resource. But after that, I don't hear
>
> from them. So, I think for non-Latinx students, it's even harder to open up about their
>
> status.

Monica also talked about the lack of dedicated positions for working with this particular

population and how emotionally and physically taxing it can be on institutional agents if they are

the only one that students can turn to or trust. She was a one-woman office for students who are

undocumented at her institution.

The frequent office visits by the same students first came up in Eliana's interview. She

reminisced how she initially began meeting DACA recipients and students who were

undocumented when they applied to her grant-funded programs for low-income students. As

they were not eligible for admission, she would refer them to other programs at the university;

however, they would return for assistance and referrals to outside agencies. She became known

on her campus, and other students who are undocumented also sought her out. Even in her own

largely Hispanic community she was highly sought after to speak to families who had children in

high school. Individuals may have been drawn to her, as she had a wealth of knowledge due to

her past employment experience in nonprofits in the Latinx community. Additional evidence of her inviting nature came about when she spoke about how service to her community had been "drummed into her" growing up as a devout Catholic.

Another participant, Zara, also experienced students who frequently sought her out for advice. This led to long meetings where she listened to them talk about their stress, family, and various work commitments. She did this by creating an inviting atmosphere for students to gain their trust. She made sure their basic needs were met and often provided a meal and a couch for students to sleep on. Zara remarked on the multiple roles that she experienced: "Because you are the social worker, you're the financial advisor, academics…but when I usually meet with students, it's an hour, an hour and 15 minutes." Similar to Diana and Monica, Zara also mentioned the need for empathy and the burden placed on institutional agents who may not be able to help students as much as they would like, or as much as they assist others. The taxing nature of this work is evident in her statement: "And just having to be empathetic is very important in working with this population, and that becomes heavy. It really does. Physically, mentally, emotionally. I can't say that I don't take this home with me."

Originally from Mexico, Raul works in a multicultural office with one other professional and assists students who are undocumented as well as other populations on campus. When given the chance to work with Dream Scholarship recipients he was "all in" due to his experience of becoming a citizen. At the time of the interview, the Supreme Court had not yet reviewed the decision about the DACA program and Raul brought up that answers to questions surrounding coronavirus and the upcoming decision need to be re-thought given changing circumstances.

Ensuring Safe Spaces

Having a safe space on campus, such as an Undocumented Student Resource Center, was vital to support students and to provide resources. While Raul's small university does not have a USRC, his office creates a safe space for all students. Victoria, Zara, and Danielle talked about how comforting their office was to students. Victoria used terms like 'homey' to describe the office that included a couch. Danielle talked about creating a space for students to feel safe:

> The space that we have is not very big, but they love hanging around. I mean, you can have a tutoring session at one table, you can warm up your food in the microwave kind of thing and have a meal or come in between classes. It has just been such a wonderful space for them.

Zara's students hung out in her office all day, as it was a space where they felt comfortable. In fact, they often took naps on the futon in her office.

Advocacy

Four of the participants mentioned their efforts to empower students who are undocumented and recognized the importance of student advocacy. Victoria mentioned that the undocumented students at her institution advocated for the original student-led center and then the creation of her position. They also advocated for the paid student interns who staffed the center. Monica talked about the demands students who are undocumented were making to the administration as they now felt more empowered and active on her campus. The demands centered around programming and additional staff to work in her office. Zara spoke about former students who were undocumented that formed an organization to fundraise for DACA renewals. In reference to the role of students in securing dedicated space at her institution,

Danielle remarked that it could not have been done without the students: "Students were very, very helpful. They were instrumental to us in securing the space."

Establishing Collaborations

The guidance and support provided by institutional agents was conducted with the assistance of colleagues. All study participants described collaborations across their campuses as essential to their work with students who are undocumented. In particular, Danielle, Monica, and Victoria all reported that admissions was an important office with which to have a good working relationship. Whether to resolve problems, provide information on resources, fund-raise, or advocate for students, participants needed partnerships.

Diana, who worked at a university in the Southeast, remarked several times that her work was not done in a silo; she had to work with other on-campus offices for workshop referrals, assistance with employment, or helping a student get involved on campus. She was proud of the connections she had: "It's just not myself, I have to count on other resources to be able to assist them [the students]" and "It's not a work that I do alone….I partner with everyone that allows me to partner with them to be able to assist my students." Also, in conversations with others, she pointed out she needed to explain that students did not seek out special favors:

> We all say that our students are unique in many ways, we say that across the board, that
> every student is unique. We know that. But these students, they're not asking for any
> kind of empathy or sympathy. They're not asking for that; they're just asking for an
> opportunity to have a sense of belonging on campus. So that is really what I like to get
> across. When I have conversations with people, they (the students) not looking for

giveaways, they are very hard working. They did not look to be treated any different or anything like that. They just want to feel like they belong. Because most of them have grown up here in the US and they were two or three years old, but this is all they know.

Working at a large university, Danielle also identified government relations, counseling centers, admissions and financial aid, advancement, and graduate studies as areas that she worked with closely. She referred students to her institution's master's programs and even those at other schools. Additionally, she joined forces with peers and faculty through an ally network, that is, individuals who came together to address undocumented student issues. They were involved with programming and fundraising for students at their university.

Addressing the increasing support she saw during her time at the university, Eliana mentioned that her peers met regularly. Discussing first-generation students included those who were undocumented. This was a positive experience for Eliana:

And we, as faculty and staff, we started meeting together as a group, and it was a nice little cohesive group of folks that would meet regularly and discuss certain issues that we found some of the students encountering. And, of course, you know, again, they didn't just focus on the undocumented students….So we knew that the undocumented students would be under their [first-generation] category too, and just bringing all this awareness out, holding symposiums or if not symposiums, holding retreats or meetings, specialized meetings, so, and, again, just seeing that many of the faculty and staff of color, coming together and helping the students, I was, I was very pleased to see that.

Additionally, she also mentioned how she worked with legislators to help them understand the overall situation, as they may be uninformed or have a different perspective.

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At Maria's institution, a Dreamer's committee included enrollment management staff and members of the advising units. When students have academic issues, various individuals have to collaborate, as each major has different advisors. Maria also collaborated with TheDream.US for workshops for students and with her school's legal counsel. Emerging student issues were a topic at the Dreamer's committee meetings. She explained the committee's meeting schedule:

> We work closely with them and we meet with them as needed. And then we probably meet like once a semester, between registrar's, financial aid, our office, and we have development officers. So we meet once a semester just to see if any new issues or anything has changed and then we also have our legal counsel who is the legal counsel for enrollment management and anytime we have, for example, a follow-up question about a new legislation or anything pertaining to Dreamers, they would be the one that helps us with that.

The federal relations department is also helpful to Maria:

> Anytime that anything is happening with DACA, they'll call together a meeting to talk about, okay, what does this mean for you? What does this mean for our students? So, we tend to be very in the know, and that's kind of how, we've kept abreast because we have to be. I feel like we have a larger population than maybe other schools.

Institutional Advancement, Admissions, and outside assistance came up in Monica's interview. As students' most pressing need is funding, this work is important to Monica. Partnerships with Institutional Advancement were also mentioned by Eliana, Danielle, and Maria. Monica stated:

I work with our Institutional Advancement office to see if we can increase some of our

funds. We have the Undocumented Student Fund, that supports students with anything

other than tuition, so for example, DACA renewals. They may want to attend a

conference because they're presenting their research and they don't have money to pay for

their conference registration, their flight, all of those expenses. That fund can help with

those things.

She also mentioned the importance of connecting with outside organizations, as her institution

did not have a law school and sometimes students have legal questions which need timely

answers.

For Victoria, her collaborative experience meant that her boss was supportive, and she

was working with like-minded staff. She proclaimed, "And so that is kind of my mission,

getting people on board, even if they don't do anything, but at least they won't be against me,"

and in regard to other staff, "the good thing is that they're willing to work with us. It sometimes

takes a while, but they're willing to work with us."

A focus on the student, not the status, was important to Jason when speaking to his

colleagues. He often deferred to the student experience; similar to Diana, he felt students did not

want the attention on their immigration status:

You know, when I work with students, with faculty, or anybody else we've talked to, I

always bring it back to the focus with the students. It is not the fact that they are

undocumented, it's a circumstance in their life. But for me, for all intents and purposes,

especially if they're Dacamented, they are regular students. And they have families, they

have friends, they need support, they need to do well in school, and that's it. And then

the undocumented part of this is something on the side that they're dealing with. And if I can help them, you know, we can help them get to a, you know, an appointment, they have with the government, let's do it. But otherwise, just stop reminding them of it because I don't think they want to hear it. It's just they want to be students.

Lastly, Raul's experience was marked by conversations with his friends and colleagues at neighboring institutions, many whom head up USRCs. They were a great resource for him in his work. He also collaborated with his university's legal clinic and orientation office to help create a welcoming environment for new diverse students. It was important to him that students and families were comfortable and felt safe on campus, this could be accomplished with all offices coming together.

<u>Research Question Three</u>

How do training and/or workshops support institutional agents who work with students who are undocumented?

The third research question explored the professional development of institutional agents working with students who are undocumented. In this study, participants reported watching webinars or attending a conference. Many also indicated that they facilitated ally training for faculty, staff, and students. In summary, webinars provided good foundational knowledge for new professionals, and participants felt a responsibility to educate institutional agents on their campuses.

Gaining Foundational Knowledge

In this study, six participants reported watching webinars or attending a conference. Five participants reported planning and presenting workshops. Three participants represented both categories. While participants expressed gratitude that the webinars provided information, after a while the content was redundant. This was perhaps due to their immersion with DACA issues, membership in professional organizations, and work with non-profits.

Jason began working with DACA students in 2016, specifically with those who were awarded TheDream.US Opportunity Scholarship. The Opportunity Scholarship is granted to students who are undocumented and reside in states that prohibit them attending institutions or where they must pay out-of-state tuition. Initially he and a colleague relied on websites for information. While he still counts on websites, he found webinars repetitive: "A lot of that is repeated material for us. We've tried to stay ahead of the curves and these students have pushed us to do it." He remarked that while the webinars were good, they were designed for new professionals.

Likewise, Diana's webinar experience is the same as Jason's. Nonetheless, she remained positive and called them constructive. When asked if she used any of the information in her work with students who are undocumented, Diana replied:

> Not at the time, I always say the financial webinar, that's always the main one. But at the end of the day, there's not that many options out there. So, they do the best that they can. And that can also be redundant. So at the same time, yeah, I know that they're doing the best they can. But all the trainings have the same finance portion on it.

On the contrary, Maria finds the webinars useful and she or her coordinator usually view them when offered. The most useful information she heard was on how to build community among Dreamers, and she acted on that to set up a Dreamer's Club at her institution earlier this year. Still, the content of webinars does disappoint her:

> My only frustration point that I sometimes find in the trainings is that a lot of times, there's schools in like California or Texas with very large populations of Dreamers and very different laws than our own. So, a lot of times what they tell me doesn't help me because they allow state funding for Dreamers, and they have all these solutions, right, that we don't have yet. So that can be frustrating.

Webinars by non-profits and professional organizations were also available to institutional agents. Victoria stated that she received most of her information from non-profits conducting webinars and workshops in her region of the country. Raul was part of a national professional organization that addressed Hispanic students, where a number of workshop topics have to do with DACA or undocumented student issues. He gathered up-to-date information at those sessions. He proclaimed that plenty of information is available; in his words, "there seems to be no lack of information flowing that is relevant and keeping me up to date regarding what some of the issues are."

Eliana reported that she had been sponsored by a senior-level staff member to attend a conference on undocumented students. She was excited to share her experience:

> I remember there was a whole plethora of different types of workshops. You know, how to do programming, how to develop programming to help the needs of the students. And then there was another one about funding sources. And out of that, I, oh, when I heard

about that, I said, Oh, I need to know about this. So I jumped in there and I and I was in a room of all these people who are representing different foundations. And so I was like, Holy moly, I hit the jackpot.

<p style="text-align:center">Sharing Professional Development</p>

In this study, five of the nine participants reported planning and presenting training workshops to other professionals. One additional participant engaged in active mentorship of professionals serving students who are undocumented, as it was important for them to be aware of their situations. The sessions presented ranged from Undocumented Ally training to workshops at national conferences. Participants expressed a need and responsibility to share information and engage in dialogue with others due to the damage misinformation can cause a student who is undocumented. Additionally, discrimination could be lessened if others learned factual information and the plight of the undocumented student community. However, motivating others to attend voluntary training sessions was a huge task. The importance of training for all is highlighted by Victoria: "I am just the point person at our campus to work with our students. But I shouldn't be the only one to carry that responsibility."

An introductory workshop on DACA students was given by Diana at her institution's student affairs conference. The workshop included two students who were undocumented who shared their emotional stories. Her institution had also offered three workshops to faculty and staff on DACA students prior to her start, with a focus on understanding the issues they faced and their legal options.

Monica ran a three-hour Undocumented Student Ally session that provided advisors,

front desk staff, faculty, and other attendees with a sticker they could place on their office door

to demonstrate they were supportive of undocumented students. She explained that the

workshop covered basic terminology, federal laws, and student barriers. Additionally, her

session featured videos from the perspective of students who are undocumented, conversations

surrounding intersectionality, and skill building. She summarized:

> We have a few videos so that people can hear from undocumented students in different
>
> settings. We talk about intersectionality. So when you're dealing with an undocumented
>
> student, it's not just their undocumented identity, but multiple identities and when they
>
> come to see us, they're dealing with much more than their immigration status, right?
>
> They're dealing with maybe hunger insecurity, they may be dealing with a disability, they
>
> may be dealing with being black and undocumented and how that feels. So different
>
> intersectionality pieces. And then we go over how to be an ally - things that you can say,
>
> you should not say, how to start conversations, how to help students work through their
>
> issues when they come and see you.

However, getting faculty and staff to opt-in to voluntary trainings was an issue. Monica felt that

if they attended, the student's perspective humanized the issues for institutional agents:

> How do you motivate them [faculty and staff]? So maybe if they hear it from a
>
> colleague, they may feel more compelled to come to the training. We go over some of
>
> the resources that we have on campus and off campus so that it's not just me doing the
>
> work, but everyone can have access to some resources so that if a student comes to you,
>
> you can tell them about this scholarship that you know about….And we have a panel of

undocumented students that want to talk about their experiences, so that faculty can hear from them. I think it is the most impactful moment in our training, because it is a student that they have taught or that they've seen in the hallways, and sometimes students have very impactful stories to tell. I think that moves the faculty and the staff a little bit more, makes them realize this is real, right? These are the humans that I'm working with, and they are dealing with all of these issues.

Danielle also conducted trainings and workshops for regional and national conferences. In the same manner as Monica, her experience included covering what terminology means in various situations. For many individuals, she explained, the definition of words was an impactful first step. Monica gave an example of a participant, in an UndocAlly training, who questioned the use of the word ally, as they related it to a war and not a way to describe people. Additionally, she covered the history of immigration, and the establishment of USRCs and why they are important to colleges. Both Danielle and Monica mentioned that they usually see the same people in attendance at their sessions. Danielle wants to make trainings required for all:

> I wish that there was a more global and intentional approach, then saying, 'oh, we're having this training' and then people just sign in. And like I said, it's typically the same folks. You know, they may bring somebody, a new staff member or whatever, but those are the people that want to know and those are the people that want to learn, people that want to help, but it needs to be more intrusive. Right, more intrusive, more intentional, just get into their face kind of thing.

Zara's interview also supported Monica and Danielle's stance on the importance of vocabulary. Training was also important to her to avoid spreading of misinformation. Zara emphasized the need to reduce students' anxiety:

> I think that words matter when we have conversations with students. It's important to conduct training for people who are at the front lines, working with students and talking to them because giving them the wrong information can really defer them, raise anxiety, or cause them to be like, 'You know what? I went to [name of school] and they said that there's no money for undocumented students,' which is not true.

Besides that, it was important for faculty, as they are also engaged with students: "And I think when working with faculty and staff, it's important to have those conversations about how we treat those students and how, what information we give them. So, it's important to do training." Various academic departments invited Zara in to conduct 15-minute training sessions. However, during the talks she always found she went over the allotted time as attendees' curiosities grew and they asked numerous questions.

Similarly, the time needed to present adequate training was never enough, according to Victoria. Additionally, she felt the initial trainings for faculty, staff, and students were broad and general. She experienced a struggle for time to divulge information due to changing policies and student needs. Referencing time, Victoria empathically stated:

> And I mean, it's never enough, especially with the changing policies all the time. So for one, it's like, you just could not possibly provide all of the information. It has to be almost like a two-day, two-week training, every day for five hours. And even then, I think you still would not be able to cover everything.

Both she and Monica addressed the voluntary nature of training. Victoria stated: "Those who opt in means that they already care."

According to Raul, misinformation only harmed students who are undocumented, and for them, their lives were at stake. Misinformation extends to the entire undocumented community, and Raul stated that there was a need for education for all. In reference to the support and advocacy for black immigrant groups, he explained:

> There's a lot of information and a lack of information also happening at the same time around these other communities that are also being impacted. You know, around their immigration experience. So, so we have a lot of teaching to do.

<u>Overall Experience</u>

The main research question asked, what are the experiences of institutional agents who interact with students who are undocumented? This question aims to focus on the phenomena of awareness, knowledge, and skills of institutional agents who interact with college students who are undocumented. Survey participants scored themselves similarly in their awareness, knowledge, and skills with scores at the high end of the range. Through the interviews the researcher interpreted institutional agent experiences to develop six major themes: (a) understanding student financial needs, (b) recognizing students' anxiety, (c) providing consistent guidance, (d) establishing supportive collaborations, (e) gaining foundational knowledge, and (f) sharing professional development with others. Appendix G includes all the topics found through participant interviews, and Table 13 provides a list of the major categories used in the analysis.

Table 13 Categories of Analysis

Category	Raul	Jason	Diana	Monica	Eliana	Zara	Victoria	Danielle	Maria
Financial	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	y
Family	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	y
Mental Health	y			y		y	y	y	
Questions	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	y
Safe Spaces	y					y	y	y	
Advocacy				y		y	y	y	
Collaboration	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	y
Training									
Webinars	y	y	y		y		y		y
Presenter			y	y		y	y	y	

Overall, the background, personal experiences, and professional roles supported institutional agent awareness, knowledge, and skills needed to assist students. Their motivation, passion, and active engagement in this area overpowered their frustrations with legislative limitations and allowed them to be empathetic with students. They were able to talk about listening to students with financial struggles and family concerns and to provide resources. They addressed collaboration with others regarding training and mental health, and they recognized that students wanted a more certain path for their future. It is the awareness and knowledge that they all have of the undocumented experience that motivates them to advocate for students. Important to this research was how they transferred their awareness and knowledge to colleagues and students.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND CONCLUSIONS

<u>Introduction</u>

Chapter 5 includes a summary of the study, discussion of the findings, practical

applications, limitations, and recommendations for further research. This chapter expands on the

results to interpret institutional agent experiences, that is, to understand their awareness,

knowledge, and practices related to supporting students who are undocumented. Additionally,

through an examination of this study, suggestions are made for institutions and future

professional development sessions for faculty and staff. The chapter ends with a discussion on

the importance of supporting students who are undocumented.

<u>Summary of the Study</u>

The purpose of this research was to explore the awareness, knowledge, and skills of

institutional agents who interact with college students who are undocumented, to inform

professional development and practice. The design of this study allowed for the researcher to

study how participants made meaning of their experiences. Through qualitative interviews,

participants discussed what they understood about the needs and barriers experienced by students

who are undocumented. Additionally, they reported on the assistance they provided to meet

student needs. Lastly, participants agreed that professional development about students who are

undocumented is important for all faculty and staff.

A survey was distributed to a sample of 277 institutional agents; of the 18 participants

who completed the survey, nine agreed to be interviewed. The qualitative sample included

mostly senior-level administrators from institutions on the West Coast, Midwest, Southeast, and

East Coast. Interviewees reported working in Multicultural or Diversity centers, Student Affairs, and Undocumented Student Resource Centers. They had from three to over 30 years of higher education work experience.

This research was investigated through the main research question: What are the experiences of institutional agents who interact with students who are undocumented? Sub-questions include:

1. What awareness and knowledge do institutional agents have of the personal needs and barriers experienced by students who are undocumented?

2. What guidance and/or support, if any, do institutional agents provide to students who have disclosed their undocumented status?

3. How do training and/or workshops support institutional agents who work with students who are undocumented?

<div align="center">Discussion of the Findings</div>

The study focused on the experiences of institutional agents who interact with college students who are undocumented. All participants understood the experience of assisting this population of students as found through six major themes: (a) an understanding of student financial needs, (b) recognizing students' anxiety, (c) providing consistent guidance, (d) establishing collaborations, (e) gaining foundational knowledge, and (f) sharing professional development with others.

Research Question One

What awareness and knowledge do institutional agents have of the personal needs and barriers experienced by students who are undocumented?

 Overall, participants described a similar familiarity of the needs and barriers experienced by students who are undocumented, such as access to education, financial difficulties, concern about family members, uncertainty of the future due to DACA status, lack of family assistance, work obligations, and a sense of belonging on their campus. An understanding of and expertise surrounding this student population was due to participants' one-on-one experiences with students who are undocumented and staying educated on laws and policies. The personal background of some participants also allowed them to relate to students who are undocumented.

 Participants all agreed that financial needs overwhelmed students and even affected staff. They agreed that the lack of federal, state, and institutional financial assistance greatly impacted students who are undocumented. While some DACA students received TheDream.US scholarships, more than half of the institutional agents mentioned financial needs could be met with development officers fundraising for emergency funds or private scholarships for students who are undocumented. Not being able to meet a student's financial need was frustrating, disappointing, stressful, and often on participants' minds. This finding indicates that institutional agents know about the financial issues of students who are undocumented yet are not able to fully meet this need due to policy limitations that prevent students from state or federal student aid or lack of scholarship eligibility. These findings are consistent with Person et al.'s (2017) research on institutional agents and Rondón's (2018) study on undocumented students; both studies found tuition and financial concerns were significant barriers for students who are

undocumented. Additionally, Southern's (2016) study of 11 individuals in California who directly work with students who are undocumented reported that paying for a four-year college education is out of reach for many students who are undocumented.

The findings of this study also have implications for the knowledge of immigration policy required of institutional agents to better support students. Southern (2016) found that immigration status is a constant obstacle for students. Danielle described immigration standing as a challenge for her students, as being out of status would render them unable to work, causing further financial stress. Monica also expressed that students' status was affected since many offices were closed due to the coronavirus pandemic. She discussed how students were unsure how to proceed: "Now that USCIS is closed, not knowing, what if my DACA expires by the time USCIS opens, and so, what am I going to do?" For some students, being out of status meant risk of deportation. Participants also brought up the anticipation of the upcoming Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS) case concerning the legality of the DACA program as it had not been decided during the interview timeframe. Monica and Danielle were actively planning for all types of possible scenarios that could occur once a decision was reached. Taking this into consideration, institutional agents must be educated on immigration laws to answer students' questions and provide advice.

Participants were also acutely aware of students' anxiety. One of the major sources of anxiety reported by participants was that students who are undocumented constantly stress about their family due to deportation concerns. Muñoz (2016) wrote that students in her study were introduced to fear about their status by their parents and learned how to hide their status from their family members. In this study, participants expressed that their students did not know their

immigration status until they had to apply for college. Gonzales (2011) also found that students learned their status between the ages of 16 to 18. Once students knew their status and potential consequences for their family, it was an overarching fear. Not knowing if parents or siblings would be home when they returned was a source of constant worry. Jason, who had worked with mostly out-of-state students who were undocumented recalled trying to calm down students who wanted to travel back home after hearing that parents may have been deported. Raul also mentioned past raids that detained parents of his students.

Suárez-Orozco et al.'s (2015) study found that students who are undocumented reported high levels of anxiety in an online assessment and two-thirds of those students reported levels above the clinical cutoff. Wells (2019) also reported mental health concerns of students by institutional agents as a theme in her study. Participants in this study agreed that the need for education and referrals to counseling was important due to what they heard and saw in students. Veronica spoke about students who could not afford co-pays for mental health sessions and the stigmas students associated with receiving assistance. Zara talked about how she encouraged students to take long walks or engage in activities in an effort to relieve anxiety. Other participants introduced counseling resources during orientation sessions for parents and students. These findings support providing a variety of free mental health resources, such as tips for stress and anxiety management, for institutional agents to use in their work and disseminate to students. While not trained as mental health counselors, they are the first point of contact for students who are undocumented and can provide them with encouragement and referrals. While the students institutional agents referenced were navigating college with worry and numerous obstacles,

mental health services may assist students with coping mechanisms to help them concentrate on their academics and work through their stressful circumstances.

Pope et al.'s (2019) multicultural competence process suggests institutional agents gain awareness, knowledge, and skills to work with students and engage in advocacy measures. A few of the participants had direct experience working with non-profits, others worked with legislative leaders in the community, and two had personal experience with becoming undocumented. This firsthand awareness lent itself to their work with students who are undocumented; however, all institutional agents expressed expert awareness, knowledge, and skills. Furthermore, their words demonstrated that they were passionate, empathetic, and motivated advocates for students. This finding supports the idea that institutional agents should understand the experiences of students who are undocumented, as they must enforce strict policies and have difficult conversations.

Lastly, the researcher learned from participants about their consciousness of higher education politics and bureaucracy. Because they must navigate this system through committee meetings and collaborations, they understand the barriers that rules and regulations can build. From access to leadership to loopholes, some financial and scholarship structures were oppressive, yet the participants knew how to work the system in favor of students. Pope et al. (2019) write that understanding of systems of oppression are paramount to achieving competence.

This research question provides evidence that the participants had direct awareness and knowledge of the needs and barriers affecting students who are undocumented. Through many responses related to the financial and mental health struggles of students who are undocumented,

they provided examples of challenges institutional agents have in assisting students who have

defeated obstacles and enrolled in colleges.

Research Question Two

What guidance and/or support, if any, do institutional agents provide to students who have

disclosed their undocumented status?

Participants all agreed they provided direct and daily one-on-one guidance to students

around DACA policy and procedures, financial and scholarship inquiries. Nienhusser and

Espino (2017) also established that institutional agents found it vital to know DACA policies

around students who are undocumented. Participants also worked in collaboration with students

to gain physical spaces and supported student advocacy efforts. Through their professional roles,

participants in this study also supervised staff that directly worked with students who are

undocumented, engaged in collaborative efforts with peers to help students with payment plans

or extra funding, and provided referrals to both on- and off-campus resources. As most

participants held senior-level positions, they were able to be heard at higher levels of

administration, which helped them obtain necessary resources. Most importantly, they provided

students who are undocumented with a sense of comfort, listened to them without judgement,

and often tried to think of matters from the student's perspective. Their experience can be

defined through the roles they portrayed, that is, advisors, counselors, and advocates for students.

For many participants, the assistance to students came with an emotional price and they felt

frustrated and disappointed, and their inability to assist them due to legal limitations around

financial aid permeated their thinking. This feeling of unhelpfulness, however, motivated their

guidance and collaborations, which was one way they advocated for students who are undocumented. The advocacy efforts exhibited by the participants are components of CRT (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017), LatCrit (Bender & Valdes, 2012), and multicultural competence (Pope et al., 2019) frameworks.

Participants in this study recognized that immigration status was salient to students who are undocumented; as previously stated, guidance provided to them had to do with participant knowledge of specific policies and procedures to maintain DACA status. Perez Huber (2010) also reported saliency of race and immigration status among students who are undocumented. The understanding that participants had of their students' immigration experience and class is emphasized in LatCrit theory as a way to understand the Latino experience (Valdes, 1996). However, Veronica, Jason, and Diana all mentioned that students did not want to be singled out due to their immigration status, as that could be detrimental to their well-being and safety. Therefore, this finding highlights the need for participants to carefully navigate assistance while respecting the boundaries students want to be academically successful.

All participants in this study reported that many, but not all, of students that they supported were Latino/Hispanic. LatCrit was used as a lens from which to view the findings, as it can remind institutional agents what to be aware of when assisting Latino students who are undocumented (Wells, 2019). For example, despite their first-hand account of students' needs and barriers, Monica addressed the fact that institutional agents can learn from students through their experiences. Monica spoke to this point through her statement on maintaining identity:

> And so for us that don't hold that identity I think it's very important that we keep humble
>
> and not overstep our students' boundaries because we need to always acknowledge that

they [students] have agency and that they have more knowledge than we, they have first experience knowledge on what it means to be undocumented and so we need to be very careful when we don't hold that identity about how we are trying to support our students, and sometimes that means you have to step to the side and let them lead and tell you what they need.

Participants also revealed that they empowered students to create undocumented student clubs. The partnership between institutional agents and students who are undocumented is important for creating a welcoming and inclusive campus environment (Chen & Rhoads, 2016). In this study, participants also agreed that students who are undocumented advocated for the creation of centers and positions to support others like them. While empowerment of students is powerful, institutional agents are also in a position of privilege and can work to dismantle oppressive barriers.

The theme of supportive collaborations, found in this study, is similar to Southern's (2106) finding that partnerships were important for providing full support for students who are undocumented. Chen and Rhoads's (2016) study of faculty and staff allies at an institution in California also found that the allies worked with non-profit organizations to raise money, and with inter-faith groups for resources such as housing, meals, and scholarships. In this study, all participants relied on non-profit groups or community-based agencies for up-to-date DACA policy information and provided referrals to the organizations to students seeking financial, legal, or housing assistance. They relied on non-profit organizations to also provide materials or trainings to undocumented students and their families. Two participants also had experience working for or volunteering with non-profit groups. Additionally, many participants partnered

with lawyers who they could refer students to or invite to conduct workshops. Victoria stated

that she often referred students to off-campus resources:

> We have a very extensive list of lawyers and different organizations that provide food or
>
> clothes, or even financial assistance, or rent, and things like that. And for the students
>
> that is huge, because we obviously mostly interact with the students, but we provide
>
> services for the whole family.

Participants also reported close ties with government officials and, in one case, directly worked

with one to write the state's Dream legislation. This finding underscores the important work of

community agencies and government: colleges and universities should not only strengthen those

partnerships to advocate for the needs of all students on their campuses but also share this

information with all institutional agents. Informed with this knowledge, institutional agents may

then also refer students or become motivated to work in partnership with such agencies.

Participants in this study reported collaborations with peers who were uninformed about

the issues of students who are undocumented. Despite the work of participants, students who are

undocumented could be negatively impacted through an interaction with someone else. Victoria

referred to her campus as "opening and welcoming" but also mentioned the difficulties in

ensuring everyone was open to students who are undocumented:

> Still, there are individuals who do not think certain students are deserving of higher
>
> education. And it is hard on a campus of this size to ensure that every person that is on
>
> our team, on our campus, is going to be friendly, conscious, and sensitive to students.
>
> And so that's one of the things that I think is a huge barrier for students, because even if

they are in a class and the teacher is promoting anti-immigrant language or materials like

that, that can be the reason why a student leaves our campus.

She also mentions that it is harmful to students that not everyone is on board with their

enrollment, especially when they have other institutional agents working to support them:

There are certain people in our administration who say they're open and willing to

support [students who are undocumented] but make it very hard. And that doesn't serve

the students at all, that is a straight disservice to the students. And it's challenging

because it makes it hard for the rest of us who are advocating for them, because a lot of

us, especially staff, we're not tenured we can get fired at any moment. So that makes it

challenging.

Jason also noted that the majority of faculty at his college supported students who are

undocumented and that others were uninformed and voiced judgements against the students:

"Our faculty tended to support them, and a great deal did, but some did not." The resistance

experienced by Victoria and Jason are similar to Chen and Rhoads's (2016) findings where

institutional agents also reported opposition from peers.

The evidence collected for this question provides examples of how students are supported

through institutional agent knowledge of DACA policy and procedures and though connections

with non-profit groups, and also the importance of collaborations to obtain information and

favors for students who are undocumented. However, the findings of unsupportive institutional

agents acting unfavorably toward students can be viewed from a CRT lens. CRT extends the

principle that racism exists and that power groups hold privilege (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017).

The institutional agents who were not supportive of students who are undocumented maintain the status quo, which does not support the students.

Research Question Three

How do training and/or workshops support institutional agents who work with students who are undocumented?

In this study, participants attended or facilitated development sessions such as webinars or conferences related to students who are undocumented. The webinars they attended were sponsored by TheDream.US organization, professional associations, and non-profit or community-based organizations that provided immigration, housing, or financial assistance. Most of the participants found webinar content redundant for the most part, yet they did mention it would be helpful for new professionals. Webinars may not have been useful to participants due to their personal and professional experiences; they were at the point of educating others rather than attending introductory training.

It was important for participants that other institutional agents gain awareness and knowledge of the barriers and obstacles faced by students who are undocumented. Participants in this study expressed that the webinars, while introductory, helped introduce them to issues facing students who are undocumented. While students may not automatically tell their status when communicating with institutional agents, it is helpful for institutional agents to understand all types of problems, as they may affect students' overall well-being, classroom behavior, and course attendance. In addition, institutional agents should view issues and challenges from the students' perspective to better understand and support them. Danielle, Monica, and Victoria

were in favor of institutionalizing training for all, as they typically saw the same individuals attending ally sessions they facilitated. For example, Danielle explained that multicultural competency training would be beneficial for all and should be required:

> We hold ally trainings and awareness type of workshops, and you typically see the same folks coming around because they want to learn more, or they may bring someone. I think this type of training needs to be institutionalized. I think that just like we have research or harassment training, just like we have mandatory risk management and safety training…. Why not mandatory training of underserved and undocumented populations…. So what I would like to see is a mandatory training on cultural awareness and on our undocumented population. On all those things that we don't talk about because they're uncomfortable.

This finding is similar to studies conducted by Person et al. (2017) and Cisneros and Cadenas (2017), who advocated for training programs for all faculty and staff in order to facilitate improved assistance and a nurturing campus environment for students who are undocumented. This is especially important given various campus environments and current political context. For example, one of Danielle's students was stunned that an institutional agent said, "I don't know why you are here" in response to the student's status.

Jason had students who reported, that "in classrooms, they would get sort of veiled threats or veiled comments about their status that they got free education." Veronica and Eliana also found that some institutional agents were not supportive in their efforts toward students. These finding are important for all institutions, especially community colleges that have open access policies. While the institution may state they have a welcoming mission on admissions

materials and engage in inclusive practices, they must make a conscious effort to educate faculty and staff on what this means to the institution and its students. One way to do this is to create awareness of institutional mission and goals among faculty and staff in various formats, including professional development. Additionally, this finding also finds that there is much misinformation on what it means to be a student who is undocumented among institutional agents who do not work with them on a daily basis.

Findings in this study indicated that the presence of students who are undocumented sharing their journeys in training sessions was impactful for attendees. The students either participated in panels at training sessions or appeared in videos shown during the workshops. It was an effective way for professionals in higher education to learn about the needs and barriers through the students' perspective. Bell (1995) asserts storytelling as one of the CRT techniques that brings consideration to oppressed individuals through non-majority voices. This finding is important for individuals planning training sessions: they may consider adding student voices to workshops to inform faculty and staff about the student experience.

Additionally, the findings indicate that in addition to general awareness training for faculty and staff, specific topics must be covered to further maintain the safety of students who are undocumented. For example, Monica stated that faculty may not know what to do if ICE comes into their classroom, and even her workshops do not cover that topic:

Faculty and staff always ask - So what if ICE comes to campus? What should I do?

Right? What if they come to my classroom? What should I do?…. There's no official

training on that. So I think we need to start creating those, especially right now. There is

a sense of ICE is not going to come to a college campus. It's never happened, but with

this administration, we don't know. And we do need to be prepared and we need to

prepare our faculty, because they are vulnerable too, they don't know what to do. I mean,

an officer comes into your class, you may feel compelled to let them into your classroom

and no, you shouldn't. But if you don't have the tools or resources, the information you

have may be putting your students in danger.

Monica's statement corroborates Person et al.'s (2017) finding that institutional agents may not

have all of the necessary information required to work with this population of students.

The results of this research question indicate that there is a need for all institutional

agents to be made aware of the issues students who are undocumented encounter on a college

campus. This would allow all faculty and staff to work toward creating a welcoming, bias-free

environment for all students. It would also allow for an understanding of student's problems that

may impact their classroom behavior, well-being, or academic progress. Most importantly, it

would humanize the students and issues that they encounter to faculty and staff working at

institutions that have enrolled undocumented individuals.

While the participants in this study were conscious of how to provide support services to

students who are undocumented, they recognized that they are not the only ones responsible for

ensuring safety and support to enrolled students. A collective approach to student services

underscores Pope et al.'s (2019) multicultural competence, that is, "diverse and inclusive

campuses" are shaped through "awareness, knowledge, skills, and action of institutional agents"

(p. 35). The intentional inclusion of all institutional agents creates more understanding and

better equips them to holistically support students who are undocumented through their academic

journeys.

Summary

The three research questions helped to explore the experiences of institutional agents who work with students. The main research question asks: What are the experiences of institutional agents who interact with students who are undocumented? This study found participants acted as counselors, advisors, and advocates who were keenly aware of student needs and barriers. They described experiences that were negative and frustrating, such as not being able to fully assist students, as certain matters were out of their control. However, they also described positive instances as they spoke about the 'resilient,' 'hard-working,' 'smart,' 'regular' students who are undocumented. Participants described the overwhelming financial needs of students who are undocumented as a barrier to their success. In addition, family and mental concerns added to students' stress and prevented them from focusing all their attention on their studies. Participants also agreed that legal limitations and lack of funding prevented them from fully assisting students. The collaborative nature of higher education meant they often had to rely on other professionals at their institutions to navigate policies and procedures. Also, they shared their knowledge of students who are undocumented with the campus community to avoid misinformation and to create a welcoming climate. However, motivating others to attend professional development related to this group of students was not an easy task. At times they encountered institutional agents who were misinformed or did not provide full support for students. The emergent themes identify the actions that characterized participants' roles.

Essentially, participants in this study supported students who are undocumented with unwavering commitment, empathy, advocacy, and a respect for students' humanity. They were

thoughtful, respected student boundaries, and were inclusive in all their endeavors, as they

recognized that other students have similar needs and barriers.

<div align="center">Relationship to Conceptual Framework</div>

CRT, LatCrit, and multicultural competence comprised the conceptual framework used to

examine the awareness, knowledge, and skills of institutional agents who interact with college

students who are undocumented, to inform professional development. In this study, survey and

interview questions were guided by these concepts. The conceptual framework is also useful to

understand the findings of this study and provide support for introducing all institutional agents

to the needs of students who are undocumented.   Figure 4 includes the conceptual framework
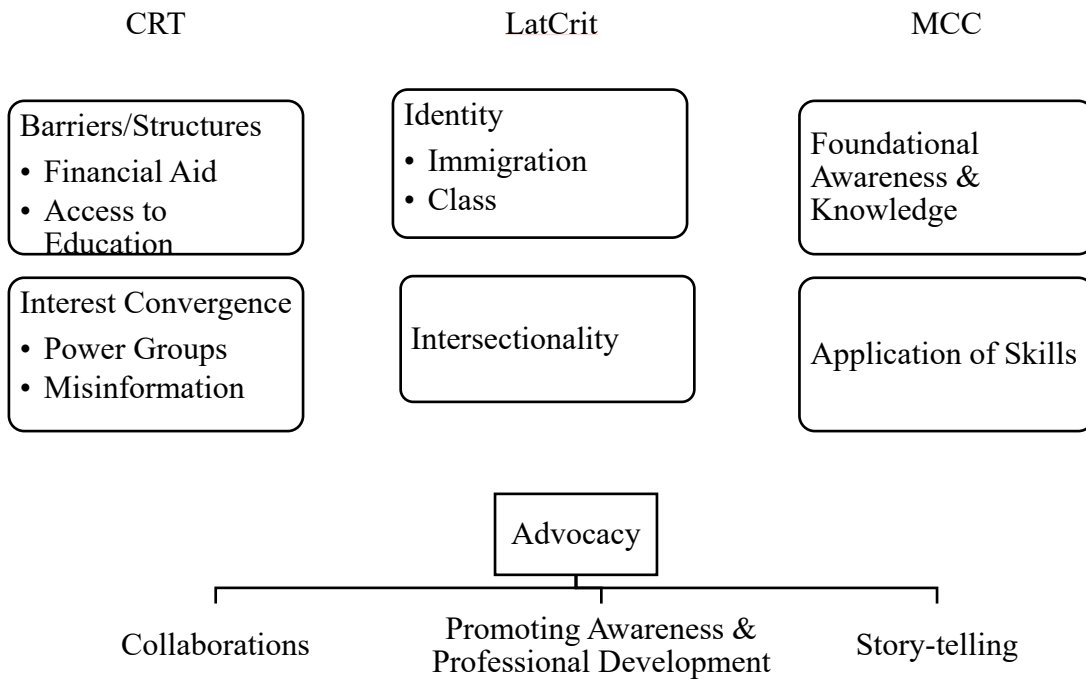
aligned with findings in this study.

Figure 4 Relationship of Findings to Conceptual Framework

Critical race theory (CRT) intentionally engages "in studying and transforming the relationship among race, racism, and power" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, p. 3). Bell (1995) writes that CRT is "ideologically committed to the struggle against racism, particularly as institutionalized in and by law" (p. 898). Participants in this study named financial need and access to education as barriers to students' persistence. While DACA recipients are granted admission by colleges, they are not permitted access to federal or state financial aid, despite the low-income status of many. Additionally, three participants mentioned that many college applications ask for social security numbers, which are not required for admission, and this deters many undocumented individuals from submitting applications. These structural barriers constructed by governments and institutions contradict the implied access to education available through DACA and admissions processes. The policies underscore the marginality of a group and the laws that CRT seeks to demolish. CRT therefore allows for an understanding of institutional power that keeps one group from benefits afforded to others.

Besides institutional power, CRT also allows for dominant power groups and microaggressions to be viewed with a social justice lens (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Participants expressed that they had to win over institutional agents who were hesitant to act on issues for students who are undocumented. Additionally, students were on the receiving end of misinformed comments from institutional agents who were in positions of power or authority. Delgado and Stefancic (2017) assert that through Bell's idea of interest convergence, power groups are maintained as "people believe what benefits them" (p. 41). Through interest convergence, the causes of the majority group are advanced through racism, and change occurs if it benefits the majority group (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Therefore, there is an opportunity to

educate members of the majority group of the benefits of inclusivity for all parties. In this manner, misguided information concerning students who are undocumented may also be presented as an educational tool showcasing effects harmful to an inclusive environment. Through support of all students on a campus, persistence and graduation rates may increase, furthering all members of a campus community.

CRT also recognizes that the experiential knowledge of groups may be communicated via storytelling to educate others on the oppression of non-majority groups (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Solórzano and Yosso (2002) also introduced counter-stories as a way to draw on these narratives that may inspire change. In this study, participants expressed that institutional agents may learn directly from students who are undocumented, either one on one or through workshops, to understand their obstacles. Incorporating the voice of students into training sessions applies CRT to educating others about their circumstances.

LatCrit provides a way for institutional agents to understand Latino students who are undocumented. LatCrit focuses on the experiences of Latina/os and how their language, generation status, gender, sexuality, and class identities interact with race and immigration (Valdes, 1996; Perez Huber, 2010). Villapondo (2004) writes that LatCrit requires institutional agents to understand the historical past and present situation of Latino students. Through this understanding agents may consider how a student's immigration and class experience intersect with their language, gender, or roles as a first-generation or transfer student, family member, worker, or other identity. Participants revealed that the students' immigration identity was salient, it was a prominent piece of their lives, especially since many had recently discovered their status upon applying to college. Also, student concerns about the deportation of family

members centered around immigration. It can also be argued that their class identity was dominant, as their financial need was the most cited stressor and barrier. Lastly, as mentioned in the previous section, students experienced microaggressions regarding their status. Through CRT and LatCrit, Solórzano and Bernal (2001) posit that race and racism are normal and intersect with other forms of oppression. The intersectionality of identity and oppressive experiences require that institutional agents consider "these origins and experiences in the development of services and programs that are designed to serve Latinos" (Villalpondo, 2004, p. 47.) It may even be extended to understanding the oppression of all non-Latino students who are undocumented.

In Pope et al.'s (2019) revised dynamic model of student affairs competence, "multicultural competence is a distinct category of awareness, knowledge, skills, and action essential for efficacious student affairs work" that assists in "creating diverse and inclusive campuses" (p.35). The concept of multicultural competence is integrated into all the eight competencies of the model, from administration to teaching. In this study, participants agreed that all institutional agents require a fundamental awareness and knowledge of students who are undocumented to best support their academic persistence and personal development. For example, should more institutional agents become conscious of the fact that students who are undocumented are not only Latino, it would not only inform on immigration patterns but help dispel stereotypes against Latino students. Jason mentioned that his institution enrolled students from many countries, however, *"everyone thinks, oh, it's Central America and Mexico, but we have German and Indian students [who are undocumented]."* Following Pope et al.'s model, participants in this study reaffirmed the importance for all institutional agents to make intentional

efforts to develop their fundamental multicultural competence and self-reflect on their actions. Resulting effects of increased campus multicultural competency include a more welcoming campus environment where students who are undocumented also feel safe.

Pope et al. (2019) write that multicultural skills are activities that apply "multicultural and social justice awareness – once internalized – to our interactions, interventions, and daily lives" (p. 43). Through interviews, participants proved that they were adept at managing difficult conversations, provided consistent student guidance, engaged in collaborations, and facilitated training. As students who are undocumented face complex situations and are integrated into classrooms and campuses, participants were adamant that institutional agents should learn about this population. However, Pope et al. (2019) recognize that not all agents will meet all elements of multicultural competency at the same time, therefore an end goal is for all to "meet foundational requirements for quality service" (p. 38). For participants, introducing other institutional agents to challenges and services of students who are undocumented is a primary goal.

To conclude, all theoretical concepts in this study include elements of advocacy. One participant, Eliana, summed up her attitude toward advocacy by stating institutional agents must always ask, "What must be done? What's not being done?" and act on the response. Pope et al. (2019) describes conscious action as changing the environment and advocating for change (p. 44). Through a CRT and LatCrit lens, change comes through the assessment of "policies, practices, and programs for inequality, contradictions, and inconsistencies" (Villalpondo, 2004, p. 48). Participants in this study deliberately advocated for students through the upper ranks of higher education and in collaborations with others. They worked in conjunction with legislators

to change policy. Additionally, they joined forces with students as they sought safe spaces.

Danielle mentioned that her institution held focus groups to ask undocumented students about their needs. Lastly, through the promotion of ally training and workshops, institutional agents attempted to engage others in gaining multicultural competency. While the above examples provide evidence of participants' active efforts to create change, institutional agents who write or enforce policies are also able to focus attention on policies and practices that do not serve all students.

<div align="center">Implications for Practice</div>

The results of this research have implications for institutions interested in implementing or expanding professional development or ally training for all faculty and staff. Participants reported that training sessions were frequented by the same individuals and they would have liked to see others participate. Additionally, participants stated that some institutional agents may learn from hearing directly from DACA recipients or students who are undocumented during training sessions. UndocAlly training programs are positive activities, and institutions should consider ways that training workshops may be expanded to intentionally include more faculty and staff. They can also attempt to have this subject woven into other professional development sessions on first-year, transfer, or low-income students, or in sessions covering topics such as academic advising and undergraduate research. This is especially important since students have intersecting identities, and compartmentalizing the issues does not provide an overall, holistic picture. As students sometimes must be strongly encouraged to attend workshops, perhaps institutional agents must also be incentivized to attend. At the very least,

institutions can share students' voices or information on issues in newsletters sent to faculty and staff. In addition to short-term training and development programs concerning students who are undocumented, institutions must consider long-term support for higher education professionals (Cisneros & Cadenas, 2017). Raising faculty and staff awareness will further help all students feel welcome on campus and bring attention to bias and discrimination that impacts the student experience.

This research also addressed the role of development officers fundraising for emergency funds or private scholarships for students who are undocumented. Institutions must consider emergency funds or scholarships for students who are undocumented as an option to provide to potential donors. While it is up to the donor to decide how their funds are used, adding this as a possibility demonstrates the value to the institution of diversity and inclusion.

Participants in this study expressed concern for the mental health of students who are undocumented. Consequently, there is a need to educate students on the value of support services, and institutions must intentionally reach out to certain groups in ways that are meaningful for them. For example, in an effort to normalize counseling, students who are undocumented and attending an undocumented student group meeting or legal workshop may perhaps receive a flyer or hear announcements about on-campus services, referral options, or online therapy. In addition to hearing about services, the benefits of such resources may be outlined on marketing material and in announcements. Perhaps peer mentors, who are trained on providing a listening ear and making referrals, could be available to students who are undocumented through student groups, academic advisement centers, or Undocumented Student Centers. According to Cha, Enriquez, and Ro (2019), the mental health of students who are

undocumented may benefit from peer or professionally led support groups. Institutions may also confer with the population of students who are undocumented on their campuses to create useful and suitable services (Cha et al., 2019).

Utilizing graduate students studying mental health counseling or social work should be more readily utilized to connect with students who are undocumented. Important to this strategy is the training and inclusion of culturally competent mental health professionals. Nilsson, Schale, and Khamphakdy-Brown (2011) found that interventions with graduate students for refugee/immigrant populations "help foster greater cultural sensitivity, increased understanding of societal influences on client mental health, and greater compassion and motivation to remedy the problems or barriers that their clients experience" (p. 420). Working with Institutional Advancement offices, perhaps emergency funds could be used to cover counseling fees at colleges.

There is a need for institutions to take a lead in ensuring all faculty and staff are informed about student populations. Institutions may bring awareness of specific issues of students who are undocumented to faculty and staff through meetings, training programs, and campus-wide newsletters so that they may look for signs in students who may need referral to services or others on campus who may be able to assist. For example, some faculty and staff may not know that the students are often facing housing insecurity or are responsible for their younger siblings due to deportation of family members.

Lastly, the responsibility for students who are undocumented extends to all on college campuses. While the participants in this study were the main contact for this group of students, they indicated that altogether institutional agents support all students with degree attainment.

The creation of a role on a campus, or added roles, may help to serve students who are undocumented in addition to students with low-income or first-generation status. It may also help extend education to other institutional agents and strengthen partnerships with outside community agencies. Veronica and Monica both stated that it is a significant institutional commitment to add positions, especially when some positions are grant-funded. Monica stated:

> But also, I think there's an urgency for institutions of higher education to create more roles like mine, because there are a lot of students that need one person that they know that they can go to and say, "I am undocumented, can you help me?" But when there isn't a person designated to do their work, they have to go to each person on campus to say, "I'm undocumented." And so they go to the advisor and say, "I'm undocumented, can you help me?" They go to the scholarships office and say, "I'm undocumented, can you help me?" So, they have to open up about their status to so many people when they shouldn't have to because it's such a difficult thing to do and to say.

Limitations

Several limitations were identified in this study's design, sample size, credibility, and generalizability. The original methodology for the study was a mixed methods design; however, it was switched to a qualitative focus due to the low number of survey responses. The low number of survey responses may be attributed to the global Covid-19 pandemic. This was an epidemic that affected many colleges students, faculty, and administrators as classes moved online. By March 13, 2020, approximately 300 U.S. institutions had begun to transition to online instruction (Foresman, 2020). In an unvetted working paper, Marsicano, Felten, Toledo, and

Buitendorp (2020) claimed that 1,400 institutions had moved to online learning by the end of March. Participating in doctoral research was not a concern for many due to more pressing needs related to the pandemic. While it may to be too soon to know the effects of Covid-19 on all higher education personnel and research, research is underway (American Educational Research Association, 2020).

The issues arising due to Covid-19 may have also impacted two individuals who agreed to be interviewed yet did not respond to multiple attempts to reach them. One of the two had even responded to the researcher to set up a time and date, however, despite two reminders, never confirmed the appointment. The pandemic also came up in interviews with participants. Additionally, lack of participation may be attributed to participants' interest in the topic or, as one participant indicated, numerous interview requests from other sources and researchers. Another potential participant also responded to the initial email with a referral to that institution's IRB office; they were not willing to participate until their institution gave approval. Covid-19 and the subsequent examples are factors that influenced the methodology and small sample size reflected in this study.

Another limitation of this study is that seven out of nine participants were in senior-level roles. While participants reported on their experiences, they were not representative of all roles found in higher education institutions. Furthermore, participants did not represent all institutional types or geographic locations. A sample with additional diversity may have provided further information to aid or hinder the research.

While efforts were made to enhance the study's credibility, another limitation is the number of returned transcripts. Participants were asked to review their interview transcript for

accuracy and clarity. Six of the participants responded, though two did not respond to two reminders. One other participant responded to selected phrases the researcher had sent for review in a third reminder. The researcher minimized the inclusion of unreviewed phrases and attempted to aggregate the findings from data collected from unresponsive participants. However, this act lessens the credibility of the research.

Additionally, qualitative research has certain shortcomings imposed by the subjective nature of data collection and interpretation of the content (Patton, 2015). This research was conducted using an approach that allowed for interpretation of what was heard throughout data collection. As such, the process is one-sided; what was explored and found is constrained by the researcher's analysis.

Other limitations exist due to the sensitive and controversial nature of the topic and the unknown number of individuals that work with this population of students. While the researcher intentionally sought a method to seek out a sample that works directly with this population of students, not all individuals contacted were willing to participate in this study. There are administrators outside of this group that may work with students who are undocumented but may not have received the call for participants. Furthermore, besides explicitly stating that the questionnaire is for institutional agents who have interacted with students who are undocumented, there is no proof as to who completes the anonymous survey. Three survey respondents indicated that they also forwarded the email to their colleagues; the researcher did not know if they meant it was forwarded within or outside of their institution. One interviewee sent the survey to a colleague at an institution that was not part of TheDream.US network. Due to the anonymity of respondents the forwarded surveys may be included in the quantitative

sample results. Lastly, due to the nature of the topic and method, in-person interviews would have promoted further rapport with institutional agents that could not be accomplished through virtual meetings.

The research questions in this study were directed to a small segment of institutional agents, and findings are not generalizable to those outside of this population (Creswell, 2014). However, the findings and implications provide recommendations for future research topics or inquiries. Despite the limitations of this study, data collected is valuable for answering the research questions and providing recommendations for practitioners and institutions.

<u>Recommendations for Further Research</u>

The participants in this study all agreed that students who are undocumented have financial needs and challenges. Additionally, they recognized that the students had concerns about their family and suffered from anxiety and depression that affected their overall well-being. A larger study would collect additional data and provide a more comprehensive review of institutional agents working with students who are undocumented. The data could be collected quantitatively or qualitatively and offer additional insight into institutional agent experiences. Results of this suggested research could also be shared with TheDream.US and partner institutions, as both have an expressed commitment to students who are undocumented.

For institutional agents not connected with TheDream.US or other non-profits, extending this research would examine their awareness and knowledge of students who are undocumented and further incorporate the information into Undocumented Ally training or other sessions. It would also offer details into the student experience from a different perspective. In all, this suggested research would support institutional agents working to provide a welcoming campus environment for students.

Participants in this study answered students' questions about DACA status, financial assistance, scholarships, and other resources as these were pertinent to students' college experience. Also important is the collaborations participants relied on across their institutions to assist with payment plans, emergency funds, and housing issues, while focusing on the student, not their immigration status. The importance of established relationships with development or institutional advancement offices was evident to participants, as donations supported scholarships and emergency funds. Further research is suggested on the experience of

development officers prospecting for funds for students who are undocumented; the obstacles they encounter and whether asking for these specific funds is a consideration, given the pressing needs of other students. Also, research could examine the characteristics of the individuals or institutions that are financially supportive to this group of students. Such research would generate ideas or practices for institutional development officers as they prospect for donations. One of the participants in this study was actively involved in fundraising efforts to support students who are undocumented. Therefore, another avenue of research could focus specifically on institutional agents who work with students who are undocumented who are actively engaged in fundraising efforts.

The participants in this study received information from webinars and were connected to non-profits, government leaders, or other resources. The participants in this study had expert knowledge and access to information which may not be the same as others who are not connected to TheDream.US organization or other resources. Providing information to all faculty and staff on student issues may take many forms. Therefore, another recommendation for further research is to examine if training sessions for first-generation, low-income, or underrepresented students include mention of students who are undocumented. After all, many students who are undocumented also identify as first generation and low income. Information from this study could perhaps determine if the subject of students who are undocumented, for institutional agents, may also be combined when speaking about other groups to reach a wider audience.

Lastly, research on the experiences of faculty working with students who are undocumented is recommended. Further understanding of their awareness, knowledge, and support of students who are undocumented would inform Faculty Teaching and Learning Centers

and UndocAlly programs. Faculty and student interactions are critical for student success (Tinto, 2006). However, not much is known on how they interact with this population of students. Including their voice as panelists, presenters, or workshop facilitators may also be useful for professional development session content and may lead to increased faculty attendance.

Conclusions

Participants in this study were aware of the challenges faced by students who are undocumented and provided support as best they could within policy and procedure limitations. The findings in this study advance the need for all institutional agents to be knowledgeable of the needs and barriers of students who are undocumented as they enroll in college, earn degrees, and contribute to the economy. This study adds to the literature that institutional agent support is necessary for students who are undocumented to feel comfortable on campus, persist, and graduate (Bjorkland, 2018; Gonzales et al., 2013; Stebleton and Aleixo, 2015).

This study is not only important in encouraging institutional agents to offer support to students who are undocumented; there are also broader implications to institutions and the economy that arise from assistance provided to the students. Colleges and universities want students to graduate from their institutions and become contributing members to society. In fact, higher education institutions in over 40 states have bachelor's degree attainment set as a goal for their residents (Feldblum et al., 2020). Therefore, students who are undocumented must be included in recruitment, support, and retention plans, as many graduate from high school in this country and are academically successful (Feldblum et al., 2020). While some states offer in-state resident tuition rates to students who are undocumented, for recruitment methods or to ease

financial burdens, intentional encouragement of this population may need to begin in elementary or high school.

Moreover, DACA recipients and other individuals who are undocumented make significant economic contributions to the U.S. economy through taxes and purchases. Wong et al. (2019) report that DACA recipients contribute $8.8 billion annually in federal, state, and local taxes. Social Security and Medicare funds are also boosted through payroll taxes (Svajlenka, 2019). A loss of these funds would disrupt government programs and spending that affect many of the country's residents. Additionally, the purchasing power of DACA recipients, who graduate from college and have a higher earning power, extends to the purchase of cars and related registration and insurance fees, rent and home purchases (Svajlenka, 2019; Wong et al., 2019). This is not to mention the amount of money spent to cover basic living expenses such as food and clothing, thus affecting the retail and food industries.

The Supreme Court of the U.S recently decided that the DACA program could not be immediately terminated by the current government's administration (Redden, 2020). It is too soon to know how the Department of Homeland Security will respond. Feldblum et al. (2020) reported that most of the students who are undocumented at colleges and universities do not have DACA status. Furthermore, the number of college students without DACA status increased after DACA was rescinded in 2017 (Feldblum et al., 2020). Regardless, students who are undocumented will have a presence in higher education, and a core group of institutional agents will support their journeys. To support students who are undocumented, higher education institutions, and the economy, more action steps are needed to reduce bias against this population and to change systemic policies.

APPENDIX A:
IRB EXEMPTION

Institutional Review Board
FWA00000351 IRB00001138,
IRB00012110
Office of Research
12201 Research Parkway
Orlando, FL 32826-3246

UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

<u>EXEMPTION DETERMINATION</u>

April 3, 2020

Dear Doris Alcivar:

On 4/3/2020, the IRB determined the following submission to be human subjects research that is exempt from regulation:

Type of Review:	Modification / Update, Modification / Update
Title:	A Mixed Methods Exploration of Interactions between Institutional Agents and College Students who are Undocumented
Investigator:	Doris Alcivar
IRB ID:	MOD00000913
Funding:	None
Grant ID:	None
Documents Reviewed:	• HPR 255 Form, Category: IRB Protocol; • irb_HRP-255-FORM-RequestforExemption-Doris Alcivar 4.pdf, Category: Consent Form; • Notification of subjects, Category: Other;

This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made, and there are questions about whether these changes affect the exempt status of the human research, please submit a modification request to the IRB. Guidance on submitting Modifications and Administrative Check-in are detailed in the Investigator Manual (HRP-103), which can be found by navigating to the IRB Library within the IRB system. When you have completed your research, please submit a Study Closure request so that IRB records will be accurate.

If you have any questions, please contact the UCF IRB at 407-823-2901 or irb@ucf.edu. Please include your project title and IRB number in all correspondence with this office.

Sincerely,

Adrienne Showman

Designated Reviewer

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APPENDIX B:
INTRODUCTORY EMAIL

Dear _____,

My name is Doris Alcivar and I am currently an employee and doctoral student at the University of Central Florida (UCF) in the Higher Education track in the Educational Leadership EdD program. I am conducting a study titled, "A Mixed Methods Exploration of Interactions between Institutional Agents and College Students who are Undocumented." I am investigating the experience of higher education professionals and faculty who assist students who are undocumented on a college campus.

You have been identified as a potential participant because your name, institution, title, and email address are listed on the Scholars' Partner College Directory on TheDream.US Scholar Hub National Scholarship web page. A few days from now you will receive an email request seeking your participation in this research study.

This research includes a brief survey that should take no longer than 10 to 15 minutes to complete. In addition, you will be asked to submit contact information only if you wish to participate in an optional, follow-up 30 to 45-minute interview. The results of this research will be used as a guide to understand the experiences of higher education professionals and faculty who advise, teach, guide, and support college students who are undocumented.

The names of participants and any other identifying information will be kept confidential and will not be used in the study or in any related presentations or publications.

All participants must be 18 years of age or older to take part in this research study.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Best,

Doris Alcivar

APPENDIX C:
PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Date

Dear _____,

A few days ago I sent a message introducing myself as an employee and doctoral student at the University of Central Florida in the Higher Education track in the Educational Leadership EdD program. I am conducting a study titled, "A Mixed Methods Exploration of Interactions between Institutional Agents and College Students who are Undocumented." I am investigating the experience of higher education professionals and faculty who assist students who are undocumented on a college campus.

You have been identified as a potential participant because your name, institution, title, and email address are listed on the Scholars' Partner College Directory on TheDream.US Scholar Hub National Scholarship web page. This research includes a brief survey (see below) that should take no longer than 10 to 15 minutes to complete. In addition, the last survey question will ask you to submit your contact information if you agree to participate in an optional, follow-up 30 to 45-minute interview. The results of this research will be used as a guide to understand the experiences of higher education professionals and faculty who advise, teach, guide, and support college students who are undocumented.

The names of participants and any other identifying information will be kept confidential and will not be used in the study or in any related presentations or publications.

All participants must be 18 years of age or older to take part in this research study.

Please click on the link below to begin the survey.

[INSERT LINK]

Thank you for your time.

Doris Alcivar

APPENDIX D:
EXPLANATION OF RESEARCH

Title of Project: An Exploration of Interactions between Institutional Agents and College Students who are Undocumented

Principal Investigator: Doris Alcivar

Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Thomas Cox

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Whether you take part is up to you.

The purpose of this research is to address the lack of awareness, knowledge and skills of institutional agents interacting with college students who are undocumented and inform their practice. Specifically, this research aims to explore the understanding and knowledge of issues affecting students who are undocumented, and the guidance provided to them, from the perspective of institutional agents.

This study includes an online survey distributed via email to institutional agents listed on the Scholars' Partner College Directory on TheDream.US Scholar Hub National Scholarship web page. The survey will include demographic questions, questions asking you to rate how strongly you agree or disagree with statements relating to your awareness, knowledge, or experience interacting with who are undocumented at your institution.   You will be asked to complete this survey fully online.

The expected time commitment for each participant in this research study will be approximately 10-15 minutes to complete a one-time online survey.

This study includes an optional follow-up interview. By submitting your contact information on the link in the last survey question, you agree to participate in an interview. You will be contacted to determine an agreeable time, and if the interview will be feasible via phone or if technology, such as audio/video conferencing, will be used. If the interview is over the phone, the interview will be audio-recorded with your permission. If you choose not to be recorded the researcher will take notes during the interview. If you select the audio/video conferencing option, the skype or zoom platform will be used for the interview. The interview will be audio/video recorded with your permission. If you choose not to be recorded the researcher will take notes during the interview. The interview will include semi-structured questions, that are informed from the survey questions and ask about your awareness, knowledge, and skills related to students who are undocumented.

The expected time commitment for each participant in the interview portion of this research study will be approximately 30-45 minutes to complete a one-time interview.

A random pseudonym will be assigned to anyone selected to participate in an interview. Your name, phone, email, and any other identifying information will be kept confidential and will not be used in the study or in any related presentations or publications. Your contact information and the recordings will be erased or deleted upon transcription completion.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You are free to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation in this study at any time without prejudice or penalty. Your decision to participate or not participate in this study will in no way affect your relationship with UCF, including continued enrollment, grades, employment or your relationship with the individuals who may have an interest in this study.

Data will not be retained after the study for future research.

You must be 18 years of age or older to take part in this research study.

Study contact for questions about the study or to report a problem: If you have questions, concerns, or complaints, talk to the research team: Doris Alcivar, Doctoral Student, Higher Education Leadership Program, College of Community Innovation and Education, at (407) 823-4530, or by email at Doris.Alcivar@ucf.edu or Dr. Thomas Cox, Faculty Supervisor, Department of Educational Leadership and Higher Education, at (407) 823-6714, or by email at Thomas.Cox@ucf.edu.

IRB contact about your rights in this study or to report a complaint: If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, or have concerns about the conduct of this study, please contact Institutional Review Board (IRB), University of Central Florida, Office of Research, 12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501, Orlando, FL 32826-3246 or by telephone at (407) 823-2901, or email irb@ucf.edu.

APPENDIX E:
SURVEY

Explanation of Research

1. Consent form   Yes, I have read the Explanation of Research

                                   No, I have not read the Explanation of Research

                                   (If "NO", Survey ends here.)

Survey

2. Have you interacted with undergraduate and/or graduate students who have disclosed their identity as an undocumented individual or DACA recipient?

    Yes   No   Unsure

    2.a.- If yes, what is the ethnic background of the majority of students that have disclosed their identity as an undocumented individual or DACA recipient?
    _____

    2.b – If "No" or "Unsure," Survey ENDS here.

3. In your current role, have you attended any training or professional development that was related to undocumented students?

    Yes   No

    3.a. If yes, what types of training or staff development did you last attend that was related to undocumented students?   (May click more than 1 answer)

    Half-day workshop   Full-day workshop   One-hour workshop
    Other (Please indicate)

    3.b, If no, redirect to Question #4

Next are questions about the experiences you have had in your current role. Please indicate the following for each statement:

Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly Agree

Question	Conceptual Framework
4. I am aware of the personal needs of undocumented students at my institution	Awareness- Multicultural competence, CRT, LatCrit
5. I am aware of the institutional barriers encountered by undocumented students at my institution	Awareness- Multicultural competence, CRT, LatCrit
6. I am aware of the resources available to undocumented students at my institution	Awareness- Multicultural competence, CRT, LatCrit

7. I am knowledgeable about federal legislation surrounding undocumented students	Knowledge - Multicultural competence, CRT
8. I am knowledgeable about state legislation surrounding undocumented students	Knowledge - Multicultural competence, CRT
9. I refer undocumented students to the appropriate on campus resources	Skills/Action – Multicultural Competence, CRT, LatCrit
10. I seek information out on how to best support undocumented student needs	Skills/Action – Multicultural Competence, CRT, LatCrit
11. I refer undocumented students to the appropriate off-campus resources	Skills/Action – Multicultural Competence, CRT, LatCrit

12. Please select your state of employment   (Drop down)

(All 50 state abbreviations listed.)

13. Please select the type of institution in which you are employed

Two-Year Public Institution   Two-Year Private Institution
Four-Year Public Institution   Four-Year Private Institution

14. Please select your current role (May click more than 1answer)

Graduate Student   Staff: Entry level   Staff: Mid-level
Staff: Senior level   Faculty   Other (Please indicate)

15. Please select the functional area that best describes your area of employment (May click more than 1 answer)

Academic department   Academic Advising   Commuter Student Services
Campus Activities   Campus Police   Health Services
Disability Services   Financial Aid   International Student Programs
Multicultural Student Programs   Undocumented Student
Other (Please indicate)   Resource Center

16. Lastly, if you would be willing to be contacted for a 30 minute follow up interview, please provide the following: Name, Email, Phone (Your contact information will be kept confidential.)

(Name, Email, Phone hyperlinked to new Qualtrics page.)

Name   Email   Phone

*Survey modified from: Cisneros, J., & Cadenas, G. (2017) DREAMer-Ally competency and self-efficacy: Developing higher education staff and measuring lasting outcomes. Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice, 54(2), 189-203. DOI: .1080/19496591.2017.1289098

APPENDIX F:
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Questions	Prompts & Elicitations	RQ	Framework
Icebreaker	Thank you for taking the time to participate.		
1. In your current role, how do you help students who have disclosed that they are undocumented?	What are the ways that you interact with students who are undocumented (Wang, 2016)? What kinds of questions do you answer? What is the reason they visit you or your office?	M	Awareness, Knowledge, Skills/Action – Multicultural Competence
2. Can you tell me about a time you faced a challenge in helping a student who is undocumented and what happened?	Tell me about a time you were able to help an undocumented student with a challenge and what happened? (Mouris, 2018) What types of issues arise on your part? On the part of the student?	M	Awareness, Knowledge, Skills/Action – Multicultural Competence,
3. What do you recognize as the personal needs of undocumented students?	What are some of the personal challenges or obstacles that undocumented students face?	1	Awareness-Multicultural competence, CRT, LatCrit
4. What do you recognize as barriers they may experience?	What are some institutional barriers?	1	Awareness-Multicultural competence, CRT, LatCrit
5. How would you describe the guidance and/or support you provide to students who are undocumented?	Do you have to refer them to resources? On campus or off?	2	Knowledge, Skills/Action – Multicultural Competence, CRT, LatCrit
6. How does your awareness and knowledge	Are there any institution, state, or federal policies that influence the	2	Knowledge, Skills/Action,-

of their challenges affect your support?	support you provide to students who are undocumented? Or any procedures?		Multicultural Competence
7. How do you stay up to date on policies related to undocumented students?	How do you stay current on policies that are relevant to your work with undocumented students? (Mouris, 2019)	2	Knowledge, Skills/Action – Multicultural Competence, CRT, LatCrit
8. Please tell me about the training(s) that have you attended that is related to undocumented students.	Please describe any training attended that was related to supporting undocumented students. Was it a one-time session or ongoing training?	3	Knowledge-Multicultural Competence
9. Tell me about a time that the training was useful to you in your work with students?	Describe how that training influenced your work with students. Did it positively/negatively influence the support you provide?	3	Skills/Action-Multicultural Competence
10. Was there anything missing in the training(s) you attended?	Was there anything that could have been covered in greater detail? (Hesse, 2019)	3	Knowledge-Multicultural Competence
11. Is there anything else you would like to mention related to understanding your experience working with students who are undocumented?	"Is there anything we didn't talk about that you think I should know about if I am trying to understand your experience working with undocumented students?" (Mouris, 2018)		
12. If needed, may I contact you to follow up on or clarify any of your answers?			

APPENDIX G:
CHART OF THEMES

Awareness of Needs & Barriers	Application barriers	Social security number on applications
	Financial	Issues due to lack of financial aid, scholarships, lack of family assistance
	Family concerns	Deportation of family members, ICE raids
	Anxiety	Need for Counseling services
	Listening	Important for students to have someone to listen to them
	Uncertainty	Future path, next steps
	Sense of belonging	Finding their place/group on campus
Guidance and Support	Specific questions	Day-to-day questions related to DACA, policy
	Collaboration	Working with other offices
	Safe Spaces	Importance of a place students could relax or safely visit, Safe spaces
	Empower students/Advocating for themselves	Assisting students with creating DREAM clubs
	Fundraising	Addressed through position or need for
	Empathy	Provided by participants
	Resource List	Provided to students
Training Support	Foundational knowledge	Webinars/Conferences
	Sharing information	Planned and presenting training
	Motivating others to attend	Effort extended for faculty/staff to attend sessions
	Keeping up to date	Use of websites, list servs, non-profits

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