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How important is higher education to you? Do you plan to receive higher education than high school? These are the questions that are being asked to Hispanics and Latinos.? In “Race in America” by Matthew Desmond and Mustafa Emirbayer, according to the U.S. Department of Education, the dropout rate among public high school students in 2012 was 24 percent for Hispanics (Desmond & Emirbayer, 2015, p. 259). According to a national survey of Latinos by Pew Hispanic Center, nine in ten (89%) young Latino adults say college education is very important, but only half of that number (48%) are planning to get a college education (Lopez, 2009). Why is it that only half of that number that Latinos are saying college education is important are planning to obtain college education? This is a question that needs to be asked and understood to help these young Hispanics and Latinos. College education is very important to succeed in life and having these resources will help them become more successful. Especially when the Latino community is growing here in the United States, they’ll have more opportunities and the younger generation of Latinos can have someone too look up to and someone they can relate to.

Researchers have discussed how self-fulfilling prophecies, stigma consciousness, and stereotype threat might contribute to the relationship between Latinos and academic achievement. Self-fulfilling prophecy, stigma consciousness, and stereotype threat processes may be especially relevant to Latinos in the United States because current public and political debate surrounding the issues of immigration, employment, education, crime, terrorism, and border security often demonize individuals who happen to be Latino/Hispanic and they are portrayed to be a threat to the United States (Guyll et al., 2010). Not just these concepts affect Latinos but so do family relationships. Familism, having to do with one’s attachment to, and reliance on, family-based relationships (Desmond & Emirbayer, 2015, p. 264).

Familism has provided both positive and negative components to Hispanic families. Family is very important in Hispanic cultures compared to any other racial or ethnic group. “After examining how familism affects Hispanic students in school, researchers have documented a positive relationship. High academic performance of Hispanic students has been linked to social capital provided by family networks, as family members help student to complete their homework and to make informed educational decisions “(Desmond & Emirbayer, 2015, p. 264). But, familism has also affected Hispanic students by performing poor by the demands placed on them by their parents, like taking care of their siblings, grandparents, or working to help their family income. Some Latino/Hispanic students after high school are obliged to start working full-time to help their family out and not focus too much on college education since it’s too expensive for them to afford. Three-quarters (74%) of all 16- to 25-year-old survey respondents, Pew Hispanic Center, who cut their education short during or right after high school say they did so because they had to support their family (Lopez, 2009).

“According to the work of Ayers and Ayers, 2011, educational institutions profess that academic attainment and failure is a result of personal choice” (Hayes, Montes, & Schroeder, 2013). It all starts with you and how you want to succeed and if you want to use education as a resource for that. But when no one thinks you can do better and you yourself start believing in that then you won’t achieve your goals. “A self-fulling prophecy occurs when a perceiver’s false belief influences the perceiver’s treatment of a target which, in turn, shapes the target’s behavior in an expectancy-consistent manner (Merton, 1948)” (Guyll et al., 2010). Meaning if when a person has a false belief towards a specific person, or those who share the same race, ethnicity, beliefs, etc., then that person being affected starts to believe those false beliefs towards themselves.

Stigma consciousness and stereotype threat go back to hand with each other. Stigma consciousness is when people are self-conscious about being a member of a stereotyped group and expect to be stereotyped by others (Brown & Pinel, 2003). Stereotype threat is “racial dynamics can infect the unconscious-the domain of unreflective habits, tendencies, and dispositions-such that we end up reproducing inequality without even knowing it” (Desmond & Emirbayer, 2015, p. 269). Also, that one’s behavior may confirm or be understood in terms of a negative stereotype because of one’s social group (Guyll et al., 2010). Meaning because people are constantly stereotyping that specific group that you’re associated with that you’re stressing yourself out to not confirm those beliefs while the stereotype threat also makes you worried about confirming those stereotype threats.

In conclusion, there’s many factors that contribute to why Latino and Hispanic students are pursuing a higher education from being stigmatize, to taking care of their family, language barrier, and not believing in yourself that you can do better and falling into the stereotype threat. It’s important for every student to succeed and given the chance to perform their best abilities in school without being stereotyped or already be seen as a failure. It is important because Latinos and Hispanics students are already being judged and categorized into a low-expectancy group by some of their teachers because of their false belief towards them. No, it doesn’t all depend on their teacher and the school system but their parents as well. Latino and Hispanic parents need to understand or be more open-minded that college education is very important and there will always be a way around paying for college and their income. A college education will help their children in the long-term and given opportunities they once had to turn down or never received themselves. As for the young Latino and Hispanic students, they need to believe in themselves because it all starts with their choices and their negatives thoughts should not hold them back.

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