



Garbanzos de libra: The Community Cultural Wealth of Male Bilingual Teachers

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ABSTRACT

Latino males are “effectively vanishing” (Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009, p. 54) from the United States higher education pipeline, a phenomenon clearly evident in the K-12 and postsecondary levels; they have become an ultra-minoritized population. Saenz and Ponjuan (2009) expound various theoretical and socio-cultural explanations for this enduring and distressing trend facing Latino males. In particular, the lack of male teachers as young Latino boys traverse their compulsory education is problematic as representation is critical for persistence and mentoring. As the number of Emergent Bilingual students is now 10% of the U.S. student population, the need for increasing bilingual male teachers is more important than ever. Increasing the representation of Latino male bilingual teachers in primary grade levels, can help ameliorate the leaks that Latino boys, particularly Emergent Bilinguals, encounter in the educational pipeline. Utilizing a narrative inquiry approach this study focused on the experiences of six Latino male bilingual elementary education teachers in the Southwest United States.

Keywords: male bilingual teachers, teacher preparation, higher education

INTRODUCTION

The steady growth of the Latino population over the past decade, up 22% to 62 million, has contributed to the diversification of the nation in every facet (NCES, 2023). In states like Texas the Latino population now accounts for the majority for the first time in history, at 40.2% (Texas Tribune, 2023) and the current U.S. K-12 population of students is comprised of 27% Latino students (NCES, 2021). Additionally, in 2022 the Department of Education reported that Emergent Bilingual (EB) students who speak Spanish account for approximately 3.8 million of the total 5.1 million total EB student population (Department of Education, 2022). Unfortunately, this diversification has not been replicated in American higher education as Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009 have noted in the disparity of Latino males in the U.S. educational pipeline. Similarly, National Center for Educational Statistics (2024) cited that the U.S. K-12 teaching force remains majority White (79%) and female (76.5%); Latino males represent only 2.3 % of the teaching workforce. Lara (2022) stated that “colleges of education have a responsibility to evaluate their approaches for recruitment and preparation of the teachers that will teach this increasingly growing school population” (p.15). Foundational multicultural education research has long depicted the critical need for male teachers of color (Lara, 2022; De Brey et al., 2019).

Increasing the representation of Latino male bilingual teachers in primary grade levels, has the potential to help ameliorate the leaks that Latino boys, particularly EBs, encounter in the educational pipeline (Skiba et al., 2011). Redding (2019) reported that students assigned to a co-racial or co-ethnic teacher were seen as disruptive less frequently and received favorable academic ratings more often. Institutions of higher education could address this disparity by developing concentrated recruitment and retainment efforts in educator preparation programs for Latino male bilingual teachers; but to understand how to do this, institutions must be willing to collaborate with Latino male bilingual teachers and hear their stories, on their terms.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the community cultural wealth of Latino male bilingual elementary teachers to better understand their experiences as they navigated in educational settings. To contribute to what Lara (2022) positioned as a “dearth of literature on Latino male preservice teachers” (p. 4), this study aims to inform both teacher preparation programs within higher education institutions and primary schools on ways to support and increase the number of Latino male bilingual teachers in elementary classrooms. The study focused on the following research question:

- What types of community cultural wealth did male bilingual teachers rely on through their educational trajectories?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Given the various challenges created by the societal pressures and the stratification mechanism that compulsory education plays in the sorting outcomes of Brown youth, our literature review will excavate the various obstacles scholars have unearthed as it pertains to Latino males and the teaching profession.

Whiteness of Education

While United States student populations continue to grow more diverse, the teaching force remains disproportionately White and female. The Pew Research Center (2022) cited that since 1987 the percentage of white teachers has only decreased 8% points, from 87% to what it is currently 79%. While quantitatively the number of Hispanic teachers has increased by five times, it is still abysmally low at 9%; considering that 27% of the student population is Hispanic (NECS; 2024). The benefits of a diverse teaching force are well documented in literature, citing benefits for diverse populations of students regarding student achievement, fewer discipline referrals, more recommendations for gifted and talented programs/advanced placement courses and overall retention rates (Skiba et al., 2011). Lara (2015) suggested, "...if Latino children are the fastest enrollment in many public schools, then a very small percentage of students are being socialized with gender, linguistic, and cultural equity in relation to the Latina/o community" (p. 224).

In the 2022-2023 academic year, Latino males accounted for 2.3% of the public-school teaching force which is incredibly problematic considering the disparity this creates for young Latino boys negotiating their compulsory education (NECS, 2024; Lara, 2015).

Disparity of Bilingual Educators

For EB students having a teacher who not only represents their culture but is also certified to teach in their first language is the difference between the possibility of academic achievement or being locked out of education all together (Kennedy, 2020). Additive bilingual education programs that develop an EB student's first language have long been shown to yield greater results in academic achievement as well cultural competence (EDWeekly, 2023; Alvear, 2018; Thomas & Collier, 2002). Seminal bilingual education scholars Gándara and Escamilla (2016) detailed the benefits of bilingual education:

Bialystock (2001) has found that bilingually educated students have greater cognitive flexibility, working memory, and executive functioning (e.g., concentration); Portes and Hao (2002) have found that bilingual students have more cohesive family relations and fewer behavior problems in school; Santibañez and Zárata (2014) have found that students who maintain their bilingualism into high school are more likely to go to college and for Latinos, to 4 year colleges; and Rumbaut (2014) has found that these students who maintain bilingualism are less likely to drop out of high school and to secure higher-level positions in the workforce. Agirdag (2014) has also found that these young bilinguals will earn significantly more in the labor market compared to their monolingual peers “with immigrant roots.” (p. 9)

Yet, due to the critical shortage of certified bilingual education teachers, only 16.5% of the nation's 5 million EB students are enrolled in some form of bilingual education program; the remainder are enrolled in subtractive based English as a Second Language programs that only focus on English acquisition (EDWeekly, 2023). Latino male teachers who are also certified bilingual elementary teachers can be thought of as *ultra-minoritized* as they are a minority (Latino), of the minority (male), of the minority (bilingual), of the minority (elementary teacher). In other words, they can be considered unicorns within the teaching profession. The critical need to recruit and retain male bilingual preservice teachers is widely understood but rarely researched. Lara (2022) highlighted the “dearth of literature on Latino male preservice teachers” (p. 4) and cited only four other known studies (Lara & Leija, 2014, Lara & Fránquiz, 2015, Lara 2022 & Gomez et.al., 2008). If there is ever going to be a transformation in U.S. education, we must consider not only what is taught in teacher education programs but specifically who is being prepared to teach (Grahm et. al, 2019).

Whiteness of Teacher Preparation

Teacher education, like K-12 education, is built on White middle-class norms to serve a predominantly a female White middle-class teaching field (Anderson & Aronson, 2019). Despite the inclusion of diversity and equity in mission and vision statements, the persistent Whiteness of teacher education can be seen in the colorblind or strictly supplemental approach to the inclusion of multicultural education and the lack structural changes that support the recruitment and retainment of students of color. Wells (2021) stated that:

Even when education policies are ‘colorblind’ on the surface, they interact with school systems and residential patterns in which race is a

central factor in deciding where students go to school, what resources and curricula they have access to, and whether they are understood and appreciated by their teachers and classmates and how they are categorized across academic programs (cited in Love, 2023, p. 235).

The question remains, will teacher education continue to be an institution that maintains inequitable structural norm or will transformation occur; and if it does, what does that entail? Systemic change requires first an understanding and acceptance of the structural inequities that currently exist. Teacher education programs all over the country seek to recruit this population that is critically needed; however, the relationship is rarely reciprocal (Gist, 2017; Gándara & Escamilla, 2017; Anderson & Aronson, 2019). Quite often culturally and linguistically diverse students' populations are recruited into teacher education programs that capitalize on their diversity while simultaneously maintaining the curriculum, policies and courses that only serve the traditional majority (Milner, 2008) which may perpetuate the absence of diverse teachers. Lara (2022) stated that “teacher preparation programs can draw on pre- service teachers’ experiences and *testimonios* to look closely at how they prepare their teachers to address the needs of Latino students” (p.15). Thus, the key to transformative change must begin with male Latino bilingual teachers and a willingness to work together to co-construct an understanding of how best to recruit and support male bilingual teachers into educator preparation programs.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Community Cultural Wealth framework challenges deficit perspectives and focuses on the assets of communities of color (Yosso, 2005). The Community Cultural Wealth framework outlines six forms of capital: aspirational, linguistic, familiar, social, navigational and resistant. Yosso (2005) defines aspirational capital as “the ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future, even in the face of real and perceived barriers” (p. 77). Linguistic capital refers to the dynamic varied language and communication skills of students of color. Familial capital refers to the personal, family and community networks knowledge students of color acquire (2006) refers to social capital as “networks of people and community resources” (p. 79). Navigational capital refers to the ability to navigate diverse settings. Finally, resistant capital refers to knowledge and skills to challenge inequality. In this study, bilingual male teachers’ lived experiences reflected the majority of the six forms of capital wealth.

RESEARCH METHOD

Utilizing a narrative inquiry approach, this study will focus on the experiences of six male Latino bilingual elementary education teachers in the Southwest, United States. "Narrative is understood as a spoken or written text giving an account of an event/action or series of events/actions, chronologically connected" (Czarniawska, 2004, p. 18). According to Creswell (2014), a narrative approach is an appropriate line of inquiry for studying "the lives of individuals and asks one or more individuals to provide stories about their lives" (p. 13).

Narrative research has its roots in various academic disciplines (Chase, 2005; Creswell, 2007). Chase (2005) states that researchers can utilize narrative research approach for paradigmatic reasons. Creswell (2007) suggests that these paradigmatic reasons include, "How individuals are enabled and constrained by social resources, socially situated in interactive performances, and how narrators developed interpretations" of those social interactions (p. 55). Creswell (2014) states that one to two participants as an appropriate number for a narrative approach.

Positionality

As researchers we acknowledge that our collective experiences may influence and inform the findings of this study. The three researchers for this study are bilingual Spanish/English and hold the ranks of assistant and associate professors respectively at Hispanic serving institutions. The researchers identify as Mexican, Latina of Mexican heritage and Mexican. Currently, the researchers work in the fields of bilingual/ESL teacher preparation and Higher Education. Prior to working in higher education, the researchers were classroom teachers in K-12 unprivileged school districts. The first and third authors were emergent bilinguals enrolled in deficit bilingual programs the United States. Furthermore, the second and third authors did not have male teachers in their elementary schooling and all three researchers are avid advocates of the importance of representation especially in classroom settings.

Participants

We interviewed six Latino male bilingual elementary education teachers who transferred from community colleges to a large and recently designated Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) teacher education program in the Southwest U.S. Interviews focused on participants' rationale for becoming bilingual education teachers within primary schools, what influenced their decision, and what, if any, challenges they faced while

pursuing careers as bilingual primary teachers.

Selection criteria included being a Latino male and bilingual primary teacher. Specifically, six first generation Latino male bilingual elementary teachers participated in this study. Purposeful sampling criteria was utilized and consisted of the following four categories: (1) in-service bilingual teacher (2) attended a community college; (3) graduated from the educator preparation program at the university (4) self-identified first generation Latinx male. Data were collected by conducting and recording Zoom in-depth interviews with participants. For the interviews, we developed a protocol that was guided by the literature as it relates to what we currently know promotes or hinders representation of male teachers in primary schools. Thus, we focused on how teachers’ racial identities, background, and lived experiences influenced their desire to work as bilingual elementary teachers.

Table 1

Male Bilingual Elementary Teachers

Participant	First Generation	Native Language	Country of Birth	EPP course modality	Age	Community College
Ricardo	Yes	Spanish	United States	FTF	41	Yes
Juan	Yes	Spanish	Mexico	Online	28	Yes
Javier	Yes	Spanish	Mexico	Online	32	Yes
Pedro	Yes	Spanish	United States	FTF	28	Yes
Emiliano	Yes	Spanish	United States	Online	-	Yes
Alfredo	Yes	Spanish	United States	Online	23	Yes

The interviews were semi-structured to allow us to explore in more detail certain aspects of what the teachers were saying in the interviews. Thus, we sought the flexibility to allow the conversation to naturally unfold. See Table 1.

Data Analysis

Upon receiving transcriptions, authors 1 and 3 reviewed them by listening to audio recordings to ensure accuracy and made corrections when necessary. Once all necessary corrections to transcriptions were made, the team proceeded to upload raw data transcriptions to Microsoft Word and Excel software. The interview data were analyzed by coding the themes that emerged from the transcriptions utilizing Patton’s (2002) approach to inductive data analysis.

We reviewed the transcriptions often to familiarize ourselves with the

data in order to see the emerging patterns and themes. To establish validity, we coded the data, and the preliminary results were shared with the study participants as a form of member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Trustworthiness

We triangulated the data to ensure trustworthiness by having more than one subject as a data source (Mathison, 1988). We also conducted individual one-on-one interviews and allowed for member-checking by sending out copies of the transcriptions and themes of the data to confirm accuracy. Mathison (1988) states, “Data triangulation refers simply to using several data sources, the obvious example being the inclusion of more than one individual as a source of data” (p. 14). Lincoln and Guba (2000) write that collecting data from various sources, such as interviews from different perspectives, strengthens trustworthiness. Thus, hearing from several bilingual elementary education teachers increased the overall trustworthiness and generalizability of the findings.

RESULTS

Aspirational

Despite the barriers male bilingual teachers encountered throughout their educational trajectory, they indicated a strong desire to become teachers to help their community and students like them. Pedro, a 4th grade dual language teacher, stated he had a strong desire to help people.

Just a desire to help other people is really what helped, pushed me into bilingual education. Like as a teacher I can help the kids with their work, I can give them tips about you know, maybe like, situations you know, to an extent.

Similarly, Emiliano wanted to make an impact on children like him. “*I wanted to become a teacher in general because I really wanted to make the same impact in other kids that my teachers made in me*”. Juan, a 4th grade bilingual teacher, always knew he wanted to be a teacher, “*so my entire life I was like I wanna be a teacher. I wanna be a teacher*”.

In reflecting on his educational trajectory Alfredo stated:

I knew I wanted to pursue higher education. Just go pursue something, you know, higher education, get my degree. I wanted to give back to the district that gave me an opportunity, well not just the district but to the organization that gave me a chance to go to college. I wanted to give back to them and to the community. So, I thought it would be a good career option to go and pursue

education.

Javier a formally undocumented student stated:

You realize ultimately what you want and we all say we want the world to be better, we want to make change in the world and society, but when I truly see the student that comes into my classroom and the student that leaves, I realize some way, somehow I planted that seed and then I, as much as I try to stay objective.

Linguistic Capital

Linguistic capital refers to the multiple language communication skills students of color acquire through their experience knowing two or more languages. Most, male bilingual teachers recognize their linguistic abilities as an asset and expressed that they wanted to use them to help students and families; many of whom they related to on a personal level.

It was definitely serving the parents who may not speak English or even at that, speak the content of education and school. So, I think parents and students have always been in my heart. And every year, that's what I strive for to serve and make sure that parents and students achieve their goals and reach those expectations. – Ricardo

I talk to students in Spanish and that, that was technically, that was me growing up. So, whenever I go to the classroom, I see myself, is like that, that was me when I was a kid growing up. I was learning 2 languages, trying to keep up with both at the same time and it's just a good feeling to be there with students who I can have a connection with.- Juan

I knew that I had the opportunities to work with new comers, students that are coming from out of the country and you know just having, I always thought about my mother how she came into this country not knowing in English. And I just wanted to, you know, be a face that they could look at, someone that is familiar and just help them out. -Alfredo

Pedro a former EB student who grew up in rural Texas saw his ability to speak Spanish as an asset; however, not all his teachers appreciated his linguistic potential. Pedro stated, “*I don't think we really attempted to speak Spanish in class, or we got reprimanded for it in class*”. Despite the negative linguistic experiences Pedro remained positive. For example, he stated “*It was*

just really me thinking that I could speak another language and, while they could only speak one. So I felt that I was at an advantage”.

Familial Capital

Familial capital wealth includes a commitment to the well-being of the community, and it is the cultural knowledge acquired from family and community experiences. Male bilingual teachers expressed the importance of family and ways in which their families have influenced who they are and how they view the world.

It is my upbringing that informs everything that I do in the classroom now, whether it's bringing context, bringing into the classroom context from the agricultural life or mechanical life or perspectives from outside the classroom that you wouldn't have if you're going to have that experience. - Ricardo

My parents are humble, we are humble people I'd like to think. We don't have much, but what we have, we have earned through hard work. My dad as a kid, I worked on the farm in the summers, and he really, and you know it really showed me, it gave me an appreciation for and demonstrated to me how hard you have to work to make things come true, because it doesn't just come to you. - Pedro

Really close like family bonds, really close knit, we kind of don't do much without everybody else knowing about it. They are a big part of the decision making, even though we are all individuals, and we all have separate dreams and aspirations. Everyone is part of the conversation. So whether it is like who you date, or what job you have, or where you plan on going to school, it's just, the usual is for us to share with each other.- Emiliano

It was a mix of seeing how much effort and how much work my father and mother put into getting into this country but make sure that they could work put food on the table and work to make sure that I could go into school. I wanted to make sure that I could make them proud and prove that all the effort they put in to put it into this country.- Alfredo

Social Capital

Social capital refers to individuals that serve as support networks. Male bilingual teacher relied on a variety of different support networks throughout their educational trajectories. For instance, Juan, Pedro and Alfredo relied on their cohort of fellow pre-service teachers to help them in their educator preparation program (EPP).

I guess having that connection with them and making that bond with them because they are the only ones who are going through the same thing as I was, a year of, like a lot of work and a lot of passing their tests and doing all of this, so I think just having that connection with them and being working towards the same goal really helped us come together and just have a good interaction with each other. -Juan

I sat with her because I knew her (referring to a female bilingual teacher candidate), she was familiar, and you know, somebody else familiar with. And being in an environment like that, you go with people you know; you know? And then she invited someone else that she asked to sit with us, and then another student sat with, the student that my friend knew because that other student knew the friend, than my friend knew. -Pedro

Something else that help me pushed me to finish was my friends that were in the cohort going through a very similar experience. I found that a lot of comfort knowing that I was not alone doing this. - Alfredo

Javier sought support outside of his cohort while completing his EPP.

I started seeking relationships with a lot of the staff at school that I was placed at including administrators, administrators that have come to visit. I would try to push myself into all these events with, within the, within the campus where I would be able to go and venture out and branch out to be able to speak to additional administrators and different teachers. Just to make sure that I was gaining as much as I can. I actually now that I'm thinking about right now, I found myself back in that, in that elementary, middle school and high school stage where I was trying to feed off from, from everyone as much as I could. So I realized that from my peers, they were very much younger than me. So I had to direct myself to seeking relationships from, from, from, from veteran teachers, educators, administrators to be able to gravitate forwards what their experiences were, what worked, what didn't work. And so,

yeah, that's, that's really where I was looking for and as much as I try to seek male administrators or educators, they're very hard to find.

Navigational Capital

The Navigational capital most present in the interviews was related to “social networks that facilitate community navigation” (Yosso, 2005). Below male bilingual teachers discuss how professors, mentor teachers, and field supervisors helped them during their educational trajectories.

It was a doctor at a local community college. Uhm? I was going to the library, I tell the story, I was going to the library to pay off the fine, the book fine, I think I had two years of fines and I saw the poster for the, what was it called?, teaching path something and I was inspired by it. And I went to this meeting that were having for teacher candidates. It was just a general invitation. And long story short, her speech to the applicants was very touching and, and I was moved to change my career from automotive to education. – Ricardo

As I always talk to them like: hey, I want to be a teacher, so they kind of put me on a pathway to get my associate's first so they kind of guided me. You gotta take this class and this class. The second probably factor was since I, I did work at the school are other teachers around me who I work with all the time. They kind of guided me a little bit. There were like you should do this, maybe think about this class or just stuff. I feel like having a teacher who went through this or who had already gone through the experience of becoming a teacher really helped me a lot and I feel like a lot of them guided me through, through the process. And of course, once I started the EPP we had a mentor, we had our site coordinator. We had just all the support throughout the whole thing. -Juan

The recruiter was, definitely a go to person that would not just guide me in the way of I, I'm the type of person that I need to know what's next. Well here goes all my chips in one bag, let's see where this leads me, right? Coming as a father, coming as a husband, had a household I needed to know, OK, this is where I'm coming up against. I'm coming up to my exams, what's next? What do I follow? What do I need to know to stay on that path? To where by

this date I'm ready to rock and roll. And I think that that guidance from those coordinators allowed me to staying, to navigate very well and not become impatient because I knew exactly where I was headed and what was next. So the outline was very clear the entire time. – Javier

Well, I had a lot of mentors along the way, teachers both in and out of the program who really help me, and my friends too. Whether it was what to do. And my mentors, whether like what would be the best recommendations for certain situations. Without any of them I wouldn't have picked it up, because like I said like in school I really never struggled it was pretty easy to memorize things. But this was the hardest I think, like schooling I ever had but my mentors and friends honestly, really help me navigate it. – Pedro

She (referring to recruiter) helped me prior to entering the EPP. Because I would talk to her when I was in 11th grade, and in 12th grade. And in 12th grade my senior year in high school, I was hospitalized. Just due to home stress. So I had to drop all my classes in the fall and only take a high school class, not a dual credit class and you know I felt really defeated about that because I wouldn't be able to start teaching and finish the program at 19 and to me that at that time felt like my whole educational life was over. But she was able to get me back on track. She said it's OK, it's just a setback. And she would get with me and tell me what I would need to transfer on time and it took me an extra year to transfer, but I was able to do it. And looking back I am so, technically 1 1/2 years earlier than others but I still started teaching earlier than what an average person going from high school to an undergrad degree would go through. So my recruiter they were a massive influence on how to navigate the educational program I was in. -Alfredo

Resistant Capital

Resistant capital demonstrates how despite the circumstance's male bilingual teacher persisted and overcame challenges or fears. The following three male bilingual teachers discuss how they felt as they completed their EPP.

So obviously one of my fears is like I'm going to be the only male,

like I had that in my head. Even working as a paraprofessional, I was one of the only males in the school. It was like maybe two other teachers, but there was, there wasn't that many. So joining the program I was like, OK I might be the only male, I don't know, I don't know yet. So when I joined I was the only male. There was twelve other girls and my field supervisor who was a girl and I mean it's just the fear, just knowing that I will be different than everybody else was just a little was just a little like nerve-racking. But I just feel like the, over time it just went away once you get to know them and we just started collaborating, working together and just getting to know each other. It just kind of went away and it was the best experience I've ever had, so.- Juan

That was an insane year, that was a crazy year, everybody kept building it up that it was going to be very intense, and that it was going to be tough, and perhaps the worst time of your life, and they were not kidding. It was really hard to keep up with all.- Emiliano

In Pedro's journey we can see how familial capital and resistant capital are interwoven and are key in completing the EPP.

As I was going through the program, I knew it was tough, I was exhausted every day. I was just generally not happy, but I knew that through my whole college career my parents are helping me out, so honestly, I persisted because I owed it to them. Because if I was paying for college, I would have to do my part to go through it too. And that was like, my attitude, through all of it, if I ever had a class and not going, I went anyway. I only missed like two classes. And that was because one time I was really sore, it was a PE class. I was taking two PE classes that semester and I was really sore from my workout. And then the other one, was I don't remember the other one. But I don't remember missing much. Just because I was like, if they're paying for my classes, I have to make it my duty to be there. And not waste their time or their money. That was just probably my attitude towards it. -Pedro

Ricardo's experience illustrates the systemic barriers and biases he encountered when he was in high school.

I remember the counselors and the principals talking to other students and not so much Latinos, but they would encourage them

to go to college and they would take him on tours and trips to colleges. But me, my, my counselor drove me down to a mechanic shop and he said: “Hey, look when you graduate high school, this is a good employer. You can work for”, and I thought it was a great deal. You know I was like, I was 17 and I was already being recommended to work at a mechanic shop. But years later, on reflection, I don't know if I'm bitter or, or encouraged to do my best, but some students were allowed to go to tours and I was driven down to a mechanic shop.

Furthermore, resistant capital helps students persevere despite the inequitable circumstance. Ricardo has been a classroom teacher for over a decade, completed his master's and hopes to continue on to his doctoral degree.

DISCUSSION

Diversifying the teacher education workforce is critical to serving all students who come from various academic and linguistic backgrounds. It is clear that there is a shortage of teachers coming to the profession which compounds the challenge of diversifying the workforce. This study's findings have illuminated how Latino male teachers navigate and cope with the hurdles they encounter to become teachers in the primary school sector. Indeed, the obstacles encountered by our Latino male participants illustrate how they navigate compulsory education both as students and teachers in the system that was designed for them. Our findings have policy recommendations that can potentially improve outcomes for EB students and increase representation of Latino males within K-12 educational system. Given the responses from our participants, it is evident that there are several policy suggestions to help promote a pathway to increasing Latino male bilingual teacher representation which are (1) Promote the Primary Education as a Gender-Neutral Profession and (2) Intentionally recruit Latino male bilingual teachers.

Promote the Primary Education as a Gender-Neutral Profession

Many of our participants indicated they received societal and community messages that suggested that the teaching profession was a gendered and racialized occupation. That is, primary grade teaching was for White women, not Brown men. This was evidenced by the lack of representation of men in primary grades when they were students and when they were in the EPP program. As Juan stated, “*So obviously one of my fears is like I'm going to be the only male, like I had that in my head. Even working as a para, I was one of the only males in the school*”. Thus, this was a concern that many had entering the profession. One particular challenge for any

marginalized group is the need to feel that they belong in the environment in which they inhabit. For example, few things send a stronger message that you do not belong is the lack of representation. As Juan indicated above, it is important that concerted efforts be made to change the community negative perceptions regarding having men in primary grade levels. Given sociocultural norms within the Latino community of what a man is expected to pursue within labor markets creates other career pathways that steers them away from the teaching profession. In addition, the cultural messages from community members that women are best teachers in primary grades creates conditions that are unwelcoming to Brown men who would like a career as a classroom teacher in elementary schools. Some of these conditions that perceive men of color as potential sexual violators can create trust issues for some community members (Lara & Fránquiz, 2015). Thus, it is critically important that school districts and postsecondary institutions send the message that primary education is not simply a woman's career option, but a gender-neutral profession and also is race/ethnic-neutral as well.

Intentionally Recruit Latino Male Bilingual Teachers

Our participants were not well recruited. It seems like many serendipitously found their way into the teaching profession. Schools and districts must be more intentional in how they approach Latino male students in K-12 to showcase that teaching in primary and secondary schools are a potential career path. Illustrating and promoting bilingual education and supporting the use of Spanish in K-12 schools so that these Latino boys, indeed, all Spanish speaking students regardless of sex and national origins, can continuously develop these bilingual skills.

Our findings would suggest that Latino males would like to pursue a career in teaching but may not know that it is a career option. Working with career services on high school and college campuses can increase awareness teaching opportunities. In addition, Latino community is usually strong on college campuses. Thus, recruiting and working with Latino affinity student clubs and organizations on postsecondary campuses could reap a high return on investment by the school districts. Finally, it is important to work with Latino family members to discuss the importance of becoming teachers as our findings indicate. As a reminder, Emiliano indicated that in his family, *“Everyone is part of the conversation. So whether it is like who you date, or what job you have, or where you plan on going to school, it's just, the usual is for us to share with each other”*. Thus, school districts need to be intentionally working with families. Furthermore, educator preparation programs would benefit from our findings. Many EPP student enrollments

have been dropping. Again, this has led to teacher shortages in the U.S. By increasing recruitment of Latino males and working with Latino clubs and organizations in addition with families, EPPs can potentially increase student enrollments. This can then lead to increases in Latino male teachers in the classrooms.

Limitations

This study has potential limitations. First, there is limited research regarding male Spanish/English bilingual elementary teachers. Furthermore, while the sample size is appropriate for a narrative inquiry qualitative study future studies should focus on a bigger sample size of male bilingual elementary teachers with a quantitative methods. In addition, given that our participants come from an R1 research university that recently became an HSI, our findings may not be transferrable to other institutions. Also, given the unique Southwest region, our findings may not be transferrable to other regions in the US. Finally, given the distinctive context for Latinas, our findings from our male Latino participants may not be applicable to Latinas.

Implications

There is limited research on how to utilize the experiences to inform transformative change of EPPs; particularly with a highly specific group such as male bilingual teachers. Kennedy (2020) states that the research done, over the past 15 years, on ways to address the bilingual teacher shortage focuses on, “removing barriers to entry into the teaching profession... [through] recruiting incentives, international recruiting efforts, grow-your-own programs and alternative routes to teacher certification” (p. 340). However, change should not rest solely on reimagining pathways for culturally and linguistically diverse pre-service teachers within structures that were not built with them in mind but rather reimagining the structures to support and welcome all students. Utilizing the results of this study authors suggest the following institutional changes to address the shortage of male bilingual teachers: increase representation of Latino males in education, focus on mentorship, capitalize on ethnic care and monetize the critical need.

Participants shared that despite the lack of representation of Latino male bilingual teachers, they still aspired to pursue this career in largely in part because identification with and love for EB students and their families. An increased representation of male Latino bilingual teachers would not only create a sense of belongingness in the EPP, but in the profession as a whole. Concentrated efforts to recruit and retain male Latino bilingual educators should be coupled with effort to recruit and retain male Latino bilingual

faculty as well; signifying not only do you belong here but this (faculty appointment) is what is possible. Acknowledge the critical need for Latino male bilingual teachers by monetizing the importance of their continued presence in education; if medical doctors with a highly sought after specialization are compensated, educators should be as well. This recruitment of Latino males must also include families of Latino males. Given the results from our study, school districts and teacher education programs within postsecondary institutions need to inform families that become a teacher is a noble profession and one that is accepting of men of color in the classroom. One thing is to get the support of the school districts, it is quite another to get the support from the family to pursue a career in elementary education. The former is important, the latter is critical.

The participants shared how their familial capital influenced their aspirational and resistance capital, however this is rarely utilized in the construction of EPPs. The notion that teachers care about students and the future is the foundational basis of many EPP's but what is missing is the utilization of what Lara (2022), refers to as 'ethnic care' (p.22). Clearly, students are coming in with a sense of responsibility to their family, community and culture and thus it is incumbent on EPPs to capitalize on this by utilizing culturally sustaining/revitalizing content, curriculum and pedagogy. Additionally, facilitating field experience and work that directly involve the community will not only help students to develop a course to field connection but also see the importance and impact of their work before they enter the field.

Lastly, the participants shared the ways in which they tapped into their social capital to build their navigational capital. In recruiting this four-time minority population EPPs have a responsibility to ensure that they have the support and mentorship to be successful. In their study of first generations colleges students Mann, Henderson and Riney (2003) state that one of the main factors that limited participation in a non-traditional program for paraprofessionals was "lack of familiarity with the requirements and process of higher education (cited in Kennedy, 2020 p.341)." Thus, sustained mentorship programs that are developed to address the needs of this unique population are needed. In centering the different forms of capital in the transformation of EPPs, programs will not only be built for Latino male bilingual teachers but with them. Create programs and structures that facilitate mentorship throughout the program; build the community without students having to seek it out on their own.

CONCLUSION

The need to increase Latino male representation is critical for the positive educational outcomes of Latino boys due to the cultural wealth and representation these teachers provide to students. Despite the positive impact male bilingual teachers provide to their communities, systemic change is crucial in order to cultivate male bilingual teachers (*garbanzos de a libra*). The lived experiences of male bilingual teachers speak to the lack of targeted support from K-12 educators and EPPs. For example, in this study most male bilingual teachers were unaware of EPPs in bilingual education. Chickpeas (*garbanzos*) are a staple in many diets because of their immense health benefits, however the process of cultivation for them is an intensive process.

Thus, to reap the benefits of chickpeas one must invest time and effort in their cultivation; and when attempting to cultivate an anomaly of a chickpea that weighs a pound (*garbanzo de a libra*) the process of cultivation has to be unparalleled. Latino male bilingual teachers are an ultra-minoritized quadruple minority and in many ways *garbanzos de a libra*, and thus their cultivation must be robust and intentional. This change cannot be singular, but institutional as male bilingual teachers need a network that will reinforce the benefits of the *garbanzo de a libra* effect.

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