“DOING MY OWN THING”: HOW FIRST-GENERATION COLLEGE STUDENTS COMMUNICATE THEIR COLLEGE EXPERIENCE WITH THEIR PARENTS

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CONTENT OVERVIEW

- Rationale
- Literature Review
- Method
- Results
- Discussion
- Conclusion
- Questions/Comments
50% Percentage of first-generation college students that make up a college population

(U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, 2010)
LITERATURE REVIEW

THE ROLE OF PARENTS AND INSTRUCTORS

- Students rely on their parents mostly for emotional support
- Students consider their instructor as a resource

STUDENT’S EXPECTATIONS

- Feel less prepared and worry about financial aid prior to attending college
- Rely on parents for making decisions prior to attending

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

- Having conversations with their parents does have a positive effect on the student’s “academic self-concept”, higher grades, and “high level of self-efficacy”
METHOD

PURPOSE AND APPROACH
- Qualitative method
- Phenomenological approach
- Interpretive paradigm

DATA COLLECTION
- Convenience sampling
- Six participants
- 30-minute interview, neutral setting

DATA ANALYSIS
- Thematic analysis
- Open-coding, comparison
- (1) Prioritizing Personal Communication; (2) Strategizing Support; and (3) Negotiating Support Networks
PRIORITIZING PERSONAL COMMUNICATION

- Update parents on what is going on in their lives by providing them a brief overview
- Discuss their experience when they are feeling stressed and need somebody to talk to

"I feel being able to tell them any weird thing that’s going on or any kind of situation having that open communication is definitely necessary. That’s why I feel, even though it has been hard, it has been a little bit easier because I don’t, and being a transfer, you don’t have that social contact with your peers and all that".
Students are more open to discussing topics learned in class if their parents express interest. Some students rely on friends, especially those who have college experience.

"My dad is really into psychology and stuff like that. He, he owns a car dealership, but he’s, he’s really into psychology and sort of more scholarly things, so I have a lot of conversations with him about the material I’m learning about in my psychology class, and my other classes too for that matter".
NEGOTIATING SUPPORT NETWORKS

- Having a professor to discuss their college experience and even plans after college is helpful
- Some students rely on their academic success advisor to discuss their experience, especially if they can’t meet with their major advisors or other professors due to timing

"I’ve talked to my professor my first semester here, Theories of Personalities, and she was a, she was a, she was an Asian psychologist and she was also Filipino and so, oh perfect cause I don’t know what to do with my degree and she was able to lay it out for me and kind of reassure me that yes, psychology is ok".
DISCUSSION

IMPLICATIONS

• Students
• Parents
• Professors and university administrators

LIMITATIONS

• Time frame
• Participants from same university
• Information was missing based on the parents’, friends’, and professors’ experiences

FUTURE RESEARCH

• Different universities
• Larger number of participants
• Follow up after college
CONCLUSION

SELECTIVE
Students are selective as to what they discuss with their parents about their college experience.

ADVICE
Students rely on their friends, especially those who have gone through college, in order to seek advice because they have experience.

ACADEMIC SUCCESS
For navigating college, students rely on professors or university resources to help them register for classes and plan for their future.
QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?

Thank you for listening to my presentation