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The Silent Struggle: Mexicana Mothers Balancing Education And Being A Madre

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Abstract

The focus of this Capstone project analyzing how Mexicana students balance obtaining an education and being a madre. Mexicanas madres face a clash of the two competing “cultures” of school and home. Being a Mexicana student often means one must observe a set of “cultural” academic expectations; namely, school comes first, and the importance of deadlines and grades. Being a Mexicana madre often means one must observe a competing set of cultural expectations. These include familia first, attend to the children, and cook and clean. The evidence based argument suggests that Mexicana student madres must learn to “navigate” these two systems and find, perhaps, a “third” way to solve this issue in order to successfully complete their college work. Six current and former Mexicana madre/students, were interviewed to see how the support provided madres pursuing a higher education could be reimagined. Based on the analysis of the data and the relevant literature, the three themes that emergent themes included: 1) Extending campus daycare hours; 2) promoting more awareness of Title IX to ensure that pregnancy or family responsibilities do not interfere with obtaining an education; and 3) creating a school policy that allows children in class. From these three action options, an action was undertaken to support Mexicana madre/students better negotiate the two competing cultures of school and home.

The Silent Struggle: Mexicana Mothers Balancing Education And Being A Madre

Setting The Stage

It was a cold December day, I was inside my room studying for my math final as my daughter was watching her favorite Tv show in the living room. As I was concentrating on my laptop, studying for my math final, I heard some footsteps coming towards my room. Thinking it was my daughter, I looked up to see that it was my father-in-law. Confused, I asked if he needed something. He stated back, "Yes, can you please leave your laptop and come be with your daughter." Slowly closing my laptop, I said "yes" to him. Despite having the opportunity to get a head start in studying for my math final, knowing that my final was hours away, I had to stop what I was doing so I could go and be with my daughter. I became stressed because I did not want to stay up late at night to study. I knew that studying at night I was not going to have the same energy that I would have during the day. But, there was no consideration of how I felt; I had to close down my laptop and be with my daughter because that was an expectation for me to do so. Being a Mexicana madre I had to meet the cultural expectations that come within our culture, one of them being family comes first and that I attend to my child. Other things come after that.

I remember the day my daughter was born and the first time I was able to hold her, I was overwhelmed with emotions. Crying from joy because the overall experience was unbelievable, and just to finally be able to meet her after nine months was so exciting. I was so prepared for this chapter of my life, but little did I know my life was going to change. Motherhood is not easy. Nights become exhausting when my baby was being bottle feed. Waking up every two hours was so difficult to do; I would get no sleep. Adding to the lack of sleep, was the fact that stress became more visible. I would feel overwhelmed and wonder if I was feeding my baby enough, why my baby was crying so much, or how will I find the energy to care for my baby, and how would I handle household duties. Being a mother was and is difficult. As most new mothers, I experienced the baby blues of feeling stressed, sad, lonely, anxious, following the birth of my daughter, because there is so much work we have to do. There's no denying it, after giving birth your priorities change. We as mothers change. Our daily reality changes, as a new mother we forget about ourselves and our focus turns into our children; they come first before anything. As

I was adjusting to the “mom life,” I was also in the process of fulfilling my requirements for receiving my B.A in Liberal Studies at California State University Monterey Bay.

It was the month of August, the first day of lecture class of my first semester at CSU Monterey Bay. My daughter was only a couple months old, as she was ready for me leave her with her babysitter. In that instance, I felt mom guilt due to leaving my daughter for the first time with her babysitter for almost a whole day, so I could go back to school. I faced separation anxiety for the first couple of weeks returning back to school. These feelings had an impact on me and my ability to focus in school. While my professors would be teaching, I would worry about how my daughter was doing, or if she was being fed at the times she was suppose to eat. My focus was on my daughter, when my focus had to be on school where I was at the moment. Being a student, I had to meet academic expectations and deadlines. Also, grades were important. It became difficult to set aside time for my education, as I had my priority of my daughter as well. Balancing being a madre and a student was a struggle for me.

Certain amount of hours were required to set aside to study and do required assignments; time that in reality I did not have. After class I had to come straight home, to take care of my daughter. Not only did I have the responsibility to care for my daughter, but I had to cook, clean, and do laundry. These are all expectations coming from our cultural traditions of being Mexicana. As the women of the household you had to attend the children and your spouse, your job is to be with your children at all times.

Consequently, I wasn't putting the effort I wanted to put into my classes. My education was and is important, but yet I was not putting the time and effort it needed. It became a repeated pattern of waiting for my daughter to go to sleep and stay up all night to complete my assignments. Half asleep doing my assignments, I wasn't putting forth the best of me. If I wanted to do my homework during the day I was seen as a “mala madre” for wanting to leave my daughter to go and do my homework. If I was doing homework, I had to stop because it was not accepted by my family. I faced a clash of two competing systems of school and home.

There is a quiet struggle that we, as mothers, face balancing school and being a mother. This is an issue that we avoid talking about. I feel that we should create more awareness, because I know there are other mothers that can relate to my experiences. I feel that, by creating more

awareness of this issue it will give the opportunity for schools of education to reimagine how to support mothers who endeavor of wanting a higher education.

Literature Synthesis & Integration: Mexicana Mothers & Education

Intro:

Nobody can imagine or tell you how hard being a parent is, but never mind being a full-time parent and full-time student. Balancing family life, parenthood, and college course work can be difficult at best and challenging at its worst. Everything requires an equal amount of attention but it does not always work that way.

What's the Problem:

Especially growing up in a Mexican culture where there are expectations as a Mexicana madre that we must follow and do. As a Mexicana madre one must observe a set of cultural expectations, familia first, attend children and we must cook and clean etc. Moreno and Villenas (2001), looked into the everyday realities that women are expected to do; Mexicana madres must cook, clean, and care for their children, that is the role as the “mujer de hogar” (women of the home). This examines the struggles and the responsibilities of cultural traditions and values that weigh on Mexicana women everyday. Day-to-day activities in the home of cleaning, cooking, and washing is the responsibilities of women in a Hispanic household concluded Alacron, Cruz, Jackson, Prieto, and Rodriguez-Arroyo (2011). The everyday activities of the women is to provide shelter, food, clothing, medicines for themselves and their families stated Villenas(2005). This shows the major role a Mexicana madre must upheld in a Mexican household.

Where as being a student, one must observe a set of “cultural” academic expectations. School comes first, deadlines and grades are the most important things. As a student you have the responsibilities of attending and participating in class. You are required to complete the assigned work given in a timely manner if not your grade will be affected. As a student, you are required to attend class regularly. Overall, as a student you are accountable for your academic success.

This creates a conflict for a student balancing their education and being a madre, one must juggle to meet both expectations of school and home. Valdes (1996) talked about how families were in favor of education by stating, “they knew credentials were needed in order to obtain certain kinds of employment. But they also wanted their children to put family first”. Valdes contradicted how families favored education but yet it is expected to put family first over anything. This becomes a struggle for a Mexicana madre who endeavors to become successful in balancing their education and being a madre.

Why is it an issue:

Mexicana madres that are students face a clash of two competing “cultures” of school and home. It is very difficult juggling school full time, and being a madre with all the expectations you must do as being a madre and a student.

Everything requires an equal amount of attention. But then you encounter yourself being challenged, when your child needs you and at the same time your project is due that night or the following day. It is hard to give your project your full attention when your child needs you. Your child becomes a priority and you need to attend your child first and put everything aside. Knowing your project is due that same night or the next day you are expected to care for your child. Homework is considered to be the last thing to think about, you have this expectation as a Mexicana madre but your also juggling to meet the expectations as being a student.

Mexicana madres face many challenges no taking into account the responsibility as being a “mujer de hogar”. Latinx student-mothers face additional challenges, ranging from lack of childcare, unwelcoming campus climates, and limited institutional support programs and services (Oliva and Jiménez 2017).

Scholars have found that “Latinas/os continue to face issues of access, remediation, financial aid challenges, retention, (low) expectations, and mentorship options from faculty and other leadership who recognize their specific challenges, strengths, and potential to thrive as college-level students” (Villenas 2001).

What should be done:

Schools of education must accommodate Mexicana madres so they can successfully complete their education and be a madre. In order to accommodate and meet the needs of Mexicana students who are madres, the research is to expose the struggles of Mexicana mothers balancing education and being a madre. With the data gathered and the information from personal experiences of Mexicana madres suggestions of options to support current and future madres who endeavor an education and be a madre must be made. Dyrness(2008) stated, as mothers we should also demand quality education for ourselves. Madres have two identities “ser madre” y “ser estudiante”.

Conclusion:

Schools of education should reimagine how to support madres who endeavor to complete a higher education. This is important because Mexicana madre must balance different cultural expectations those of school and those of home. Schools of education must “accommodate” Mexicana madres so that they can successfully “complete education” and “ser madres.”

Method Section

For this Capstone Project the researcher investigated how Mexicana students balance education and being a madre and what they think could be done to improve it. Based on an analysis of the data and the relevant research literature, the researcher used what she has learned to formulate an action project that responded to the focus issue in a way that inspires, informs, or involves a particular audience.

Context

My community partners were Mexicana current and former students that are madres, my research took place primarily at Cal State University of Chualar¹ which stands by the border between the city of Del Rey and Seattle. Del Rey has a population of approximately 21,145 residents, in Del Rey the racial demographics are made up of 35.8% Caucasians, 27.9% Hispanic or Latino, 17.8% Asian, 7.1% African American, 2.7% Pacific Islander, 0.56 Native American (“Marina, CA”, n.d). In Seattle, which is located in the Central Coast California and has a population of 33,145. The racial demographics of Del Rey make up roughly about 48%.4 Caucasian, 43% Latino or Hispanic, 9.7% Asian, 8.4% African American, 1.6% Pacific Islander and 1.1% Native Americans with (City Demographics: Seaside, CA”, n.d).

Founded in 1994, the University of Chualar is a public institution school and is one of the smallest CSU’s in the state of California with a current enrollment of about 7,616 students (“The California State University”, n.d; “Enrollment Fast Facts (Most Recent Term)”, n.d). The average cost of tuition per academic year will cost about 5,742 (“2019-20 Tuition Fees and Deadlines”, n.d).

In addition to this research an important factor to take into consideration is that there is no specific number of how many Mexicana madres that are students attend the University of Chualar. But we should take into account that the University of Chualar serves a Latino student population that makes approximately 44 % of the total student body as Fall 2019 (IAR data”, n.d ; “U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: San Diego County, California; Los Angeles County, California; Monterey County, Salinas city, California” n.d.). Within the Liberal Studies department/program hispanic, latina Mexicanas make up approximately 56% of the student body for that major.

Participants and Participant Selection

The researcher invited six Mexicana mothers to participate in this study. This group of participants are being invited to participate because they are madres who dream of becoming maestras and thus have knowledge that is relevant to my issue/focus. Out of the six mexicana

¹ Pseudonyms have been used in all people, places, and things to protect anonymity.

madres that were interviewed two were former Cal State University of Chualar alumni students who as well experienced the struggle of balancing education and being a madre.

Researcher

This concern is personally meaningful to me because I am a Mexicana madre, who is currently trying to balance being a mom and finishing school, so that I can become a maestra. It is something that I experience and I know there are other Mexicana students that are madres that can relate. I feel that my personal life experiences qualify me to carry out this project. I feel that my own struggles/obstacles that I face of balancing school and being a madre can make connections to this project in identifying that there is an issue occurring. I am a madre who is struggling therefore I am empathetic toward the struggles. I am a madre that had lost hope after failing a class as an undergrad. As a student, I did not give the time and effort the class required to put, because as a madre I had to put my daughter first. But I regain my confidence, with all the struggles I faced and obstacles I am finishing my last semester as an undergrad.

Informants

Itzella: Itzella is 49 years old, and is a single mother of two boys ages 17-20. She graduated from the University of Chualar in 2008 and is now a teacher in the Wine School District. She also completed her credential at University. She has been a regular mentor for many new mothers who are also entering the teaching profession.

Samantha: Samantha is 39 years old, and she has been married for 12 years. She has four children, two boys and two girls their age ranges from 1 years- old-17 years old. Samantha completed her BA in Liberal Studies University of Chualar in the fall of 2002, and finished her credential in 2003 at University of Chualar. She later received her Masters at Santa Clara State in 2006, and began teaching for the Wine District in Sonoma Ca. Samantha has been teaching for about 15 years as a bilingual kindergarten teacher.

Isuara: Isuara is 36 years old, and has been married for fourteen years. She has a daughter that is 11 years old. Isaura transferred to University of Chualar in fall of 2017 coming from Hawk College, and is currently fulfilling her requirements in order to receive her BA in Liberal Studies. If everything goes as planned, she will have completed her requirements by fall

of 2019.

Yanette: Yanette is 28 years old, she is a single mother of two girls ages 6 and 11. Yanette attended University of Chualar in the fall of 2014 majoring in Liberal Studies, but did not return back after failing two classes. Yanette lost hope and was discouraged as she struggled balancing her education and being a madre to her daughters. For three years, Yanette dedicated herself working a fulltime job and caring for her daughters. In 2017, Yanette decided to give education another try and she is now fulfilling her requirements to receive her BA in liberal studies for WildCat Distance & Online Education and she will have completed all her requirements by fall of 2019.

Leslie: Leslie is 24 years old, and has been married for two years. She has one child that is seven months old. Leslie transferred from Panther College in the year 2017, and is currently fulfilling her requirements at University of Chualar to receive her BA in Liberal Studies.

Angelica: Angelica is 24 years old, she has one child that is a year and four months. Angelica is a transfer student from Panther College and began her first semester at the University of Chualar in the Fall of 2017, she is majoring in Liberal Studies and will have completed all of her requirements by Spring of 2020.

Semi-Structured Interview and Survey Questions

1. What has it been like to balance school and being a madre?
2. As mothers, does being a college students create tensions between your experiences at school and home. If so explain?
3. What do you see as the challenges of balancing schooling and being a madre?
4. What are you concerned about when it comes to balancing education and being a madre?
5. What do you see as the benefits of balancing education and being a madre?
6. How does being Mexicana add to the complexity of balancing motherhood and school?
7. What is currently being done to support Mexicana students as they balance their schooling and being a madre? - by whom - and do you think this is good, bad, or indifferent? Why?
8. What is currently being done to improve How do Mexicana students are able to balance education and being a madre?
9. What do you think should be done to help Mexicana students balance education and being a

madre?

10. What do you think are the obstacles that Mexicana students face as they seek to balance their schooling and being a madre?

11. What do you think are the obstacles/drawbacks/disadvantages that prevent CSUMB from helping Mexicana students balance their schooling and being a madre?. Is there anything else that you would like to say about

Procedure

All interviews were done as a focus group. I hosted two cohorts, each with three participants. I hosted two cohorts because it was not possible to bring all six together at one time. For each cohort I hosted two sessions. During the first session the researcher included the asking of questions (1-10?). The second session focused on a review of the data from the first session as well as a chance to ask follow-up questions. Two participants were unable to attend the focus group, but they completed a survey of the same questions.

The Focus Groups were roughly an hour and were audio-recorded (with participant consent), and took place in CSUMB. A semi-structured interview format was used, so as to allow for follow-up questions and to understand unclear, interesting or unexpected responses. All interviews/surveys were scheduled at the convenience of the interviewees.

Data Analysis

Transcribed interviews **will** be coded and analyzed for emergent themes.

Results

For this Capstone Project, Mexicana madres current and former students were interviewed to see what they think could be done to improve balancing education and being a madre. This is important because a Mexicana madre must balance different cultural expectations those of school and those of home. Schools of education must “accommodate” Mexicana madres so that they can successfully complete education and “ser madres.” Based on an analysis of the data and the relevant research literature three themes emerged (see Table 1). Evidence-based decision making required evaluating each potential Action Option by the following criteria: Cost;

Sustainability ; and Effectiveness. The first criteria Cost will be based on how much money is required to implement the action project before it can be acquired or done. The second criteria Sustainability is based if the action project will maintain at a certain level or rate. Lastly Effectiveness will be based on whether the action project will be successful in producing a desired result that is expected. Based on the evaluation of each Action Option an action will be recommended and justified.

Table 1

Evaluation of Action Options

	CRITERIA 1 Cost	CRITERIA 2 Sustainability	CRITERIA 3 Effectiveness
1.Extend campus childcare hours	High	Low	Low
2.Promoting more awareness of Title IX to ensure that pregnancy or family responsibilities do not interfere with their education;	Low	High	High
3.Creating a school policy that allows children in class.	Low	Moderate	Moderate

Evaluation of Actions Options

As noted in table 1, three actions emerged after interviewing six Mexicana current and former students that are madres at the University of Chualar in purpose to find solutions to help struggling madres/students who are balancing education and being a madre. These options are:

1. Extend campus daycare hours
2. Promoting more awareness of Title IX to ensure that pregnancy or family responsibilities do not interfere with their education.
3. Creating a school policy that allows children in class.

All three actions will be evaluated by cost, sustainability, and effectiveness. Evaluating how much cost and action will require is an important criterion to evaluate because schools have a limited budget and in order to allow the action to follow through, it has to fall within the schools expenses. Sustainability is also an important criterion to evaluate because we have to see if the action will be supported and upheld by the school. The third most important criterion to evaluate the actions is the effectiveness it will have, since the goal of the research project is to help struggling Mexicana students that are madres who want to complete their education without any barriers, we have to see if the proposed action will produce the desired results expected.

Extending campus childcare hours

Four out of the six Mexicana former and current students that are madres interviewed, brought up extending campus daycare hours. They felt that if schools would extend campus daycare hours it would provide a good outcome towards madres who struggle to find child care. They specifically talked about the struggle of not having child care for the evenings, when they are required to take evening classes. Currently at the University of Chualar daycare runs from Monday-Friday from 8am to 4pm. Which makes it difficult for mothers to find another replacement to care for their children in the evenings. Isuara said that at times when her mother was not able to watch her daughter in the evenings when she has class, she was expected to stay home and miss class to care for her daughter. “You are expected to put your children first and put everything aside, even if you have expectations to meet from school” said Isuara. Ynette agreed and responded, you are told from your Mexican family “que la educación puede esperar”

(Y. Chavez, personal communication, October 18, 2019). But in reality it is hard said Angelica, it becomes stressful with one day of missing class it can really put you behind. You'll have to try to anticipate what was covered in class, studying more material than necessary because you weren't in class that day to hear what was actually necessary.

Additionally, many find it difficult finding evening care some delayed going back to school until their children are old enough for preschool. Angelica added "extending child care not only allows parents peace of mind it gives them more time to devote to schoolwork, and it can also help increase retention among a group that is likely to drop out of school"(A.Villalobos, personal communication, October 18, 2019).

Isaura believes that "the campus daycare center should provide support for students' parents and help them to succeed"(I.Gonzales, personal communication, October 18, 2019). While Samantha added"adding evening child care would provide students parents a flexibility to take evening classes without finding other solutions and it will have students stay on track for graduation" (S.Vasquez, personal communication, October 18, 2019).

Expanding campus daycare hours, will probably have a high impact on cost. It will require for the school to have additional funds to pay for additional staff, compensate workers, care services and other resources if needed. The cost invested will be determined whether it is within the school budget. Expanding daycare hours will have a low sustainability if given a certain amount of money specifically for the daycare, it will be hard without going overboard and investing more money than expected. The probability of effectiveness will have a low impact because if hours are extended you would first have to see if they are able to accommodate your child into the program so there is still that possibility that your child may not qualified into the program.

Promoting more awareness of Title IX to ensure that pregnancy or family responsibilities do not interfere with their education

One out of the six Mexicana madres interviewed brought up Title IX, Lupita felt that promoting more awareness of the rights that pregnant and or student parents have under Title IX

will benefit future and current students that are madres or that will be. Lupita specifically talked about how she took a semester off from school because her due date to give birth to her first child was around the dates where she would be still be in school. Lupita said “ I was scared I did not want to miss class, I know that some professors have strict attendance policies and I did not want them to drop me or be at risk of failing” (personal communication, October 18, 2019). Yanette added, “I actually decided to risk it and go to school while being pregnant with my second child it was hard, I ended up withdrawing my classes in the end” (Y.Chavez, personal communication, October 18, 2019). Further stating, my mom wanted me to stay home and not go back to school, she expected me to be a “mujer de hogar” a stay at home mom that has to be at home cooking, cleaning, and caring for my children (Y.Chavez, personal communication, October 18, 2019). Yet, I wanted to have a career to support my family. But I did not want my pregnancy or family responsibilities to interfere with my education. It is a struggle that us madres face said Yanette .Yanette said often at times, there are barriers in place that prevents madres drive and determination to keep up with their schoolwork. As a result, becoming pregnant or a parent causes us madres to drop out of school. Us Mexicana madres “tend to stay silent about the struggles we face”. Due to being unaware of the resources that can be provided to us, if we do not seek for help schools or faculty will be unaware of our struggles.

Furthermore, Lupita mentioned that when she returned back to school the following semester, she found out about Title IX through a mutual friend. Lupita said she was unaware of Title IX. She learned that under Title IX pregnant students and student's parents receive special services and accommodations. For example, professors must provide you leave of absence for as long as it deemed necessary, after returning from an excused absence, your professors must allow a reasonable amount of time to make up assignments and or test.

It was helpful to learn about what is Title IX Lupita mentioned “but it was a little too late I was already a semester behind” (L.Gomez, personal communication October 18, 2019).She further stated that Title IX provides accommodations to nursing mothers, such as lactations rooms a comfortable private spaces provided by your school for the purpose of expressing milk.

This is useful for mothers, because they do not have to rush home to express milk and come back to school again.

Promoting more awareness of Title IX to ensure that pregnancy or family responsibilities do not interfere with their education will have a low cost; all public and private schools, school districts, colleges, and universities who receive federal funds (“schools”) must comply with Title IX. Therefore, while the school receives federal funds they are entitled to give pregnant and student parents their rights. Promoting more awareness of Title IX to ensure that pregnancy or family responsibilities do not interfere with their education will have a high sustainability as long as the school is funded they are entitled to provide services for pregnant and parenting students under any circumstances under Title IX. This action will have a high effectiveness if pregnant students and or student parents take in consideration these types of resources offered.

Creating a school policy that allows children in class

One out of the six Mexicana madres interviewed suggested creating a school policy that allows children in class. Itzela talked about times where she had no babysitter for two of her boys and she had to find other solutions such as grandma, picking them up, and or friends of hers, and sometimes in desperation will take them with her to class. But hey would have to stay outside while class was in session. Itzela said “I was afraid my children would act up and create a disruption and me and my children get kicked out. I felt them safer outside than inside,”(I. Salazar, personal communication, October 18, 2019). And this occurred a couple of times where I had to bring my boys to school. It was hard to find other alternatives, It was easier for me to bring my boys to school with me. But they had to stay outside I did not want to be judged nor I wanted my boys to add distractions in class and disrupt other students learning:

At times when I would leave my boys with my friend I was told “I was mala madre”by my mother. My mother wanted me to stay home and not leave them with a random person,even if that random person was a close friend of mine. Occasionally, I missed a few classes due to not having a babysitter my teacher probably had a bad impression of me already. I also noticed that my attendance grade was already being affected. At that moment, I thought about not going to

school anymore and dropping out era muy dificil”(I. Salazar, personal communication, October 18, 2019).

Itzela felt that if the campus created a school policy that allows children in class it would seek to focus on providing an environment open to families issues. Itzela felt that it is vital to attend class regularly, missing class should be a rare occurrence. If you miss class more than what is expected, it will interfere with your learning and have a negative affect on your performance and your grade.

She further stated by, allowing children we madres will not be stressed when we come upon not having a babysitter, it will enable us to succeed in our education without any restrictions. Upon such occasions, with the instructor's advance permission, our children should be allowed to be brought into the classroom, but they must remain under the direct supervision Itzela said.

Creating a school policy will have low cost a school policy is a set of rules and procedures in order to function effectively and ensure everyone is connected. Money is not required to form a policy. This action will have a moderate sustainability, if applicable other students who are not parents can disagree with the policy and make students parent feel uncomfortable for bringing their child into class. Creating a school policy will have a moderate effectiveness because it will depend whether the professor implicates the policy and if he/she is okay for parents to bring their child to class when in need to.

Conclusion

This section will justify the action I recommended to help struggling Mexicana madres/students who are balancing education and being a madre. I will also discuss some of concessions, limitations and possible negative outcomes of my recommendation.

Recommendation

Of the three actions options that arose from interviewing six Mexicana former and current students that are madres, I strongly recommend that the school should increase awareness of the rights of pregnant and parenting students have under Title IX. I'm assured that this will

work because this is something that Mexicana madres can utilize to stay in school and meet their education or career goals.

Concession

The other two options, extending campus childcare hours and creating a policy on allowing children in class, are also good options because they increase a sense of relief. This is important for mothers and most importantly for Mexicana madres that are students. Extending campus childcare hours are convenient for parenting students who take evening classes and usually find themselves in need of a childcare provider in the evenings it will give the parenting students the flexibility to take evening classes and help them stay focused in school while not having the difficulty of finding other solutions.

Creating a school policy that allows children in class is also a great action because in an ideal world, if there is an unforeseen disruptions in childcare it often put parents in the position of having to choose between missing class to stay home with children. Occasionally bringing a child to class in order to cover gaps in care should be acceptable.

Limitations

Within this research there are a few limitations to be considered that includes incomplete data and insufficient evidence of the impact of promoting more awareness of Title IX rights has had for Mexicana pregnant or student parents. These results are based on the six Mexicana madre/students that were unaware that the school is required to give special services or accommodations for a pregnant student or student parents under Title IX. Mexicanas madres are not willing to report their concerns to the school and therefore refuse to seek help. This becomes a limitation since the exact rate of madres unaware of their rights under Title IX are unknown. Further research would need to be conducted in order to see how these components are being evaluated

The other limitation of analysis is the lack of evidence of the effectiveness of promoting more awareness of Title IX rights for pregnant or parenting students. There is no specific percentage that identifies how many Mexicana madres have taken into account the types of resources Title IX provides for them.

Potential negative outcomes

Promoting more awareness of Title IX rights may cause discrimination against Mexican pregnant and student parents. At certain circumstances, professors or administrators may not obey Title IX, and can lead them in telling pregnant and student parents that they have to drop out of their classes or change their educational plans due to their pregnancy or family responsibilities. Making Mexicanas madres feel out and unsupported they are at risk of deciding to drop out of school. Pregnant or parenting students may also receive an attack or an offensive comment due to getting a sort of treatment under Title IX. Other students would feel that pregnant and students parents are taking advantage of the accommodations given by the school and faculty, further stating that it is not fair that they are given a timely manner to catch up on assignments or class credits or even missing more than three class meetings.

Conclusion

Despite the limitations and potential outcomes, I still feel strongly about promoting more awareness of the rights that Mexican pregnant and students have under Title IX at the University of Chualar. Mexicanas madres will feel supported and safe knowing they are protected and given rights under Title IX at their school.

Action Documentation And Reflection

Being a Mexicana madre one must meet a set of cultural expectations, family first, attend children and we must cook and clean. Being a student one must be responsible to meet their academic expectations from school. School comes first, grade and deadlines are the most important things to do. Mexicana madres face a clash of two competing cultures of “school and home”. Both require an equal amount of time that, Mexicana madres find themselves struggling balancing both their education and being a madre. Mexicana students must learn how to navigate this two competing cultures of “school and home” so they can successfully meet their education.

Taking into consideration this conflict, it is important to create opportunities where Mexicana madres feel supported so they can successfully complete their education or career goals and be a madre.

Given the issue, it was important to reach out to the stakeholders who were knowledgeable in the matter, who could provide possible action options. I interviewed six Mexicana current and former students. Two of the interviewees Itzela and Samantha are former alumni students from University of Chualar and are both elementary schools teachers. The other four interviewees Angelica, Isuara, Yanette, and Lupita are current students currently finishing their requirements as an undergrad. Who also share their knowledge on the matter and added both a student perspective and a madre perspective.

From each of the interviews, I gained knowledge about the struggles that student-parents face while balancing education and being a madre. After taking into account all perspectives, three options emerged these were:; 1) extend campus daycare hours; 2) promoting more awareness of Title IX to ensure pregnancy and family responsibilities do not interfere with their education, and 3) creating a school policy that allows children in class. As the options were narrowed down based on our criteria, both participants and I concluded that promoting more awareness of Title IX to ensure pregnancy and family responsibilities do not interfere with their education would be the best option for Mexicana madres that are students. This option would allow Mexicana pregnant and student-parents to be aware of the services and accommodations they are allowed to receive under Title IX.

For my action option, I chose to implement flyers at the University of Chualar. The school library welcomed me to come into their building to implement my action project up in their bulletin intended to share out information for all students in campus. The flyer was intended to spread awareness and share information purposely for Mexicana pregnant students and students parents. This would allow for pregnant and student parents to be informed of their rights they have under Title IX. I also gave out flyers to pregnant students , student parents ,and students in general, the purpose was to educate them of the types of services Title IX provides for pregnant and student parents at their school.

**ATENCION MADRES
MEXICANAS****¿USTED CONOCE SUS DERECHOS
ABAJO TITULO IX? DO YOU KNOW
YOUR RIGHT UNDER TITLE IX?**

If you are pregnant or a parenting student under Title IX you have the right to receive accommodations and support services to meet your needs. Such as time without penalty, functional lactation rooms, reasonable time to make up assignments/credits, and more.

Want to know more? Meet with your school TITLE IX coordinator to see how they can accommodate you. You have the right to stay in school so you can meet your education goals.

**Artifact1**

Artifact 1: An image of my flyer. This flyer is one sided, and is a bilingual English and Spanish flyer.

My goal was to share out information for future or current use for pregnant and student parents so they can be aware that their school is obligated to comply students with special services and accommodation, in order to successfully meet their education or career goals and be a mother without interference.

What was unexpected of the recommended action option, was that many students were not familiar with Title IX, they had no clue what was Title IX and it what ways it benefited them. A few students I had encountered, thought that Title IX only corresponded to the category under sexual harassment in their school. But never knew that Title IX also had rights for pregnant and students parents, so this lead me to modify my flyer since I assumed that many knew what was Title IX. I had to define what was Title IX in my flyer in order to let students know its purpose and how it ties to pregnant and students parents. What was also surprising is that a few faculty

members were unaware of this right that are given to students who are pregnant or are parents. This is something I regret not knowing from the start. With more time, I could work towards working with the Title IX coordinator to spread awareness within the faculty in order for them to be aware of the rights their students have. If faculty become aware of the rights students have they are able to help students who are struggling in balancing their education and being a parent .

While conducting this project, I was able to learn that I was not alone in this silent struggle. I was able to make connections with mothers that identify themselves as a madre Mexicana. They as well, are or were students facing a clash of two competing “cultures” of school and home. As a madre and as a student we remained silenced of the struggles of balancing two meet the expectations of being a madre and being a student. I was afraid of speaking up, but while conducting this research I learned that I have a voice, we have a voice and we want to be heard. I want to stop this silent struggle and I want Mexicana madres that are students to be supported in order to be successful in their education.

I was inspired by my own struggles and experiences, to be able to conduct this research, and be allowed to research something different and probably unexpected. Although it was an inspiring research to do, it was challenging at the same time. It was difficult to gather information and data to support my focus issue. My hope is that this paper will give an opening of a start to extend a further research that would look into the day-to-day life of a Mexicana student balancing education and being a madre. In order to provide other options as a support.

Synthesis and Integration

After conducting my Action Research Project and required coursework, I was able to connect my project with two liberal Studies MLOs the first one is;

MLO 2: Diversity and Multicultural scholar

During my research I was able to learn that I was not the only Mexicana madre experiencing this struggles. I was able to learn from other people's experiences of the challenges of balancing being a madre and a student. I also discovered that Mexicana madres are not the only ones that struggles there are other mothers from different ethnicities that as well experience the struggles of being a student and a parent.

MLO 4: Social Justice Collaborator

During this research, I interviewed six current and former students that were Mexicana madres for the purpose of finding solutions to their struggles of balancing being a madre and a student. A solution was proposed to make a change to help struggling madres be successful in being a student and a madre.

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