

ABSTRACT

This study examined the role that social supports played in helping DACAmented individuals to gain access to higher education and to continue with their studies successfully. Data from 22 online survey responses indicated that the type and frequency of social supports received varied based on the context considered. Across all contexts, the most frequent social support received was emotional support as opposed to instrumental support, which was the least frequent. However, when the higher education context was considered in isolation, instrumental support was the least present ($n = 11$) and appraisal support was the most present ($n = 18$). Outside the higher education context, informational support was the least present ($n = 16$) and emotional support was the most present ($n = 24$). Survey participants also indicated that they were most satisfied with the appraisal support received within their higher education contexts and the least satisfied with the instrumental support provided to them. Whereas outside their higher education contexts, survey participants indicated that they were most satisfied with the emotional support and least satisfied with the appraisal support provided to them. Nine semi-structured interviews expanded on DACAmented individuals' experiences with these social supports and provided suggestions for how higher education institutions could better support the undocumented community. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the qualitative data and resulted in the emergence of six themes: (a) Familial support and costs to psychological well-being; (b) Barriers to financial aid impede access to higher education and beyond; (c) Necessity for greater knowledge of the undocumented community (d) Importance of advocates and allies among faculty, staff, and peers; and (e) Resiliency—a desire to grow and learn as individuals.

Support in the Shadows:
DACA Recipients' Reported Social Supports in the Context of Higher Education

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TERMINOLOGY

Researchers have used a variety of different terms to describe the immigrants who came to America without authorization or stayed past their required date of departure. There are also many different terms used to describe the groups that are within this community of immigrants. To clarify the terms used in this study, the researcher defined this community of immigrants as the undocumented community. Within the community, the researcher uses the term undocumented individuals/immigrants to refer to the individuals who do not have any form of authorization, such as a work authorization permit. The researcher also uses the term DACAmented individuals/immigrants to refer to members of the undocumented community who have DACA status, which will be discussed later in this study. Finally, the researcher uses the term Dreamer(s) to refer to both DACAmented and undocumented youth who came to America at a young age and grew up in America.

INTRODUCTION

“It is not just stressful but also depressing for any human not being able or motivated to think, dream, and plan a future”

—DACA recipient (Teranishi, Suárez-Orozco, & Suárez-Orozco, 2015, p. 15)

Approximately 12 million individuals residing in the United States do not have papers (Baker, 2018). That is, they have arrived in the United States without the proper authorization, or they received authorization for a temporary stay but remained past their required date of departure. Among these 12 million individuals, approximately one million are under the age of 18 (Baker, 2018). In 1982, *Plyler v. Doe*, 457 U.S. 202 legalized K-12 education for these minors. In undergoing an American education, undocumented minors instill within themselves American values of meritocracy and citizenship (Gleeson & Gonzales, 2012; Gonzales, 2011). In some cases, these minors might not even recognize that they are different from their peers in terms of documented status (Gonzales, 2011). However, as they reach adulthood, they quickly realize that they are indeed different as their unauthorized status prevents them from achieving many milestones that serve as markers into adult life, such as getting a driver’s license or even a job (Gonzales, 2011; Gonzales & Chaves, 2012; Siemons, Raymond-Flesch, Auerswald, & Brindis, 2017; Suárez-Orozco, Yoshikawa, Teranishi, & Suárez-Orozco, 2011). And for some, even more importantly, their status creates a barrier for gaining access to higher education and pursuing their career aspirations (Gonzales, 2011; Gonzales & Chaves, 2012).

Despite this obstacle, there is a subset of undocumented individuals who are able to find routes to pursue higher education. These individuals demonstrate resilience in the face of overwhelming odds as data suggests that despite experiencing higher levels of psychological

distress, they are achieving academically at similar levels as their documented peers (Teranishi, Suárez-Orozco, & Suárez-Orozco, 2015). Among these individuals, many scholars have documented the presence of social supports as a factor in facilitating their success. Specifically, supports originating from family, peers, and/or academic professionals contribute to developing their academic success and resiliency (Cervantes, Minero, & Brito, 2015; Contreras, 2009; Gleeson & Gonzales, 2012; Gonzales, 2011; Gonzales, Suárez-Orozco, & Dedios-Sanguinetti, 2013; Perez, Espinoza, Ramos, Coronado, & Cortes, 2009). However, to date, there is limited research examining how undocumented individuals themselves view these social supports as assisting them with both gaining access to higher education and continuing with their studies successfully. Hence, this study seeks to explore the role social supports can play in the undocumented community by directly asking members of this community to share their experiences.

History and Economic Prospects of the Undocumented Community

Plyler v. Doe, 457 U.S. 202 (1982) was a landmark Supreme Court case asserting that a state could not deprive undocumented immigrants from receiving an education. While sharing the majority opinion, Justice William J. Brennan, Jr. stated that by denying undocumented immigrants access to a public education, they would most definitely be locking undocumented individuals into the lowest socioeconomic class. This would have negative social, economic, intellectual, and psychological well-being effects, and the justices argued that such costs to both the nation and the children who had no control over their undocumented status was not a sufficient reason for denial. As a result of this case, undocumented immigrants were given access to a free K-12 education. However, times have changed since 1982. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (2014) found that, compared to women and men in 1979, women and men in

2014 holding a bachelor's degree or higher have seen an increase in income, while those without a high school diploma have seen a significant decrease. These findings imply that access to higher education is necessary to provide individuals the opportunity for the socioeconomic mobility that the justices sought to provide in 1982. However, despite the potential negative economic outcomes that may result from not attaining a higher degree, undocumented immigrants have seen limited federal support in accessing higher education.

Without access to a higher education and the ability to legally join the workforce, undocumented immigrants are often limited to lower-wage jobs, many of which pay under the table (Gleeson & Gonzales, 2012; Gonzales, 2011). Hence, no tax is withheld from their paychecks (Mahony, 2012) and the country and state lose the opportunity to earn tax revenue from their employment (Gonzales & Chavez, 2012). This, in turn, is a great loss in the investment of American taxpayers who spent approximately \$12,330 for a student enrolled in the fall of the 2015–2016 school year (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019). Given this amount, approximately \$160,290 of taxpayers' revenue goes toward paying for the K-12 education of a single student ($\$12,330 \times 13$ years). After high school graduation, immigrants often join the workforce and contribute back to America's economy. However, research suggests that undocumented immigrants tend to earn less money when compared to their documented peers, who are not limited to lower-wage jobs that pay under the table (Abrego & Gonzales, 2010). This goes to demonstrate that by failing to provide undocumented immigrants with a pathway to legally enter the workforce or to attain a higher education, American taxpayers lose out on the economic investment they have made in sending undocumented students to K-12 public schools (Mahony, 2012).

Recognizing these potential losses, beginning in 2001, there have been a number of attempts by politicians to enact some legislation that would provide some relief to undocumented minors. Termed the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act in 2001 (DREAM Act 2001), the act would prohibit deportation, provide a pathway to permanent residency status, and expand higher education benefits based on state residency to undocumented minors who fit a specific set of criteria (S.1291, 2001). Having failed in the Senate, the DREAM Act of 2001 was reintroduced under the name the DREAM Act of 2007. This act expanded the number of applicants eligible to apply for conditional permanent status and gave them a pathway for permanent residency. However, in 2007, the Senate failed to invoke cloture, needing an additional 5 votes to conduct a vote in the Senate for the passing of this proposed legislation (S.2205, 2007). Yet another bill was introduced to the Senate in 2011, known as the DREAM Act of 2011. The bill would allow for undocumented individuals under the age of 35 to gain permanent residency and to become eligible for financial assistance and education services as listed in Title IV of the Higher Education Assistance Act of 1965 (S. 952, 2011). Again, this bill did not pass, and so, with the absence of action from Congress to repair the defunct immigration system, President Obama passed an executive order in 2012 to provide temporary relief to Dreamers, a term coined after the introduction of these acts to refer to undocumented minors who followed their parents in coming to or staying in America without authorization.

President Obama's executive order, known as Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), granted a work authorization permit, social security number, and deferment from deportation for eligible Dreamers. However, DACA does not provide a pathway to legal permanent resident status nor citizenship and must be renewed every two years. Acknowledging this limitation, President Obama urged Congress to pass legislation that would allow

undocumented individuals to plan futures that could be extended past two years (The White House Office of the Press Secretary, 2012). Specifically, to be eligible for DACA, a Dreamer had to fit the following criteria (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2018):

1. As of June 15, 2012, the individual had to be under the age of 31.
2. The individual had to have arrived in the United States before their 16th birthday.
3. The individual has to have continuously resided in the United States from June 15, 2007 to the present.
4. The individual has to be physically present in making the request for DACA.
5. The individual has had no lawful status on June 15, 2012.
6. The individual is currently attending school, graduated from high school or the equivalent (GED), or is an honorably discharged veteran.
7. The individual is in good conduct, meaning they have not been convicted of a felony, a significant misdemeanor, or multiple misdemeanors.

Financial Barriers to Accessing Higher Education

Dreamers who fit the criteria, often also known as the DACAmented in the undocumented community, have been granted greater access to jobs. However, their access to higher education that leads to higher paying jobs has only increased modestly (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2019). It is worth noting that these modest gains are occurring at the state level as opposed to the federal. DACA students are ineligible for federal financial aid such as the Free Application for Federal Aid (FAFSA), Pell Grants, and federal loans. Instead, DACA students must rely on in-state tuition, but that is only applicable in 19 states (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2019). The lack of federal legislation is unsettling considering the confusion it can cause DACAmented individuals during the college application process. For

example, even though Arizona has state legislation that prohibits the undocumented community from benefitting from in-state tuition, there are some community colleges that offer in-state tuition rates to DACA recipients (Teranishi et al., 2015). In other states, like Alabama, undocumented individuals cannot enroll in public colleges nor receive in-state tuition, but DACA recipients can enroll in community colleges and benefit from in-state tuition at some universities within Alabama (Teranishi et al., 2015). The policies that surround higher education for the undocumented community are largely determined by each state and can be different for DACAmented individuals. This requires DACA recipients to be very vigilant when looking for what they can and cannot have access to with regards to higher education in their respective states. The confusion that is warranted from the lack of comprehensive legislation among the states and the lack of financial aid, more generally, is even more unsettling considering that many in the undocumented community report that financial barriers impede their access to higher education (Abrego & Gonzales, 2010; Cervantes et al., 2015; Contreras, 2009; Teranishi et al., 2015). In fact, only 25% of the undocumented community have accessed some form of higher education, as compared to the 61% of citizens and 54% of documented immigrants (Nienhusser, 2015; Passel & Cohn, 2009).

Psychological Well-Being and Feelings of Belonging among the Undocumented Community

Literature suggests that concerns beyond access to education exist. Scholars have documented that compared to other temporary status students such as international students or students with visas, DACA students within a community college setting reported higher levels of anxiety, isolation, and alienation (Alif, Nelson, Stefancic, Ahmed, & Okazaki, 2019). Furthermore, when scholars compared anxiety levels between members of the undocumented community, DACA students and non-DACA students, the results remained consistent with

DACA students experiencing higher levels of anxiety (Teranishi et al., 2015). This was a paradoxical finding as DACA recipients have greater benefits than do non-recipients. However, the authors speculated that the temporary nature of DACA and heightened fears for unprotected loved ones may have resulted in this finding.

More generally, the undocumented community faces a number of unique experiences. For starters, undocumented individuals in particular, fear for not only their own deportation but also their family's deportation. While DACA has provided safety against deportation for DACA recipients, it does not extend protection to parents who may be undocumented (Cervantes et al., 2015; Suarez-Orozco, Katsiaficas et al., 2015; Sudhinaraset, To, Ling, Melo, & Chavarin, 2017). In addition to the fear of deportation is the fear of law enforcement officials and of being detained (Gonzales & Ruiz, 2014). Taken together, scholars describe the increased fear of enforcement officials, deportation, and separation from family members of the immigrant community as a form of personal trauma, but the fear is also extended to describe cultural trauma within the undocumented community (Aranda, Vaquera, & Sousa-Rodriguez, 2015).

A community experiences cultural trauma when members of the group experience events that will leave a mark in members' memories and influence their future identity and behavior (Aranda et al., 2015). This cultural trauma was described in one study as an undocumented individual reported that after her aunt broke a simple traffic law and was detained, the individual expressed fear of driving due to the risk of being pulled over and deported. As a result, the individual reported preferring to get rides from friends in spite of living in Washington, where undocumented immigrants could legally obtain a driver's license (Gonzales & Ruiz, 2014). Other examples often cited in literature include increased alertness of surroundings, increased

adherence to traffic laws, and active avoidance of areas with high law enforcement activity (Gonzales & Chavez, 2012).

In regards to the impact that personal and cultural trauma can have on the development of identity, some members of the undocumented community may have difficulty recognizing themselves as Americans, or even, a hyphenated American (e.g., Mexican-American or Brazilian-American). This is especially true for members of the undocumented community who are 1.5-generation immigrants—those who have immigrated to the United States during their childhood. This difficulty results because they encounter barriers in accessing benefits to which typical Americans and hyphenated American have access (Aranda et al., 2015; Cebulko, 2014; Gonzales & Chavez, 2012). In addition, despite having their lives rooted in America and instilling within themselves American values, the 1.5-generation immigrants of the undocumented community face a society that tells them that because they lack papers, they do not belong in America (Aranda et al., 2015; Gonzales & Chavez, 2012). This, in turn, creates a gray area for these members of the undocumented community where they may feel American but are constantly rejected legally from identifying as Americans.

While Aranda et al. (2015) framed the undocumented individuals' ambivalence of their identity as a form of trauma, other scholars have looked at it through the lens of belongingness. In questioning their identity as American, (Aranda et al., 2015; Cebulko, 2016), Dreamers, both those with DACA status and those without, often report feeling confusion in their understanding of where it is that they belong (Suarez-Orozco, Katsiaficas et al., 2015). This questioning of identity and of being an American becomes particularly salient during the transition into adulthood as this is the time when Dreamers find themselves unable to move forward alongside their peers in achieving adult milestones, such as getting a driver's license and a job (Gonzales &

Chavez, 2012; Gonzales et al., 2013; Siemons et al., 2017). Additionally, their rights to an education, granted by *Plyler v. Doe*, expires post-high school. As a result, Dreamers often find themselves facing barriers to attaining a four-year higher education alongside their peers (Gleeson & Gonzales, 2012; Gonzales & Chavez, 2012). Even if they access higher education, Dreamers often find it difficult to pursue their passions and career aspirations due to the limitations posed by their status in entering the workforce (Cervantes et al., 2015; Gleeson & Gonzales, 2012).

Growing up in America, Dreamers are taught that America is a land of hope and that hard work will pay off. However, due to the limitations posed by their status, many Dreamers come to realize that achieving the American Dream may not be possible for them (Sudhinaraset et al., 2017). In the face of such limitations, this can create a sense of hopelessness for some individuals (Gonzales et al., 2013; Jefferies, 2014). Further, when their status thwarts their plans, some Dreamers experience feelings of grief and loss as they have lost the person they thought they were going to become (Gonzales et al., 2013). While Dreamers with DACA can achieve the aforementioned milestones and have greater access to the workforce, improving their feelings of belongingness (Raymond-Flesch, Siemons, Pourat, Jacobs, Brindis, 2014; Siemons et al., 2017; Teranishi et al., 2015), DACA recipients also acknowledge that relief is limited as their status is not permanent (Cervantes et al., 2015). Hence, many desire the paperwork that would guarantee their right to be in America (Cervantes et al., 2015; Raymond-Flesch et al., 2014; Siemons et al., 2017; Teranishi et al., 2015).

Exacerbating the lack of belongingness is the internalization of the negative messages that surround the undocumented community. Being members of the undocumented community, Dreamers can find it difficult to come out to others for fear of being treated differently (Jefferies,

2014; Raymond-Flesch et al., 2014). While DACA recipients have reported that DACA has created a safer coming out space (Pérez Huber, Pullido Villanueva, Guarneros, Vélez, & Solórzano, 2014; Teranishi et al., 2015), they still, alongside undocumented individuals, find themselves coming to terms with messages in their environment stating that they are not perceived as fellow Americans. Instead, they are “illegal,” contributing to the lack of psychological well-being (Gonzales et al., 2013, p. 1186). This is in part, because DACA provides no pathway to citizenship. With no pathway to citizenship nor full access to the resources and opportunities provided with citizenship, many DACA recipients have internalized the negative stigma associated with their undocumented status. That is, they have reported internalizing the label of “illegal” as something criminal and something to be embarrassed of (Contreras, 2009; Gonzales et al., 2013; Siemons et al., 2017; Teranishi et al., 2015), contributing to feelings of shame, narrowing dreams, and diminishing mental health (Gonzales et al., 2013; Perez et al., 2009; Teranishi et al., 2015).

Living in a Realm of Uncertainty

Since DACA provides no pathway to citizenship, every two years, DACA recipients must undergo a renewal process, which requires them to pay a fee and fill out paperwork. This paperwork asks them to explain why they need a work authorization permit and to recount any encounters with the police and law that they may have had, including sharing even a record of traffic tickets. One small mistake could be the reason the government refuses to reinstate a person’s DACA status (Siemons et al., 2017; Teranishi et al., 2015). Additionally, since DACA was not passed as a legislation, but rather as an executive order, the benefits granted to these individuals could be revoked with the wave of a pen from the Oval Office. That is, DACA could be removed, and thus, leaving thousands of undergraduate students without the possibility of

completing their education or obtaining a job out of college. Acknowledging this limitation, President Obama urged Congress to pass legislation that would allow members of the undocumented community to plan futures that could be extended past two years (The White House Office of the Press Secretary, 2012) but to no avail. On September 4, 2017, the Attorney General Jeff Sessions sent a letter to the Department of Homeland Security stating that DACA was an unconstitutional act of authority by the Executive Branch and called for the end of DACA (Duke, 2017). The next day, DACA was rescinded and new applications from individuals applying for DACA status were rejected. The government also stated that after October 5, 2017, renewal applications would no longer be processed, stripping DACA recipients of the many benefits that they had relished since 2012. In a matter of months, however, in January 2018, federal courts ruled that the federal government could not take away DACA from those who already had DACA, reopening the renewal application (University of California v. DHS, 2018). However, the United States government has appealed to the Supreme Court, and currently, as the justices debate on whether DACA will remain or be terminated on the basis of unconstitutionality, DACA recipients are waiting for a decision that could affect the rest of their lives. The political battle that ensued highlights the instability of DACA and how DACA recipients' identity development and career goals may be thwarted.

Without DACA, there will be increased financial barriers for accessing higher education and for entering the workforce (Gonzales et al., 2013; Muñoz, Vigil, Jach, & Rodriguez-Gutierrez, 2018). Hence, DACA recipients live with an omnipresent feeling of uncertainty, worry, and concern about their futures and how their lives may turn out, making it difficult for DACA recipients to plan for the future. With the possibility that their renewal may be unsuccessful or that the program may be removed completely, DACA recipients know that their

efforts in pursuing higher education and their dreams can be invalidated. This, in turn, contributes to DACA recipients' low psychological well-being: "It is not just stressful but also depressing for any human not being able or motivated to think, dream, and plan a future" (Teranishi et al., 2015, p. 15). The realm of uncertainty, which surrounds both the status of the DACA policy itself and the future of DACA recipients more generally, contributes to feelings of alienation, anxiety, depression, and isolation. Such lowered psychological well-being can negatively affect people's motivation, underscoring the significance of receiving some form of support to alleviate distress and to encourage continued academic achievement.

Additional Risk Factors Imposed by Intersectional Identities

While the uncertainty and fear are specific to members of the undocumented community, they also encounter many of the same challenges representative of other underrepresented minorities. Specifically, a majority of DACA students are ethnic minorities, qualify as first-generation college students, and belong to low socioeconomic classes (Suarez-Orozco, Katsiaficas et al., 2015; Teranishi et al., 2015). Previous research demonstrates that first-generation college students are less likely to persist in attaining a higher education degree in the face of financial barriers (Somers, Woodhouse, & Lofer, 2004). Additionally, ethnic minorities, excluding Asian and Pacific Islanders, see lower levels of college attendance rates as compared to their White counterparts, and there is less college attendance in lower income ethnic minorities (The Pell Institute & PennAHEAD, 2018).

Because Dreamers are often from low-income backgrounds and are ethnic minorities, scholars have documented the impacts of identifying with such marginalized identities. Dreamers often work many hours to earn an income (Suarez-Orozco, Katsiaficas et al., 2015) which is both stressful and takes time away from studying (Abrego & Gonzales, 2010; Gagnon

& Packard, 2012; Teranishi et al., 2015). And by also identifying with ethnic minorities, Dreamers can face discriminatory practices associated with their race, clothes, and food (Cervantes et al., 2015), and for undocumented Asian and Pacific Islanders in particular, they can face the model minority myth (Sudhinaraset et al., 2017). Facing discriminatory practices and stereotypes can also undermine academic performance (Steele, 1997) and hence, can hinder higher education attainment. Along with the aforementioned lower levels of psychological well-being, it is evident that DACA students face many risk factors that can deter them from educational success. However, there are many who have demonstrated remarkable amounts of resilience in the face of these potential risk factors.

The Environmental Social Supports Conducive to Creating Resilience

Resilience is defined as the phenomenon of overcoming adversity and gaining positive outcomes or avoiding negative outcomes (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005; Luthar, Cicchetti, & Becker, 2000). Not only are DACA students who are enrolled in higher education overcoming adversity by overcoming structural barriers and accessing higher education to begin with, but these students are also overcoming barriers by achieving academically at levels similar to their peers in four-year public and private colleges (Teranishi et al., 2015). Among the students included in Teranishi et al. (2015)'s study, at public four-year colleges, 86% received a 3.0 or higher, and at private four-year colleges, 84.6% received a 3.0 or higher. Resilience models stress the influence of personal characteristics such as internalization of the goal to improve one's situation (Cervantes et al., 2015) and competence in adapting to environments (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005; Garmezy & Masten, 1991). Resilience models also stress the influence of external factors such as environmental social supports, which help youth overcome risks (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005; Perez et al., 2009).

Perez et al. (2009) reported that undocumented youth who demonstrated higher levels of resilience and achieved at higher levels of success in academics as compared to their high-risk peers reported more environmental social supports. The environmental social supports reported in Perez et al. (2009)'s work included parents and peers valuing school, participation in extracurricular activities, and growing up with both parents. Environmental social supports were also reported by Contreras (2009) who found that, in the lives of undocumented Latino students, the role of a mentor was an important factor in whether they were to persist in college. Other scholars have found a similar pattern in their undocumented community: Dreamers were more likely to remain in school if they were able to identify an individual, friends, or adult mentors such as teachers or counselors with whom they could develop meaningful relationships and share their struggles as Dreamers (Gonzales et al., 2013). In yet another study, Dreamers who accessed higher education were able to identify at least one key adult within the academic space who was especially important in their academic achievement. This was because the adult was able to provide necessary information and confidence for these Dreamers to continue achieving academically (Cervantes et al., 2015).

Along with adults in the academic space, scholars have reported that peers can play an equally important role. Dreamers reported that through peer support, they were able to transition heightened feelings of fear and anxiety related to their undocumented status into feelings of empowerment and determination to succeed (Muñoz et al., 2018). Related to peer and adult support, Dreamers also found support in student organizations and safe spaces dedicated for the undocumented population (Suarez-Orozco, Katsiaficas et al., 2015; Teranishi et al., 2015). There, Dreamers could receive information that was more directed to their particular concerns and share their unique experiences with others who had similar experiences. In fact, in seeking

other Dreamers who shared the same struggles, Dreamers found that the feelings of isolation that came with being undocumented lessened (Gonzales et al., 2013). This in turn, improved their psychological well-being.

Theoretical Framework: Social Support as Providing Emotional, Instrumental, Informational, and Appraisal Support

Family, peers, and mentors who support another individual are often considered to provide social support. Social support is the existence and availability of those who show another that they are loved and valued and those who another can rely on (Sarason, Levine, Basham, & Sarason, 1983). Scholars have categorized the supportive behaviors that constitute social support in a number of ways. One framework, in particular, aggregated the different conceptualizations to define four categories of social support: emotional, instrumental, informational, and appraisal (House, 1981). Behaviors that constitute emotional support are those that provide feelings of empathy, trust, and love. Instrumental support is provided through resources such as money, labor, or care. Informational support is given by providing someone with information that could help them with coping (e.g., advice) or providing someone with information (e.g., tutoring, academic knowledge). And finally, appraisal support is given by providing evaluative information one could use to evaluate themselves. Appraisal support can be categorized into two categories: explicitly evaluative information, which provides an individual with a direct form of evaluation such as feedback and affirmations; and implicitly evaluative information, which provides individuals with a more indirect form of evaluation. That is, providing an individual with a standard that would allow the individual to self-evaluate their standing according to that standard (House, 1981). A teacher, for example, can provide appraisal support by simply informing a third-grade student about the range of reading levels of typically developing third

grade students. The teacher has provided implicitly evaluative information in which the student can now use to self-evaluate their standing in terms of reading level as compared to their peers.

Within education, the social support framework has been used to understand fifth and eighth grade students' experiences with support (Malecki & Demaray, 2003). Malecki and Demaray (2003) found that students considered emotional support from parents to be most important, informational support from teachers and the school to be most important, and appraisal support from friends to be most important. Additionally, they found that when teachers provided emotional support, it was a significant predictor of students' social skills and academic competence, which they defined as academic skills relative to peers (Demaray & Elliot, 1998; Malecki & Demaray, 2003).

While emotional support from teachers can be a predictor of social skills and academic competence in fifth grade to eighth grade students (Malecki & Demaray, 2003), for high school students and beyond, other dimensions of social support are also important. For instance, research indicates that the presence of teacher mentors and full-time faculty in college is influential in the academic success of students because these teachers and professors are an important source of informational and appraisal supports (Fruht & Wray-Lake, 2013; McCallen & Johnson, 2019). In fact, for underrepresented students, in particular, previous research suggests that informational support is particularly helpful for students to integrate into a higher education setting. Of importance, students reported receiving this informational support most frequently from faculty and staff (Raposa & Hurd, 2018).

Given that Dreamers are underrepresented in the higher education context, the findings that document the importance of informational support to underrepresented students can be applied to the community of Dreamers as well. In fact, aforementioned literature had indicated

the importance of academic professionals in aiding Dreamers to pursue their studies (Cervantes et al., 2015; Gonzales et al., 2013). Also mentioned was that the support received from peers and family helped predict academic success within this population (Contreras, 2009; Muñoz et al., 2018; Perez et al., 2009). Social support, therefore, has been documented in literature to be important in supporting the education of Dreamers. Hence, using a social support framework to conceptualize these findings can be important in understanding how to best support these learners.

Current Study

Literature suggests that Dreamers face many barriers in both gaining access to higher education and continuing their studies successfully. As aforementioned, many of those in the undocumented community are low-income and first-generation college students. As a result, they may not have the cultural capital to navigate the higher education context. In addition, because Dreamers do have rights to a K-12 education, and more generally, do not need to provide documents at a young age (Suárez-Orozco, Yoshikawa, Teranishi, & Suárez-Orozco, 2011), Dreamers often do not understand what it means to be undocumented. That is, they do not realize the limitations that come with being undocumented (Gonzales & Chaves, 2012; Jefferies, 2014; Suárez-Orozco, Yoshikawa, et al., 2011). As a result, they do not have the unique pieces of information necessary to navigate the limitations that suddenly come to light when they try to meet adult milestones, such as accessing higher education.

Particularly when they face barriers while attempting to access higher education, Dreamers may turn to the internet and gatekeepers such as counselors, staff, and administrators. However, previous literature demonstrates that there is a lack of knowledge regarding the undocumented community and the particular benefits given to the DACAmented population

(Teranishi et al., 2015). As a result, Dreamers may come across information and individuals who may discourage their pursuits. For example, one participant in a study done by Contreras (2009), reported that in trying to access graduate school, the head of the department stated that due to financial costs and the concern that others may get offended, the participant should not continue to pursue graduate school. In addition to the lack of information regarding the undocumented community, limited access to financial aid often decreases Dreamers' possibility of accessing higher education (Abrego & Gonzales, 2010; Cervantes et al., 2015; Gonzales, 2011). As mentioned previously, only 19 states out of the 50 states offer in-state tuition to DACAmented students while undocumented students must pay out-of-state tuition. This lack of a federal legislation that provides universal financial relief to the undocumented community creates more opportunities for misinformation to be transmitted to Dreamers residing in different states. It also contributes to the web of information that Dreamers must learn to weave through in order to access higher education.

Along with the many risk factors present in the lives of Dreamers, which range from lowered levels of belonging and increased levels of anxiety, fear, and trauma to uncertainty, it is evident that Dreamers encounter a number of barriers as they attempt to pursue a higher education. As literature suggests, social supports can help underrepresented students overcome such barriers. In overcoming such barriers and attending higher education institutions, Dreamers, in particular, have shown great amounts of resilience. In fact, in the face of these barriers and challenges, many are empowered to inspire younger generations in similar situations (Contreras, 2009; Muñoz et al., 2018), give back to their parents, and better their families' situations (Cervantes et al., 2015; McCallen & Johnson, 2019). However, there are few studies that ask Dreamers in higher education directly how these supports function and what social

supports in particular—emotional, instrumental, informational, and appraisal—are important to them. Furthermore, it is unclear from past literature how these supports assist Dreamers with staying resilient as they strive to access and persevere through higher education. Because DACA recipients in higher education tend to report lower levels of psychological well-being on college campuses, there is a need to understand which resources students seem to rely on most for gaining support while in college. Moreover, there is a need to understand which resources that students perceive to be lacking. Therefore, the current study seeks to address these gaps in the literature by asking DACA students directly to share their unique experiences. In particular, this study seeks to answer the following questions:

- a) What social supports do DACA recipients report they possess and/or do not possess?
- b) How do DACA recipients report that they would best feel supported in gaining access to higher education and to continue with their studies successfully once enrolled?

METHOD

To gain a deeper understanding of the social supports DACA recipients reported possessing or lacking and how they felt they could be better supported in accessing and continuing their higher education, data for this study were collected via two sources: an online survey and qualitative interviews. Specifically, the surveys were used as a way to assess the overall satisfaction of the social supports that were available to DACA recipients in accessing and continuing their higher education. The survey was also used to recruit participants for the qualitative interviews. The qualitative interviews were used to gain a more nuanced understanding of the experiences of DACA recipients and the role that social supports have played in recipients' lives such that they were able to continue their education into post-secondary institutions.

Participants

For the survey component of this study, participants were recruited through social media, email, snowball sampling, flyers, as well as through reaching out to community organizations that supported the undocumented community. From this recruitment strategy, a total of 42 survey responses were collected. However, 20 survey responses were excluded from the final analysis due to one or more of the following reasons: incomplete or missing social support data ($n = 14$), which were required to answer the study's primary research questions, suspicion of duplicate responses from the same individual ($n = 1$), and failure to meet eligibility criteria for inclusion of this study ($n = 5$), which required participants to either have or had DACA status

and to be attending or have attended a higher education institution. This resulted in a total of 22 survey responses that were included for data analysis for this study.

Within the survey responses, 21 participants provided demographic data such as sex, age, racial/ethnic background (see Figure 1), birth country (see Table 1), and education. Thirteen participants self-identified as female and eight participants self-identified as male. Participants ranged in age from 20 to 35 years old. Two participants (9%) indicated that they identified as poor, ten participants (45%) indicated that they were working class, six participants (27%) described themselves as lower middle class, two participants (9%) described themselves as middle class, one participant (5%) described themselves as upper middle, and one participant (5%) did not disclose this information.

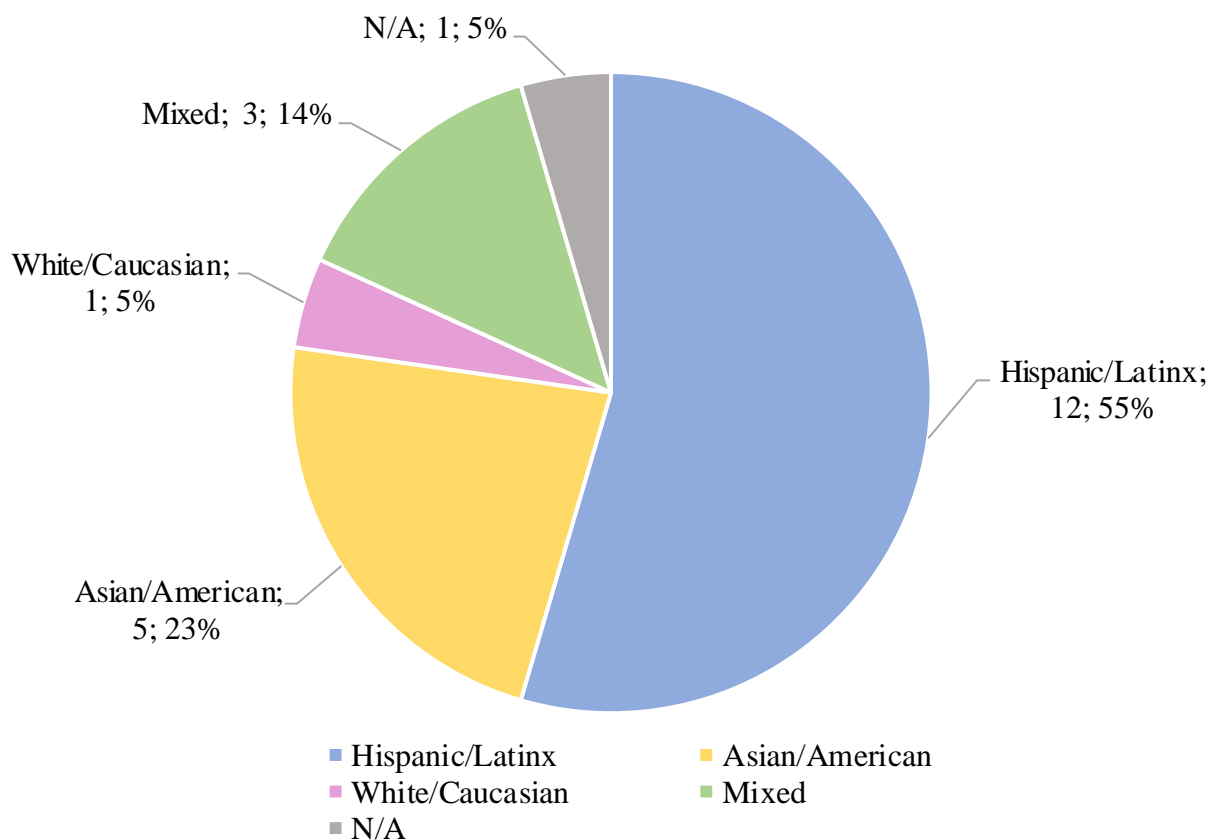


Figure 1. Race and ethnicity data provided by survey participants

Table 1

Participants' Reported Country of Birth

Country of Birth	Number of Participants
Mexico	8
Korea	5
Ecuador	2
Honduras	1
Turkey	1
El Salvador	1
Colombia	1
Japan	1
Peru	1
Did Not Disclose	1
Total	22

Seventeen participants (77%) were first-generation college students, which was defined in this study as a student whose parents did not complete a four-year degree. Three participants (14%) were not first-generation college students and two participants (9%) did not specify. All 22 participants had accessed some form of higher education with an average grade point average of 3.51; 13 participants reported attending or having attended a public four-year undergraduate institution, 8 participants reported attending or having attended a private four-year undergraduate institution, and 1 participant reported having attended a two-year community college/vocational/for profit institution (see Figure 2). As a thank you for participation for the survey component of the study, all participants were offered the opportunity to enter a raffle for a \$25 Amazon gift card.



Figure 2. Location of participants' undergraduate higher education institutions (markers do not pinpoint exact locations).

For the interview component of this study, the researcher used purposive sampling, which is a method of choosing a sample with participants who have particular characteristics. Survey respondents who indicated interest in participating in a follow-up interview were contacted by email. Nine participants were successfully contacted and interviewed. Interview participants' ages ranged from 20 to 35 years old; five identified as female and three identified as male. Interview participants also reported their highest level of education; one reported having an associate degree, five reported having a bachelor's degree, and two reported some college. One interviewee did not provide their gender identity, age, and highest level of education. All interview participants were given a \$10 Amazon gift card as a thank you for their participation in the interview.

Materials & Procedure

Online survey. For the survey component of the study, SurveyMonkey was used to create the online survey (see Appendix A). The primary purpose of the survey was to screen participants for the interview. Before completing the survey, all participants were required to check “Yes” to having read an online informed consent form, indicating that they wanted to participate in the study and understood the terms of their participation. To protect participants’ identities, they were not asked to sign their names to the informed consent nor were they asked to provide any other additional identifying information. Instead, they were only asked to verify if they had ever been a DACA recipient.

Once participants confirmed their DACA status, they were asked to answer whether they were currently attending or have attended a higher education institution. Because this study focused primarily on DACA recipients who had accessed some form of higher education, participants were required to confirm that they had been in a higher education institution to proceed in the survey. Once they did, participants were asked questions related to their education such as the highest degree they had attained, in what state their institution was located, and whether their campus was a sanctuary campus, which was defined for them on the survey as a campus that had adopted policies meant to protect their undocumented community.

The next section of the survey asked about the social supports participants felt they have or had received in accessing and continuing with their higher education. Prior to responding to these questions, the participants read a page that defined the different types of support (emotional, instrumental, informational, and appraisal). Then, participants were asked to make a list of people who supported them in pursuing their goal to attend a higher education institution and/or who currently supports them in continuing with their higher education. Participants were asked to list their relationship to the people they listed and what form of support(s) they received

from the individuals listed. Then, participants were asked to choose one person or more, if they desired, from their list who they felt had been the greatest support to them while pursuing college and continuing with their higher education. Participants were then asked to describe how that person helped them pursue or continue to pursue their academic studies within a college or university. Finally, this section of the survey concluded by asking participants to rate their overall satisfaction with the social supports made available to them within the context of their higher education institution and outside of it. Social support satisfaction in this study was measured on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*Dissatisfied*) to 6 (*Very Satisfied*). This Likert scale was adopted from the Social Support Questionnaire (SSQ6), which asks participants for their satisfaction with the overall support they receive (Sarason, Sarason, Shearin, & Pierce, 1987).

The next section of the survey asked students to respond to open-ended questions about support specifically within their higher education context. Participants were asked to answer open-ended questions regarding areas that made them feel particularly supported/unsupported in their college/university. Additionally, students were asked to answer how they thought support could be improved. The final section of the survey asked participants to respond to demographic questions and to indicate their willingness to participate in an interview.

Semi-structured qualitative interview. Participants who indicated on the survey that they were interested in participating in a follow-up interview were contacted via email to schedule a semi-structured interview (see Appendix B for interview protocol). Of the thirteen survey participants who indicated interest on the survey, nine participants (69%) responded and provided some convenient times for an interview. Interviews were conducted over a three month period over the phone ($n = 6$), Skype ($n = 1$), and in-person ($n = 2$). Interviews ranged in length

from 30 minutes to 75 minutes. During the interview, participants were asked to provide oral informed consent in which they also gave permission for the interview to be audio recorded. After the interviews were conducted, the researcher transcribed the interviews and as an extra precaution to protect participants' identities, she destroyed all audio recordings.

Analysis Plan

Online survey coding. As previously mentioned, within the online survey, participants were asked to create a list of supportive individuals and to indicate which support(s) individuals had provided to them. For each individual the participant mentioned, a score of 0 or 1 was given to indicate presence or absence of each of the four social supports (emotional, instrumental, informational, and appraisal) made available to the participant. A score of 0 represented the absence of a support in the data and a score of 1 or higher (if multiple sources of a particular support were listed) represented the presence of a support in the data. For example, if the participant listed two individuals and stated that Individual A provided them with emotional and appraisal support and Individual B provided them with emotional and instrumental support, the participant received a score of 2 for emotional, 1 for instrumental support, 0 for informational, and 1 for appraisal. Additionally, the researcher coded family members listed as individuals (e.g. mom, dad, sister) as one group. This was done to allow for the comparison of social supports between participants who had simply listed "family" on the survey and other participants who had listed specific family members. Hence, if a survey participant listed that their mother provided emotional and instrumental support and that their father provided emotional and appraisal support, the participant's availability of social support within the context of the family was considered to be emotional (1), instrumental (1), appraisal (1) as opposed to emotional (2), instrumental (1), appraisal (1). A composite score of each of the four social supports was created

for each participant and further, for the sample, to determine the most available and least available social supports within the sample.

To gain an understanding of the overall satisfaction DACA recipients reported feeling with the social supports made available to them, descriptive statistics were calculated to determine the mean satisfaction of emotional, instrumental, informational, and appraisal support. Because overall satisfaction was a discrete variable in this study, it was only presented as a mean and standard deviation with no further analysis. Open-ended survey questions were analyzed using both theoretical and inductive thematic analysis and, as described in the section below, these responses provided additional contextual information for understanding participant's experiences.

Open-ended survey response coding and semi-structured interview coding. To identify and analyze the nature of the social supports DACA recipients reported that they received or currently possess, the researcher used theoretical thematic analysis for both the survey open-ended responses and the semi-structured interviews. The purpose of this analysis was to identify the social supports DACA recipients reported receiving and to highlight some suggestions that could be implemented in higher education contexts to better support the undocumented community. Theoretical thematic analysis is a form of analysis that is guided by the researcher's analytic interest, such as a study's research questions which have been formed on the bases of past literature (Braun & Clark, 2006). Because the four types of social supports have already been identified in literature, theoretical thematic analysis is an appropriate analysis for coding for the absence and presence of social supports as defined in this study. Participants were asked to answer an open response question regarding how one or more people have been the greatest support to them while pursuing higher education. Using theoretical thematic

analysis, the researcher coded to see which of the four social supports (emotional, instrumental, informational, and appraisal) the individual(s) provided and how such supports played a role in shaping a participant's experience while in higher education.

The researcher also used inductive thematic analysis to uncover the patterns that appeared in participants' open-ended responses on the survey and the interview, particularly to analyze how participants felt they and their community could best be supported within higher education contexts. Inductive analysis allows researchers to look across the data for emerging themes without limitations or personal preconceptions. That is, it allows for unexpected insights to arise from the data. As a result, this form of thematic analysis can often provide a richer description of the data compared to when theoretical thematic analysis is used alone (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thus, using this inductive analysis to code these data was appropriate as a goal of this study was to allow for DACA recipients to share their unique experiences of gaining access to higher education and continuing with their academic studies successfully.

To analyze the data, the researcher followed the six steps of thematic analysis described by Braun and Clarke (2012). The researcher first familiarized herself with the data: reading the data actively to pinpoint anything that may be relevant to answering the research question. The second step was to create initial codes and comb through the data looking for the occurrence of each of these initial codes. In this study, codes were defined as "the most basic segment or element of the raw data that can be assessed in a meaningful way regarding the phenomenon" (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 63). Codes were continuously modified to become increasingly specific so to capture the nuances and patterns found in the data. The third step was to look for similarities and overlap in the codes to construct related themes that were relevant to answering the research question. The fourth step was to review the themes and ensure the themes were both relevant to

the research question and prevalent throughout the data. The fifth step encompassed two parts. Part one was finalizing the name of the themes and part two involved the extraction of quotes that would demonstrate the theme's significance and relevance to the research question. The final step was to generate a final report of the findings.

RESULTS

Quantitative Results from Online Survey

Assessments of the Type and Frequency of social supports. Of the 22 participants, 21 participants provided data about the type and frequency of social supports that were present in their lives across all contexts, which included both within a higher education institution and outside of it. Among these 21 participants, 95% percent of the sample reported at least one instance of instrumental support, 90% reported at least one instance of emotional support, 81% reported at least one instance of appraisal support, and 76% reported at least one instance of informational support.

The data were also assessed to understand the total frequency at which participants reported multiple sources of each support. The prior assessment only examined whether there was at least one source of a particular type of support. This secondary assessment of the data was used to calculate the total frequency counts of all social supports each participant listed. From this total frequency count, the data indicated that participants had more sources of emotional support ($n = 55$) compared to any other social support (see Table 2). Furthermore, participants reported the least number of sources for instrumental support ($n = 39$). Thus, although 95% of the individuals had indicated that they had at least one source of instrumental support compared to the 90% who had at least one source of emotional support in the prior assessment, when it came to assessing the total number of sources of a particular support, participants tended to have received emotional support from more sources as opposed to instrumental.

Table 2

Presence of Social Support

	Overall Supports Reported		Supports Reported Within Higher Education		Supports Reported Outside Higher Education	
	Overall frequency of sources of support	Individuals reporting at least one source of support across all contexts ¹	Overall frequency	Individuals reporting at least one source ¹	Overall frequency	Individuals reporting at least one source ¹
Emotional	55	19 (90%)	15	10 (48%)	24	15 (71%)
Instrumental	39	20 (95%)	11	8 (38%)	23	15 (71%)
Informational	42	16 (76%)	15	8 (38%)	16	11 (52%)
Appraisal	50	17 (81%)	18	9 (43%)	19	12 (57%)

¹ Percentages are calculated out of the 21 participants who reported the frequencies of social support

Assessment of social supports within higher education. To determine which social supports were most and least present within the higher education context, the availability of emotional, instrumental, informational, and appraisal social supports were coded into three different categories that represented the different contexts in which they appeared to originate (i.e., within the higher education context, outside the higher education context, and ambiguous context). From this assessment, 32% of the total frequency of social supports reported, which represented the total sources of social support participants had indicated, originated from within the higher education context, 44% originated from outside the higher education context, and 24% originated from an ambiguous context. Within the higher education context, sources of instrumental support were the least present ($n = 11$) and sources of appraisal support were the most present ($n = 18$). Outside the higher education context, sources of informational support were the least present ($n = 16$) and sources of emotional support were the most present ($n = 24$) (see Table 2).

Overall satisfaction of social supports. Within the survey, participants provided insight into the overall satisfaction they felt with the social supports made available to them both within and outside of the higher education context. Satisfaction was measured on a scale of 1 (*Very Dissatisfied*) to 6 (*Very Satisfied*). The data presented in Table 3 display the mean levels of satisfaction for the sample.

Table 3

Overall Satisfaction of Social Supports

	Within Higher Education ¹		Outside Higher Education ^{1a}	
	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev
Emotional	4.32	1.32	4.86	1.59
Instrumental	3.54	1.74	4.43	1.69
Informational	3.95	1.68	4.38	1.32
Appraisal	4.36	1.40	4.24	1.51

¹ Data was provided by 22 survey participants

^{1a} Data was provided by 21 survey participants

Within the higher education context, survey participants reported their highest overall satisfaction to be with appraisal support ($M = 4.36, SD = 1.40$) and their lowest overall satisfaction to be with instrumental support ($M = 3.54, SD = 1.74$). Outside the higher education context, survey participants reported their highest overall satisfaction to be with emotional support ($M = 4.86, SD = 1.59$) and their lowest overall satisfaction to be with appraisal support ($M = 4.24, SD = 1.51$). Qualitative data analysis will expand on participants' experiences with each of these supports.

Qualitative Data Analysis from Online Survey and Interviews

Social supports in accessing and continuing higher education. Thematic analysis was used to identify themes that emerged in both the open-ended questions on the survey and the interviews. Twenty participants responded to the open-ended questions on the survey that asked them to describe the supports that were present to them in accessing and continuing higher education and how they felt support could be improved for the undocumented community. Additionally, nine survey participants agreed to a semi-structured interview to share their experiences and suggestions to increase support for members of the undocumented community. From the data emerged six themes: (a) theme 1: Barriers to financial aid impede access to higher

education and beyond; (b) theme 2: Necessity for greater knowledge regarding the undocumented community; (c) theme 3: Importance of advocates and allies among faculty, staff, and peers; (d) theme 4: Necessity for unique avenues of support for the undocumented community; (e) theme 5: Familial support and costs to psychological well-being; and (f) theme 6: Resiliency—a desire to learn and grow as individuals (see Figure 3).

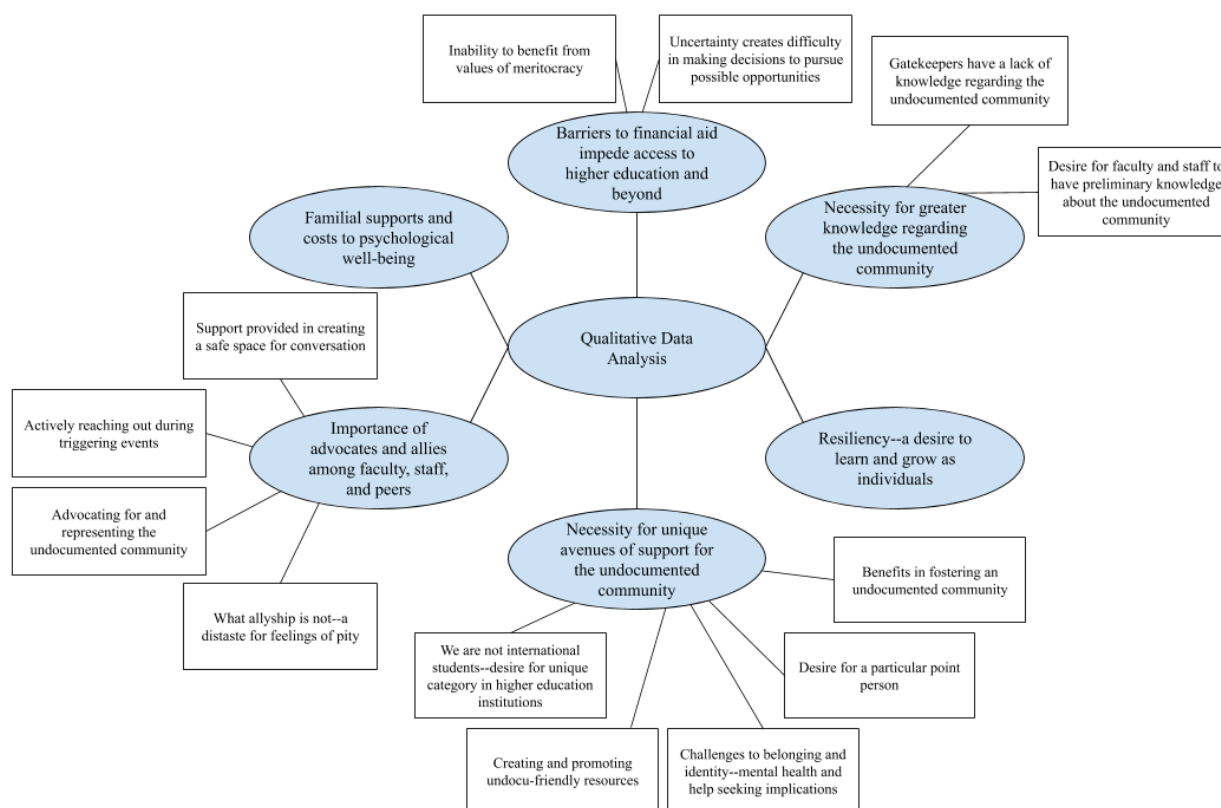


Figure 3. Themes and subthemes that emerged from the qualitative data analysis

Theme 1: Barriers to financial aid impede access to higher education and beyond.

Eight interview participants shared the sentiment that members of the undocumented community were often in low income families. Participants shared that due to the tendency of individuals in the undocumented community to be from a low-income background, it was especially important

for them to have access to financial aid in order to attend higher education. However, the most basic form of aid provided to Americans, federal aid, in particular FAFSA, is inaccessible to all members of the undocumented community. In addition, participants mentioned that depending on their state of residence, the cost of higher education rose exponentially as some states did not recognize DACA and undocumented individuals as residents of the state. This issue was brought up by Enrique¹ and Chabela who attended school in Arizona. As they explained, in Arizona, there were laws that prohibited all members of the undocumented community from benefitting from in-state tuition. As a result, even community colleges charged 300% of the in-state tuition to the undocumented community. While some universities had found a route that allowed DACAmented individuals to pay only 150% of in-state tuition, Chabela noted that it was “still a burden.”

Higher education is already extremely expensive for many families, not just for low-income families. This expense, however, can be alleviated through in-state tuition, federal aid, and loans, but the undocumented community does not have access to such financial aid. Hence, there is an even larger hurdle that the members of the undocumented community must overcome to access higher education. In describing the structural barriers that exist for the undocumented community, Zainab affirmed:

Number one, financial, like number one. There's no denial, doubts, or buts about it. We don't go to college because we don't have the money to go to college. We don't get federal aid. If we don't get scholarships, we don't go. And just, simple as that.

To further elucidate on how the lack of financial aid has impeded access to opportunities post-high school, the researcher divided this theme into two subthemes. The two subthemes

¹ All names used in this study are pseudonyms.

were: (a) subtheme 1a: Inability to benefit from values of meritocracy; (b) subtheme 1b: Uncertainty creates difficulty in making decisions to pursue possible opportunities.

Subtheme 1a: Inability to benefit from values of meritocracy. Participants reported that status influenced their ability to reap the rewards of their hard work. This occurred because they could not receive money that was a part of a scholarship they had earned to go to college.

When DACA came out in 2012, it provided eligible members of the undocumented community with a social security number and a work authorization permit. This opened up many doors for eligible members of the undocumented community. However, because DACA only came out eight years ago and undocumented students have been attending college for much longer, there were six interview participants who reported that they did not have DACA when they were applying to college in high school. Enrique and Jesse shared how this created a roadblock in trying to pay for college. In high school, both Enrique and Jesse, having their eyes set on going to college alongside their peers, had applied to and received scholarships to attend college. However, the scholarships were revoked because they did not have a social security number. For Enrique, this caused him to reevaluate that being undocumented meant that one must work hard, but also, harder than most. This also made him realize that to go to college, he would now have to start from “square one.” After high school, Enrique shared that he had to find work to fund his post-secondary education and that he was fortunate to have had received a private scholarship from the head of a nonprofit with whom he worked. This, he explained, helped him pay for classes when he was short on money and would have decided to not attend that semester. For Jesse, the inability to receive the scholarship and go to college caused him emotional distress, explaining that he was discouraged, mad, and depressed. Without access to

the scholarship, Jesse ultimately delayed his entry into college as he opted to work to save money to attend.

Maria had a similar experience to Enrique and Jesse in not being able to benefit from a scholarship she had received. She had received a state-funded athletic scholarship to run in college, but the state had recently passed a law dictating that those without authorized status could not receive state aid. As a result, her scholarship was revoked, crushing her dreams: “I broke down. It was very emotional. I thought that my dream of going to a four-year institution and continue my running was over.” Fortunately, the school came up with private funds to compensate for her revoked scholarship, but these experiences demonstrate that despite having received scholarships for their hard work in high school, participants were not able to benefit from them. Instead, they had to find different routes to fund their higher education.

Subtheme 1b: Uncertainty creates difficulty in making decisions to pursue possible opportunities. Being a part of the undocumented community, participants discussed the uncertainty that surrounded their lives. Even with DACA, the uncertainty still exists because it is temporary in nature—it must be renewed every two years—and it is easy to overturn since it was not passed as legislation. Such uncertainty, participants reported, made it difficult to make plans for the future since they were unsure of what would come next.

Similar to Enrique and Jesse, Hazel reported that DACA did not yet exist when she was in high school applying to college. As a result, she discussed that there was confusion and uncertainty as she approached the college application period:

When I was about to graduate high school, I was very scared of the future. I didn’t know how, if I was going to go to college or what was gonna happen....even if you do go to college, you don’t know if the degree that you’re working towards ... is gonna allow you

to work too. So there's also the second factor too, of okay I'm going to go to college for four years, I'm gonna spend all this money because I can't get financial aid, but then I have a degree, then so what? I don't have a work permit either. So, at one point, it felt like, you don't know what you're working toward almost. It feels like you're just running, but you don't know where you're running to, so it's [a] very confusing time.

While Hazel wanted to go to college, there was a disproportionate cost-benefit ratio that she had to consider. This resulted from the lack of financial aid available to her at the time with little guarantee that she would be able to work in her desired field. With DACA, she gained access to a work authorization permit, creating a better balance of the cost-benefit ratio. However, while Hazel reported that DACA improved the ratio as it allowed her to work in a company, Eugene discussed that due to DACA's fragility, it was still difficult to plan for a future.

Especially in light of the Trump administration and Supreme Court proceedings to possibly remove DACA, Eugene discussed the omnipresence of uncertainty in her life and how that made it difficult for her to build up to her future like everyone else. In fact, she discussed her aspirations to go to medical school, but with the uncertainty of DACA and limited financial aid options, she explained that there was a lot of uncertainty with whether she should undergo that journey. Again, there is a disproportionate cost-benefit ratio that Eugene has to consider in fulfilling her aspirations of becoming a doctor.

Theme 2: Necessity for greater knowledge regarding the undocumented community.

Overwhelmingly, the participants highlighted the overarching idea that there is limited knowledge regarding the undocumented community and DACA in the general public. As a result, this implied that there is a necessity for others to be better informed about the

undocumented community and DACA, especially as the ignorance was seen to limit and impede access to higher education and career opportunities. To further elucidate the nuances of this theme, the researcher split the theme into two subthemes: (a) subtheme 2a: Gatekeepers have a lack of knowledge regarding the undocumented community; and (b) subtheme 2b: Desire for faculty and staff to have preliminary knowledge about the undocumented community.

Subtheme 2a: Gatekeepers have a lack of knowledge regarding the undocumented community. Four interview participants shared that gatekeepers to higher education had a lack of knowledge regarding the undocumented community. Eugene noted that when she went to the financial aid office, the staff was unaware that DACA recipients could not fill out FAFSA. This implied to her that the financial aid office did not have sufficient information to equip members of the undocumented community. While this instance occurred within a higher education context, other participants discussed the lack of knowledge regarding the undocumented community outside the higher education context. This, in turn, was seen to impede individuals' access to higher education.

Enrique disclosed that his guidance counselor did not know how to help undocumented students and so, Enrique had to find support outside of his high school. Chabela also disclosed that her guidance counselor was uninformed about undocumented students' eligibility to attend college, but her guidance counselor had fortunately, encouraged her to simply ask higher education institutions. And so, Chabela was able to attend university. However, she also discussed that other undocumented individuals were not given the same advice and sometimes, even discouraged to apply. Chabela emphasized the dangers of such misinformation, explaining that if someone with authority misinforms undocumented students, it can impede their access to higher education: "they [undocumented individuals] shared with me that the counselors have said

no you can't go to college because you don't have documents. And then, that's the end of it.”

Similarly to Chabela, Ben also shared that he knew of undocumented individuals who were discouraged from applying to college, and instead, encouraged to enter the workforce after high school. As a result, Ben explained, sometimes these undocumented individuals had decided to forgo college completely.

Ben also shared that a lack of knowledge could not only limit undocumented students' access to post-secondary options but also their access to scholarship resources. Ben said that he was fortunate to have met a well-informed guidance counselor who informed him of the opportunities and resources that he was eligible for despite being undocumented. Other undocumented individuals who Ben knew of however, were simply recommended to apply to community college and then, not given any information about potential scholarships. As a result, these individuals paid out-of-pocket and thus, took four, sometimes five, years to graduate from a two-year institution. This, Ben attributed to the lack of information regarding the undocumented community and the resources that could be taken advantage of by the undocumented community, or “undocu-friendly” resources. He shared with the researcher, a number of potential scholarships: the Dream.US scholarship; the Hispanic Scholarship Fund; scholarships from immigrant centers and consulates; and Macaulay Honors, which provides a full tuition scholarship to attend one of eight City University of New York colleges.

Subtheme 2b: Desire for faculty and staff to have preliminary knowledge about the undocumented community. Specifically within the higher education context, the participants highlighted the need for their faculty and staff to have at least, some preliminary knowledge of DACA and a basic understanding of the experiences of the undocumented community. Participants shared some of their unique experiences that they desired faculty and staff to be

aware of, these encompassed the following: navigating contexts in which there are additional barriers of access, emotional and psychological distress that result from their status, and the inability to pursue particular educational opportunities, such as study abroad, like their peers.

Whereas financial barriers of access were mentioned previously, an additional barrier that participants faced was navigating higher education as first-generation college students. Ben shared that in high school, he did not even know the difference between a two-year college and a four-year college, but his guidance counselor had given him the required information and resources that aided him in applying to college. However, accessing college is only the beginning as Maria also discussed that in attending college, she found herself having difficulty navigating multiple small things that would have been easier had she not been a first-generation college student. Because she did not have the luxury of turning to her family or having someone who could advocate for her, she felt she was navigating a “whole other monster of a new experience” on her own. Zainab shared a similar sentiment and discussed her profound appreciation in finding the adults in such an unfamiliar context who were advocating for her. Specifically, her “academic mom,” who was a biology professor, often facilitated her educational journey by directing her to resources on campus and by providing her with advice for navigating her way in academia. Enrique also shared that in receiving such information and advice from a faculty member at his college, he was able to receive his associate degree and two certifications without having to spend time and money on unnecessary courses. The importance of this guidance was emphasized as he implied that the lack of such guidance may impede a student’s continuation of their academic studies. He shared that he hoped to receive a four-year degree, but he was in “uncharted terrain” for himself. Hence, the immense amount of information and resources he would have to navigate had actually created an anxiety that put him into a “freeze.”

The importance of having preliminary knowledge of the experiences of the undocumented community was further emphasized as four participants shared that often, they found themselves revealing their status to faculty and staff when they were searching for some support regarding their particular situation as an undocumented or DACAmented individual. However, revealing their status was only helpful if the individuals knew how to support them and had a basic understanding of the undocumented community. This highlights the importance of increasing the awareness, resources, and knowledge about the undocumented community across faculty and staff. Participants suggested that such knowledge can be spread during faculty meetings and professional development meetings that focus specifically on supporting and understanding the needs of the undocumented community.

In addition to increasing knowledge among the faculty and staff within the higher education context, Ben expressed his desire for staff, particularly those in the career centers in colleges, to inform companies who come to campus about the undocumented community. He explained that in his experience, many hiring managers and companies were unaware that DACAmented individuals had a work authorization permit and so, were allowed to work legally. Ben had to clarify to such companies that he was legally allowed to work so that they would not turn him away during a career fair. This demonstrates that the unawareness of the undocumented community could impede access to career opportunities. In meeting recruiters who lacked knowledge regarding his situation, Ben suggested for higher education institutions to take extra steps and inform companies about the presence of an undocumented community on campus and that those with DACA, can, in fact, work legally.

One particular area of frustration that both Maria and Hazel emphasized was people's lack of understanding of the rigidity of their status. That is, being DACAmented and being

undocumented is not something that someone can easily change nor is it something that these individuals have not tried to change in the past. In addition, DACA does not provide a pathway to citizenship. In receiving questions and suggestions to simply apply to adjust their status, both Maria and Hazel discussed having to clarify for others that the immigration system does not allow for them to simply apply for citizenship or lawful permanent resident status.

Maria and Hazel shared that this was basic information about the undocumented community that they desired for people within a higher education context to understand. Therefore, in response to any questions regarding why members of the undocumented community did not yet change their status to a legal status, Hazel shared a succinct response that faculty and staff should understand: “I *can't* apply for a green card that's why.”

Theme 3: Importance of advocates and allies among faculty, staff, and peers.

Interview and survey participants discussed the support they received in having faculty, staff, or peers who acted as allies and advocated for them and the undocumented community.

Participants discussed this theme in a variety of contexts, so the researcher split the theme into four subthemes that demonstrate how faculty, staff, and peers have been advocates for the community and how allyship can be improved. The four subthemes are: (a) subtheme 3a: Support provided in creating a safe space for conversation; (b) subtheme 3b: Actively reaching out during triggering events; (c) subtheme 3c: Advocating for and representing the undocumented community; and (d) subtheme 3d: What allyship is not—a distaste for feelings of pity.

Subtheme 3a: Support provided in creating a safe space for conversation. Participants described that they perceived support from individuals who gave them the space to be listened to in a safe environment. Hazel described a safe environment to be a place where people felt open

to discuss their problems. Similarly, a survey participant discussed the importance for safe environments to exist where the listener reciprocates with an open mind and does not hold negative judgements. While a safe environment could be created by many individuals, five interview participants differentiated the support they received when the listener was someone with a shared experience, either as an undocumented individual or as another marginalized identity. This was meaningful to participants as members of the undocumented community often possess a number of different marginalized identities beyond their status as an undocumented individual. Zainab, in particular, highlighted this in discussing her relationship with Individual A and Individual B. While Individual A and B had both been strong supports in her college journey, Zainab indicated that Individual B provided an additional dimension of support in having a shared understanding of being an immigrant and a woman of color. This accentuated the idea that DACA recipients are not just defined by their undocumented identity. Instead, they have intersecting identities that played a role in shaping their experiences and developing their support networks.

Subtheme 3b: Actively reaching out during triggering events. Some participants also described instances where safe environments were actively extended to them, especially during tough political periods that could affect participants' security in America. They discussed how faculty and staff checked in on them; for example, they sent emails asking the participants if they were okay and if they needed anything. This experience was especially highlighted when President Trump rescinded DACA which momentarily stripped DACAmented individuals from the benefits that DACA had provided them.

During this rough period, Sara shared an experience in which the dean of students reached out to her inviting her to coffee. In turn, this experience resulted in a more meaningful

relationship. Sara shared that when the dean of students reached out to her and they got coffee, there was no mention of DACA. It was simply a moment for conversation. After the coffee date, Sara sent an email sharing that she was a DACA recipient and that she was struggling. The dean of students replied that she knew that Sara was a DACA recipient and that was the reason why the dean had asked her for coffee. In this way, the dean had hoped to give Sara a space of support in case Sara needed it. Since then, Sara reported that she had gone to the dean for many different reasons. The dean of students in Sara's experience, was proactive, provided a space of support, and gave Sara the decision on whether to reveal her status or not. Because of the dean's caring, proactive action, a genuine and meaningful relationship was able to be formed.

Maria also recounted an experience in which her English professors came up to her when she was in the English department and gave her emotional support. The day after President Trump was elected, Maria shared that she was distressed because she did not know what the election meant for the future of DACA. However, her English professors offered words of affirmation and told her to let them know if they could do anything. Maria shared how the support provided by her English professors was particularly meaningful to her because she knew they did not simply define her by her undocumented status:

Knowing that I had that support from the staff there [English professors at the English department] was, such a huge relief for me and also knowing that there were people who were rooting for me and people who didn't see me as just this, undocumented person, who saw me as a good writer, who saw me as a good student, who saw me as someone that they cared about.

Similar to this sentiment shared by Maria, open-ended survey responses showed that faculty and staff were particularly helpful in helping participants understand their potential in

their respective fields of study. This demonstrates the appraisal support that faculty and staff can potentially provide for members of the undocumented community.

Subtheme 3c: Advocating for and representing the undocumented community. Both open-ended survey responses and interview data suggested that participants perceived or would perceive support from individuals advocating and supporting the undocumented community visibly through action. As one survey participant stated, “Talk less, do more. Any college can have an initiative with decorative language, but what matters is where they fund their money, and what spaces they protect and allow to exist.”

Having individuals who offered words of support and demonstrated their support via action seemed especially important to Enrique and Chabela. They discussed the barriers the undocumented community have in influencing political decisions: all members of the undocumented community are barred from voting. This leaves them with limited power in voicing their opinions when new immigration policies are considered. Thus, it would be helpful to this community to know that they have supporters going to the polls and voting for policies that would benefit their community and future. As a result, participants discussed the support that could originate from faculty, staff, and peers representing the undocumented community in polls.

Enrique, in particular, expressed the sentiment that proactive support for the undocumented community was lacking in terms of voting. He explained that he had friends who could vote, but when it came time to vote, they decided that it is a waste of time. Rather than representing the undocumented community and advocating for politicians who supported in-state tuition, these individuals had forgone the opportunity to proactively advocate for the

undocumented community. Precisely because the undocumented community cannot vote, Enrique expressed that it was important for eligible voters to show their support through voting:

The students can say, I need help paying for college or I need a cheaper tuition, but they're [government] not going to listen to them because they're not voters. And if you are a teacher and you're in that district, then advocate for them.

The importance of having eligible voters vote in favor of the undocumented community was implied in the interview with Chabela as well. She revealed that Prop 300, a ballot initiative that prevented the undocumented community from benefitting from in-state tuition, is "voter protected." Hence, this emphasized the need for eligible voters to be knowledgeable about the undocumented community and for those who claimed to support the community, to actively show that support via voting.

Aside from voting, one interview participant discussed the support she had received in having a peer advocate for the undocumented community. When President Trump rescinded DACA, Zainab described how, in response to her worries about the government coming to get her with no one to stop them, her friend countered, stating, "yeah, but you best believe that I'll be the first one to fight for you." These words were then supported by action as her friend organized a rally in response to the government rescinding DACA and encouraged Zainab to voice her thoughts at the event. Such peers provided her with appraisal support as they were influential in Zainab's own development as a leader because she desired to become a better leader and a changemaker like her peers.

Subtheme 3d: What allyship is not—A distaste for feelings of pity. Interviews suggested that providing support by advocating for and being an ally to the undocumented community is different from providing feelings of pity. Jesse, in particular, discussed his distaste for popular

media which had framed DACAmented individuals in a pitiful light, suggesting inferiority, “they’re so poor...look at this DACA people, they’re going to lose their protection” rather than genuine support. To Jesse, it was important to note that with or without the general public’s support, DACAmented individuals were still human beings and not simply defined by their undocumented status.

Zainab also shared dissatisfaction with receiving pity. She recalled experiences where she revealed her status to particular individuals only to have them respond by apologizing to her. However, when such individuals were not the reason for her situation, she felt that such an apology was unnecessary and did not garner feelings of support but rather frustration:

I’m not here to get any kind of pity from you...Don’t just assume that...I want, oh sorry. Like no, I want you to know how you can help me and ask me, what type of help you want. So, just basic, human connection like that.

Zainab and Jesse provided an important reminder that members of the undocumented community are still humans and desire empathy, not pity. In this way, they implied that support for the undocumented community comes from a willingness to understand their specific experience rather than feeling sorry for the members who must undergo particular struggles and barriers to continue their academics.

Theme 4: Necessity for unique avenues of support for the undocumented community.

Participants discussed that being a member of the undocumented community meant that they faced unique struggles and experiences different from many of their peers. As a result, participants reported that there was a necessity for higher education institutions to address these unique struggles and to provide different resources to aid them in accessing and continuing higher education. Some supportive actions that addressed the unique struggles were through the

provision of accommodations, physical items, opportunities such as jobs, and a number of recommendation letters which were usually necessary to apply to private scholarships. To further emphasize and capture the unique struggles and suggestions that participants shared, the researcher created five subthemes: (a) subtheme 4a: We are not international students—desire for a unique category in higher education institutions; (b) subtheme 4b: Creating and promoting undocu-friendly resources; (c) subtheme 4c: Challenges to belonging and identity—mental health and help-seeking behaviors implications; (d) subtheme 4d: Desire for a particular point person; (e) subtheme 4e: Benefits in fostering an undocumented community.

Subtheme 4a: We are not international students—desire for a unique category in higher education institutions. Members of the undocumented community hold citizenship in a foreign country, and thus, regardless of the length of time they have been living in the United States, higher education institutions lump these individuals with international students. However, participants shared their dislike of the international student label as they felt it did not reflect their true identity. As a result, they desired a category specific to students in the undocumented community. For some interview participants, like Zainab and Eugene, they have been living in America almost all their lives—Zainab came to America at one years old and Eugene, three months old. Hence, to be labeled as an international student, to them, invalidated their presence in America:

I'm not an international student. Don't classify me as one. Cause it's offensive, I've lived here all my life and you're still making me feel like I'm a foreigner? Literally, I've been here since I was one years old. And it's frustrating and insulting in that way. I know...I'm not a complete American. I know I was not born here. (Zainab)

In addition to the invalidating nature of being labeled as an international student, participants expressed that the needs of international students and undocumented/DACAmented students were different. Sara expressed this sentiment in stating that she received email after email that would be helpful to international students, for example in regards to tax forms, but the emails were not applicable to her. Because DACA students were lumped in with international students, she expressed that DACA students did not receive any resources for their particular needs.

One last point of concern in regards to being labeled as an international student was the international student fee, which is an additional tuition fee that international students are often made to pay. This, Jesse shared, just increased the financial burden that the undocumented community must consider when applying to college because, he explained, Dreamers were often asked to pay this fee as well. And at the time of the interview, Sara mentioned that she had just learned she had been paying the international student fee every semester and as a result, she had been paying more tuition than necessary.

Subtheme 4b: Creating and promoting undocu-friendly resources. Members of the undocumented community are often unable to utilize the same resources and opportunities as the general public when accessing professional development or scholarship opportunities. Thus, some participants discussed the support they perceived when members of their higher education context informed them of opportunities and resources that were, specifically, undocu-friendly. Some of these resources included, but were not limited to, those concerned with applying to graduate school, internships, fellowships, research funds, scholarships, and more. While some of these resources helped participants further their career, others helped alleviate the financial burden that many members of the undocumented community have to take on in continuing their

education. As a result, participants reported the desire for higher education institutions to promote those resources that are undocu-friendly and revise other resources to become undocu-friendly.

Participants discussed that sometimes, they were given many resources, but it was clear that these resources were developed in a manner that catered to the needs of the general public. Hence, they had to filter through the resources and find those that were undocu-friendly. This, they reported, was frustrating and discouraging, and implied the need to increase accessibility to undocu-friendly resources. This could be done by the creation of awareness and greater promotion of those resources that were undocu-friendly. Chabela in particular, shared feelings of intimidation when given resources that were more catered to the general public as opposed to the undocumented community. Chabela explained that when she did attend events that were supposed to be resourceful, she instead, felt intimidated as she could not relate to the students around her and felt that she did not belong. Chabela suggested that higher education institutions send targeted emails to the undocumented community.

In addition to increased accessibility to undocu-friendly resources, participants expressed their desire for higher education institutions to either revise eligibility requirements for current resources offered or to create undocu-friendly resources. One survey participant discussed that universities should remove citizenship requirements from their scholarships and two interview participants, Sara and Zainab, discussed their desire for their higher education institutions to create resources for Dreamers specifically.

Sara, in particular, shared this in the context of her ineligibility to access a program that could uplift the burden of holding an unpaid internship. For students looking at public service internships, she explained, their first summer was often unpaid. Hence, her school provided a

stipend to their students for the summer through a fund. However, unlike everyone else in her degree program, she did not have access to that fund as a DACAmented individual, and there was a lack of initiative from the school to provide some alternative to support her:

I need the university to know that that's not an option for me. And to have back up options. Or have something for me, like point me to some direction of what I can take advantage of since every single other student I go to school with gets access to that program, but I can't even apply.

Similarly, Zainab discussed that she desired for her higher education institution to be proactive with developing a contingency plan for her to continue her studies in the event that the Supreme Court decision coming out in 2020 results in a negative outcome for DACA students. Although she had a full tuition scholarship, she explained that she needed to work to help pay for food, loans, and books. Thus, if DACA is permanently removed, she explained that that would strip her from her ability to work on campus to earn money to pay for these necessities. Hence, she reported the desire for the university to be aware that supporting the undocumented community was not simply about tuition, but also how the university was going to ensure its undocumented students could afford the other expenses that are incurred while attending college.

Subtheme 4c: Challenges to belonging and identity—mental health and help-seeking implications. Some participants disclosed the challenges they had experienced in understanding their undocumented identity and understanding where it was that they belonged. The word used to describe this community, “undocumented,” essentially means without documents or without papers. In our society, participants expressed that there is a legitimization that comes with having papers that document one's presence and right to be in a particular country. Without them, as Chabela and Jesse described, members of the undocumented community were like

ghosts in America. As a result, participants experienced challenges to their sense of belonging and in forming their identities.

Sara discussed how this lack of understanding of where it was that she belonged was traumatic. She described that this trauma stemmed partially from not understanding what it meant to be American when others denied that aspect of her identity and what it meant to be Peruvian when she had not been back to Peru since she was 6 years old. This trauma also stemmed from fears of deportation for her family and uncertainty of what would come next for her. Sara expressed that such challenges warranted greater mental health support for members of the undocumented community at higher education institutions. However, in her college, she expressed the irony of having to give a training to campus counselors regarding the unique experiences that undocumented students have to go through: “The student who needs your [counselors] help shouldn’t be telling you, how to help me, because I’m also not, I’m not a professional, I’m not a psychologist, so I don’t know how I can be helped.” This irony, Sara explained, demonstrated the necessity for counselors to be well aware of the unique emotional and psychological experiences of the undocumented community and receive some training to increase their knowledge of the special needs of the undocumented community.

This necessity to increase knowledge of the undocumented community is further emphasized as the implications of being undocumented could result in reticence. As Enrique experienced, and as Ben’s mom cautioned, identifying as a member of the undocumented community could make them a target for insensitive jokes or bullying. Enrique shared that in middle school when he shared his status with his peers, his peers called him “wetback,”² and

² The term, “wetback” is a derogatory term used to describe, often a Mexican, who came to America without authorization

made jokes to call immigration officials. As a result, he shared: “I felt immediate shame and fear and guilt for even bringing it up. And from there, I just kind of stopped telling people.”

Chabela and Eugene also discussed that their status held a threatening nature to it, since it could possibly result in deportation or detainment. In addition, Eugene and Hazel explained that it could also result in discrimination. For this reason, Eugene expressed that in determining whether she would reveal her status to people in her higher education context, she considered the extent of support she needed from the individual and their political standpoint. She explained that she did not know where her advisors and professors stood in immigration, particularly DACA and undocumented, policies and whether their political standpoint, would then translate into feelings about her. Partially for this reason, Eugene expressed that she liked to keep others’ knowledge of her status to the bare minimum.

Chabela also expressed a similar sentiment back when she was in high school. Chabela explained that she was afraid to ask her counselor about her eligibility for college, because there was the implication that if she revealed her status, she was putting herself at risk for deportation:

When I was in high school, I was afraid to ask my counselor. I mean, even disclosing that I was undocumented was like oh, what does this mean? Are they going to call the police? Are they going to call ICE? Are they going to deport me?

Not only that, but Chabela also discussed the reticence that could result as undocumented community members tried to reconcile their identity with the negative stigma surrounding the undocumented community. Because society had criminalized migration to such an extent that undocumented community members were made to feel ashamed, they were less willing to disclose their status. Chabela explained that if they also received a negative response and their identity was stigmatized or they had a family member who had been detained or deported, such

experiences further deterred undocumented individuals from disclosing their status in the future and asking for support.

Subtheme 4d: Desire for a particular point person. Participants acknowledged the difficulty in having all faculty and staff be well-informed on how to best support their community. Hence, many suggested a more plausible solution, that being, the introduction of a particular point person for the undocumented community. In that way, even if the faculty or staff member did not know how to specifically help them as an undocumented community member, the faculty and staff would be able to provide a direction as to where or to whom the participant should be reaching out to. In addition, this particular point person, Sara mentioned, should be someone who was not the head of international students, because the needs of the undocumented community were different and needed to be differentiated by staff in higher education institutions.

Subtheme 4e: Benefits in fostering an undocumented community. Both survey and interview participants discussed the benefits that could be incurred from higher education institutions that foster an undocumented community on their campuses by creating something similar to a Dream center where undocumented students could connect with one another. This idea was further expanded as some interview participants discussed the specific support that they had received in interacting with peers who were also members of the undocumented community.

Participants believed that an introduction of an organization such as a Dream center would be immensely helpful in providing undocumented students with support because it would allow for the flow of informational support and for the increased accessibility to undocu-friendly opportunities and resources. In addition, such an organization would allow for the flow of appraisal support and emotional support as undocumented and DACAmented students could

connect with one another. As such, the community could empower itself. This is especially important to consider as Sara mentioned, “I leaned on my friends for specific support, but it’s different to lean on citizens than it is to lean on other DACAmented friends.”

Chabela also discussed the support she received when uncertain about whether she could continue her higher education. That is, when Arizona Governor Jan Brewer revoked in-state tuition from DACAmented individuals in 2014, Chabela feared that her university would then reject her from continuing her education. However, her friends encouraged her to continue, and she specifically recounted seeing one peer that found private scholarships to keep attending college. Chabela discussed that had it been any other friend who had citizenship, it would not have created as much support because they did not have the same financial barriers. In seeing that her friend who was also undocumented had figured out a way to continue higher education, this encouraged Chabela to redetermine her will to continue her higher education.

Theme 5: Familial support and costs to psychological well-being. Participants also discussed that the determination to persist in their education was a result of the support they received from family members. This support was described in many different contexts. Some participants described that support was provided through monetary aid, which is a source of instrumental support, as parents, sisters, or aunts helped pay for their tuition. Other participants described that their family provided support by granting them the opportunity to grow up and receive an education in America. In addition, participants described that their families valued education and encouraged them to pursue their dreams and academics despite the limitations posed by their status, constituting emotional support. It is important to note that although the participants in this study indicated that they had familial support for their academic studies, this support is not necessarily universal for all undocumented individuals. In fact, Enrique shared

that he had interacted with other undocumented and DACAmented individuals whose families did not provide them with the support to pursue education. Instead, Enrique explained that some individuals often view DACA and its provision of a work authorization permit as an opportunity to help the family by working rather than an opportunity that opened doors for pursuing a higher education.

Although Enrique shared stories of his interactions with other members of the undocumented community who did not have the same experiences of familial support, this was not a trend across the interview participants included within the study. In fact, other participants indicated that their parents provided the support and inspiration to succeed academically. Ben, Zainab, and Chabela discussed this sentiment in detail, describing that their parents had provided and gave up so much for them. This helped to curate their motivation and persistence to pursue higher education. However, participants shared how this support created a sense of pressure and responsibility as well as emotional concern for family members.

Ben described that his parents worked a lot and worked hard. This provided Ben with emotional support as his parents worked hard so to ensure that he would excel in his academics in America. However, understanding the amount that his parents had to work, he felt the pressure to work hard, go to college, and graduate, because it was time for him to make his parents' dreams come true. Similarly, Chabela discussed that she owed it to her parents to receive a college degree because of her parents' sacrifices. She explained that her parents, in bringing her to America, had not been able to see her other siblings for 20 years. Chabela's understanding of such a sacrifice made undergoing a college education a necessity for her. Zainab also discussed her understanding of the sacrifices her mother had made in arriving to this country. She shared that that was a reason for her motivation to continue to pursue education

despite the barriers posed. She explained the sacrifices and risks her mother, at 20 years old, had endured in carrying Zainab, as a one-year old, across multiple countries to arrive in America:

It's basically almost a suicide mission. Like you know you can easily die on this trip and so can your child...and yet you're still going to risk it because you're that desperate and literally raise your child in a country you don't know the culture, you don't know the language, don't have any opportunities, yet you're still going to do it as a single mother...Like that's the reason. Because that woman has done so much for me to have the opportunities that I have in front of me.

The risks and sacrifices that Zainab's mother took in coming to this country had offered Zainab a source of emotional support that motivated her to continue her studies. The discussion of the risks and sacrifices that Zainab's mother made in coming to the country can be representative of the larger undocumented community. That is, undocumented parents are often introduced to a whole new culture, and often times, a new language. In addition, undocumented parents do not have access to DACA and so, they often do not hold a work authorization permit or a social security card. This implies that these parents left the country that they call home to be either unemployed or employed in low quality jobs with a necessity to work hard. These factors of sacrifice and support contribute to the resiliency and motivation of Dreamers to continue to pursue higher education. As one participant stated in their open-ended survey response, "Both my mother and father provided a blend of inspiration and steadfast reminder to keep my focus on my education, while leaving 'the rest' to them."

In other instances, the support provided from their family carried costs to participants' emotional well-being. That is, in understanding their parents' experience, participants demonstrated their sense of empathy for their parents.

In leaving their country of origin, if parents are also members of the undocumented community, they are unable to return to their families back at home because they will be barred from re-entry. For this reason, as aforementioned, Chabela's parents have not been able to see their other children, and she acknowledged this vast sacrifice that her parents had made. Eugene and Ben also discussed this inability to reunite with close family members that reside outside the United States. Whereas Ben described how this causes him continuous feelings of pain since him and his family cannot celebrate important dates with their extended family, Eugene described this inability to travel to cause feelings of apprehension. She described that she feared the potential death of her grandparents because her parents were unable to see their parents. Visualizing the potential loss of her grandparents, Eugene expressed the apprehension and concern she has for her mother: "I can just imagine that. It'll destroy her."

The potential death of a loved one can weigh heavily on the hearts of undocumented parents, and participants expressed an understanding of this weight that their parents carried. Chabela shared that her parents already underwent such an experience and described its gravity. By bringing her parents to family reunification efforts, she attempted to relieve the pain that such an event incurs for her parents. However, she addressed the irrevocable nature of death "my parents can get citizenship tomorrow and that's not going to bring my grandparents back so, there's nothing really that I can do....it's a very hard situation."

There was an immense amount of support family provided through their sacrifices, but simultaneously the support came with a cost. In understanding such sacrifices that their families made in coming to this country, the participants shared that they undergo emotional struggle seeing the extent to which their families have given up for them. In recounting a meeting with a member of Congress and other DACA recipients, Sara explained the shared understanding that

DACAmented children have in their families' sacrifices. Her experience implies that members of the undocumented community are facing unique emotional stressors while trying to continue their studies successfully:

And as we went around the circle, we all were crying our faces off...and we were all crying because we were talking about our parents and our siblings and the difficulties that our parents have had to endure.

Theme 6: Resiliency—A desire to learn and grow as individuals. The DACAmented community is often described as resilient and the interview participants did not shy away from that descriptor. Participants demonstrated their resiliency in navigating successfully those systems that were not built to welcome them. All the participants accessed some form of higher education and expressed the desire to continue to pursue higher education despite the obstacles that stood in their way. This resiliency was shown in a multitude of ways, but in the context of this study, in participants' persistence in receiving a higher education degree. Alternating between attending school and working, Enrique shared that he completed his associate degree after 7 years and Chabela shared that she completed her bachelor's degree after 12 years. Two other participants, Hazel and Maria attended a community college at first, but they did not settle there, and persisted to receive a bachelor's degree. Jesse, in particular, recounted his experience working a myriad of jobs to save money to go to college and when a county disregarded state legislation AB540, which would have allowed him to be exempt from paying out-of-state tuition, he decided to file a lawsuit. After a 6-month fight with about 13 different colleges within the county, he was able to prove that the county could not override state legislation, proving his and other undocumented students' rights to pay in-state tuition. Not only did Jesse reapply to college after having to give it up due to financial concerns after graduating high school in 2003, but also,

when he was denied the financial relief again in 2007, he fought the system that obstructed his path to receiving a four-year degree. In demonstrating such resilience, he was able to receive his bachelor's degree in Kinesiology.

Such persistence and resiliency are demonstrated by all the participants in undergoing the unique emotional and psychological stressors while also overcoming the structural barriers of access to higher education. Many also shared such continued determination to pursue education and their dreams: Eugene shared her pursuits and interests in attending medical school despite the high costs, Ben shared his current pursuit of a master's degree in the field of engineering, Sara shared her current pursuit of a law degree, Hazel shared her admittance to another college to receive her second bachelor's degree in computer science, Zainab shared her current pursuit of a dual degree and desire to attend law school, and Maria shared her desire to pursue a master's degree that would enhance her understanding of systems that work for some populations but not for others. These participants demonstrated their ambition to continue their education just like any other American. And despite having to weave through a complicated web of politics, structural barriers, emotional and psychological distress, participants demonstrated that at the end of the day, they will continue to figure out ways to achieve their dreams.

While participants mentioned that DACA and their undocumented identity did shape parts of their lives, it is important to note that this resiliency is characteristic of the individuals themselves, not as DACA recipients. Hazel indicated that many undocumented and DACAmented individuals are not comfortable with sharing their story in association with the typical DACAmented student's narrative of overcoming obstacles. Instead, they desired for their success to be attributed to their own resiliency. In parallel with this sentiment, Eugene attributed her success, not from the struggles she has had to endure as a DACA recipient, but simply, "me,

myself, and I.” That is, she described her personality to work hard and to put in a tremendous amount of time to study. In fact, most of the participants shared that they themselves, valued an education and desired to learn. In the context of Arizona and Prop 300, which denied in-state tuition to people who were not citizens or legal permanent resident, Chabela explained that students came out of the shadows saying “undocumented, unafraid” because Prop 300 had taken away their rights to something they held as valuable—education.

Demonstrating such feelings of love and value of education, Hazel explained that despite the factors that could potentially discourage her from continuing onto higher education as an undocumented individual, her love of learning motivated her to continue her studies:

If at the end of it [college], if nothing happens, I knew... I would figure something out.

And I was just, way too curious not to go to college... I love learning and I love to go to school. If I could, I'll go to school for the rest of my life.

A similar sentiment was shared by Maria who stated that she had been intrinsically motivated by the idea of college and living on a campus at an early age. And with the encouragement of many teachers, she knew she wanted to go to college, especially as she loved learning.

DACA is a most definitely a benefit that has opened many doors for eligible members of the undocumented community. However, DACA is not the reason for the resiliency that has been demonstrated by the undocumented community. Instead, with or without DACA, the participants were resilient in figuring out ways to receive the education they desired and to gain the opportunities necessary for them to achieve their dreams and aspirations.

DISCUSSION

The current study sought to understand what particular social supports DACA recipients reported possessing or lacking as they strived to gain access to higher education and continue with their academic studies. Furthermore, this study sought to understand how support could be further improved.

The quantitative results revealed that overall, the least frequent support received was instrumental support, which is the provision of service and tangible aid. However, most individuals were able to indicate that they had at least one source of instrumental support. In previous literature, underrepresented college students were asked to indicate the social supports that they received from mentors who had not raised them. Underrepresented college students reported that the least frequent type of support they received was that of instrumental support which, though the current study did not look solely at mentors, was consistent with the current study (Raposa & Hurd, 2018).

Overall, the most frequent support reported was emotional support, which is the provision of feelings of empathy, love, and concern. This finding was inconsistent with previous literature which found that appraisal support was the most frequently reported social support by underrepresented college students, followed by emotional support (Raposa & Hurd, 2018). This discrepancy could potentially be explained by the small number of survey responses collected in the current study. The frequencies of appraisal support and emotional support were close in range, so there is the possibility that with a greater number of participants, appraisal supports would have a higher frequency.

Survey participants were also asked about their satisfaction with their perceived social supports. Within the higher education context, participants were most satisfied with the appraisal support and least satisfied with the instrumental support provided to them. Outside the higher education context, participants were most satisfied with the emotional support and the least satisfied with the appraisal support provided to them. Given that this was the first study to date to investigate satisfaction of social supports among this population, it is unclear how these results would differ among a different sample and it highlights the need for additional research.

Qualitative analysis provided a deeper understanding of how each of these supports were presented to DACAmented individuals in accessing and continuing college, including but not limited to, familial support to pursue education, faculty and staff reaching out during triggering events, creation of a safe environment to discuss their experiences and struggles, monetary support that helped to pay college tuition, provision of information regarding undocu-friendly resources and opportunities, and provision of words of affirmation. Participants also shared their unique experiences growing up undocumented and provided suggestions to improve support. This was discussed by the six themes that emerged from the data.

Family members provided a number of social supports and the interviews pointed specifically to the perceived emotional, instrumental, and appraisal support that was received. Emotional support was provided as parents were cited to be supportive of participants' academic studies and encouraged them to focus on education. In addition, Ben, Chabela, and Zainab shared that their parents, in coming to America, had sacrificed and/or risked their lives and the quality of their lives. Thus, the participants shared that their academic success was in part, for their parents. Previous scholars have documented the feelings of appreciation for parents and the acknowledgement of parents' sacrifices and how that encouraged Dreamers to overcome barriers

and achieve academically (Cervantes et al., 2015). Therefore, with the sacrifices that parents made for their DACAmented children, parents were able to provide a unique source of emotional support. This, in turn, also seemed to have made participants create an internal standard that helped participants understand if they were making their parents' sacrifices worth coming to America. Participants found themselves evaluating their degree of academic success which was often measured by achieving academically and receiving a four-year degree. Tied with previous literature, the current study suggests that parents' sacrifices may have also provided a form of appraisal support for members of the undocumented community who have attained some form of higher education.

The current study also demonstrated that family members provided sources of instrumental support as they helped pay for participants' college tuition. However, some participants like Enrique, Jesse, and Chabela described that in order to attend college, they had to work and thus, took longer to earn their degrees. This finding was similar to previous studies which described that members of the undocumented community often took longer to finish their degree than U.S. citizens or other temporary students (Celbuko, 2014; Conger & Chellman, 2013; Gonzales, 2011). This results because, as participants discussed, the undocumented community has limited access to scholarships and state aid and no access to federal aid. This was an unfair burden because members of the undocumented community often identify as low income. As with the participants in the extensive study done by Teranishi et al. (2015), the majority of the participants in the current study reported an income of less than \$50,000 and a little over the majority of the current study's participants self-identified as either poor or working class. Facing barriers to financial aid while being low-income students, participants reported that this was one the biggest structural barriers for the undocumented community in accessing and

continuing higher education. This is a finding that is comparable with much of previous literature that discussed the financial barriers in accessing higher education (Abrego & Gonzales, 2010; Cervantes et al., 2015; Contreras, 2009; Teranishi et al., 2015)

With such barriers that arise due to their status, Dreamers are often unable to benefit from their efforts in school. Despite achieving academically with high grade point averages, Dreamers have found that their opportunities were limited to low-wage jobs and found it difficult to achieve their dreams of going to a four-year college (Gleeson & Gonzales, 2012; Gonzales & Chavez, 2012; Teranishi et al., 2015). This was similarly found in the current study as Jesse, Enrique, and Maria had shared that the scholarships they had earned were revoked due to the limitations posed by their status. While DACA had opened doors for Dreamers to more easily access scholarships and white-collar jobs, Eugene still expressed the uncertainty that surrounded her ability to succeed in her career aspirations. Other scholars have also documented this uncertainty that surrounded the lives of DACAmented individuals which resulted because of the lack of permanency of DACA. This caused DACAmented individuals to fear and worry about the potential that they would be unable to pursue their desired career if DACA was removed (Cervantes et al., 2015). Coupled with previous research, the current study further suggests that DACA is not enough and a more permanent form of relief is necessary to support such talented and hardworking members of the undocumented community.

The current study additionally emphasized the role that faculty and staff of both high schools and colleges could play in providing informational support to members of the undocumented community. The current study found that outside the higher education context, the least perceived support was informational support which is parallel to previous studies that demonstrate that underrepresented students seek informational support most often from academic

professionals (Raposa & Hurd, 2018). As many members of the undocumented community qualify as first-generation college students (Teranishi et al., 2015), Ben and Maria discussed that Dreamers may not have access to information that other peers may have in navigating college. The majority of the participants in the current study were first-generation college students and thus, that explains why participants in the current study reported coming out to faculty and staff as undocumented to find support and information. This emphasizes the need for faculty and staff to have knowledge about the undocumented community that could potentially be present in their institutions.

Further augmenting the need for faculty and staff to be aware of the needs and limitations of the undocumented community is the negative consequences of misinformation. Ben and Chabela discussed that they knew of Dreamers who were misinformed that they could not attend college or who were provided with insufficient information to attend a four-year college and graduate within four years. This adds to previous literature that demonstrated that misinformation impeded academic achievement and continuation into higher education (Gonzales & Chavez, 2012; Jefferies, 2014). Additionally, even after Dreamers access higher education, the current study suggests that there is still a need for faculty and staff to know how to advise Dreamers who hope to pursue graduate studies. Like participants in other studies that desired to continue into graduate school (Contreras, 2009; Siemons et al., 2017), participants in the current study also expressed their desire to pursue graduate school. However, when faculty and staff did not understand the unique experiences of the undocumented community, advice and suggestions were not particularly helpful, emphasizing the need for them to have some preliminary knowledge. Not only is the lack of helpful guidance a concern, but also, previous studies have documented that faculty and staff's lack of experience with such a population can

cause them discomfort and thus, react in an invalidating way when undocumented community members come out to them (Stebleton & Alexico, 2015). This explains Eugene and Hazel's discussion of how sharing their identity can be difficult because there is uncertainty around how others would respond. Together, these findings underscore the necessity for not only increased knowledge regarding the experience of the undocumented community, but also increased knowledge in how to provide support.

Previous scholars have documented that Dreamers were more likely to persist in accessing college and were more likely to continue to achieve academically when they had developed meaningful and supportive relationships with unrelated individuals (Cervantes et al., 2015; Contreras, 2009; Gonzales, 2011; Gonzales et al., 2013). Limited research described what these relationships looked like and what particular social supports were perceived. The current study adds to this field of research as participants in this study described these relationships and implied how each of the four social supports (emotional, instrumental, informational, and appraisal support) were presented to them.

Participants in other studies have suggested that faculty and staff could provide support by simply listening and having a conversation with members of the undocumented community (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2015). Similarly, in the current study, participants reported the benefits of having individuals who listened with an open mind and reciprocated without judgment, constituting emotional support. However, the current study has expanded on the idea that while any faculty, staff, or peer can provide a safe space, there are different supports that could arise when there is a cultural similarity. Previous scholars have documented the ease in which some participants shared that they were able to relate with peers and faculty who had the same cultural background or identified as people of color (Stebleton & Alexico, 2015). These findings were

found in the current study as well, particularly in Zainab's experience as she noted the different supports she received from a nonimmigrant faculty member and an immigrant staff member. This suggests the need for higher education contexts to hire more faculty and staff that identify with marginalized identities. Such faculty and staff can provide a different element of support because there is a shared perception in growing up that faculty and staff who do not identify with particular marginalized identities may not have.

While not all faculty and staff identify with marginalized identities, they could still provide emotional support in other ways. The current study demonstrated the support that was perceived when faculty and staff actively reached out to their students who may have been affected by changing immigration policies. This was inconsistent with one previous study where participants discussed that peers who continuously questioned their well-being after an upsetting political event caused feelings of exhaustion rather than support (Muñoz et al., 2018). The discrepancy could potentially be explained as the peers in the aforementioned study were persistent in asking about their DACAmented peers' well-being. This may have unintentionally communicated thoughts to the participants that they were in need of support from others and could not figure it out themselves as the participant in the study explained, "I'm dealing with it my own way...I'm okay and I can do it and if I really need help, I'll seek the help" (Muñoz et al., 2018, p. 42). The participant's point is parallel to Jesse's explanation that with or without support of others, members of the undocumented community have continued to do what they needed to do. This suggests the importance of giving undocumented students space to choose to seek help as did the dean of students in Sara's higher education institution and Maria's professors who simply just let her know that she could come to them if they could do anything for her.

Due to the negative stigma that surrounds the undocumented community, however, participants shared that not all undocumented and DACAmented students are willing to disclose their status. Eugene in particular, discussed that she did not just reveal her status to anyone. Similar to participants in previous studies, Eugene also discussed the concern of coming out to faculty and staff who may not be in favor of DACA and hold negative judgements about the undocumented community (Jefferies, 2014; Stebleton & Aleixco, 2015). This results in the difficulty to reveal one's status, whether or not they may need support or information. Hence, it may be beneficial for faculty and staff to have a visual sign that symbolizes their support for the undocumented community or simply to interact with all their students in ways that demonstrate that the classrooms and offices are safe and nonjudgmental coming out environments.

While previous scholars have largely discussed the provision of informational support and the lack thereof, in the context of accessing higher education (Cervantes, 2015; Contreras, 2009; Gonzales, 2011), limited studies have sought to understand what informational support was perceived and what informational support was lacking after enrolled in higher education. The current study sought to fill that gap in literature by asking participants to explain how informational support was presented to them within the higher education context. Participants discussed that they perceived informational support when informed of resources and opportunities concerning graduate school, internships, fellowships, research funds, additional scholarships, and more. This is important because many resources and opportunities are not applicable to the undocumented community (Contreras, 2009), and thus, as some participants in the current study explained, require them to filter through a lot of information. Hence, being informed of undocu-friendly resources was seen as supportive. Additionally, the participants discussed their desire for greater promotion and creation of undocu-friendly resources on higher

education campuses. Similar to Teranishi et al. (2015)'s study that suggested that higher education institutions should review existing systems and ensure that opportunities can be accessible to the undocumented community, participants in the current study reported their desire for such changes. Specifically, they suggested that such structural revisions should focus on adapting resources to make them more inclusive, such as removing citizenship clauses from funds that provide financial support, creating alternative educational opportunities for DACA recipients who want to study abroad but cannot, and creating supports in place for Dreamers who would like to work but do not have a work authorization permit.

The desire for specific revisions that would help make resources and opportunities undocu-friendly suggest the need for unique sources of support for the undocumented community. However, it can be difficult to provide such specific support for the undocumented community within a campus when the community is simply aggregated into the international student community. Previous studies have discussed that this aggregation had augmented tuition rates for undocumented students, furthering their financial burden (Contreras, 2009; Teranishi et al., 2015), but few studies have discussed the implications that the label had on feelings of belongingness and on the impediment to receiving more specific support. The current study demonstrates that a unique category would be supportive, not only because it would help prevent Dreamers from paying an augmented tuition, but also because it would help students feel that they are not foreigners in a country in which they grew up in, unlike other true international students. In addition, in creating a unique category for Dreamers within the administration of higher education, it would help faculty and staff provide targeted emails like they do for their international students.

Another particular need of Dreamers that appeared to be of concern was mental health support. Similar to previous studies which found that DACA recipients reported higher levels of anxiety than their documented peers (Alif, Nelson, Stefancic, Ahmed, & Okazaki, 2019; Teranishi et al., 2015), the participants in the current study also discussed an omnipresence of uncertainty and fear that constitute feelings of anxiety. In addition, as did participants in previous studies, participants in this study described the existing fears of deportation and detainment despite having DACA because as some discussed, their parents remained unprotected (Cervantes et al., 2015; Suarez-Orozco, Katsiaficas et al., 2015; Sudhinaraset, To, Ling, Melo, & Chavarin, 2017). In addition to fears of deportation and detainment, participants discussed their questioning of their belonging in America because without a legal document and society refusing to acknowledge their presence, as Sara, Eugene, and Zainab explained, they were not yet full Americans. Coupled with fears of law enforcement, the current study provides further evidence of the existing personal and cultural trauma within the undocumented community that was described by Aranda et al. (2015). This study also suggested another factor of cultural trauma that may be present in the undocumented community. Eugene, Chabela, Zainab, and Sara specifically, shared their understanding of their parents' sacrifices and implied it weighed heavily on their own lives. And as Sara shared, when she met with other DACA recipients and they all shared their families' struggles, everyone was in emotional distress, crying. These findings imply that perhaps, Dreamers' understanding of their parents' struggles can be seen as a cultural trauma within the undocumented community.

The current study provided further evidence of the existence of trauma within the undocumented community. This emphasizes the need for mental health professionals within higher education contexts to find ways to be educated and aware of Dreamers' specific

challenges. As Sara shared, it should not be the Dreamers' responsibility to inform the counseling staff of their unique needs especially considering the fact that the staff are the professionals. Thus, just as they should know how to ease the trauma and anxiety associated with other mental health distresses, they should know how to support Dreamers' lowered psychological well-being associated with their specific experiences.

An additional suggestion for support that was found in this study, as was found in previous studies, is the introduction of Dream centers within higher education contexts (Siemons et al., 2017; Suarez-Orozco, Katsiaficas et al., 2015; Teranishi et al., 2015). Not only would this provide a space for the sharing of information that is specific to Dreamers' unique needs, but also, as this study found, it could provide a space to foster a community that would provide other forms of support. As Chabela and Sara mentioned, there is a different form of support that is provided through connecting with fellow Dreamers. Specifically, Chabela discussed an implicitly evaluative form of appraisal support she was provided in seeing a fellow Dreamer persist to attain a higher education. This support allowed her to more confidently determine that she would attain her degree as well. However, she discussed that had it been a peer who had citizenship, it would not have had the same effect. Previous scholars have also found that in finding Dreamers who shared the same struggles, feelings of isolation lessened, increasing psychological well-being (Gonzales et al., 2013). As a result, this helped provide a sense of healing and heightened feelings of empowerment and determination to succeed (Muñoz et al., 2018). Together, these findings continue to demonstrate that undocumented centers or organizations on campuses can be a great resource for Dreamers on college campuses.

Previous scholars have discussed the resiliency demonstrated by members of the undocumented community in accessing higher education (Cervantes et al., 2015; Contreras,

2009; Perez et al., 2009; Raymond-Flesch et al., 2014). The current study continues to emphasize that strength and persistence found within the community. However, the study adds to previous literature, suggesting that the desire to be resilient does not lie solely in the context of being members of the undocumented community, but also in their own values of education and desires to learn.

Future Directions

Scholars have cautioned against studies exclusively focused on those members of the undocumented community who attended four-year universities (Abrego & Gonzales, 2010). The implication being that most undocumented students are in community colleges or working, and hence, there needs to be a more representative sample in research that documents the experiences of undocumented student who have not gone on to achieve four-year degrees. The implications that Abrego and Gonzales (2010) provide is supported by the current study as the participants acknowledged the privilege they had within the undocumented community, specifically growing up in America and having a family support their education and dreams. Therefore, future studies should examine the differences in the availability of support for those Dreamers who were able to access four-year colleges as compared to those who were unable to access four-year colleges. Environmental supports have been documented to have some correlation with higher education attainment (Gleeson & Gonzales, 2011; Perez et al., 2009). Therefore, understanding the differences in the supports that are available to those who were able to access higher education and those who were not could provide evidence for developing policy recommendations to balance out the inequality present within the undocumented community.

Another suggestion for future studies is examining the availability of information regarding the undocumented community that is currently present in educational settings. The

current study adds to previous literature that emphasize the role that adults, particularly faculty and staff, could play in supporting their undocumented students in accessing and continuing their academic studies (Cervantes et al., 2015; Contreras, 2009; Gonzales, 2011; Gonzales et al., 2013). However, as demonstrated by the results in this study, lack of knowledge and misunderstandings of the undocumented community could impede the support that faculty and staff could provide. As a result, participants in the current study, as did participants in previous studies, suggested the introduction of professional development and training specifically regarding the undocumented community (Stebbleton & Aleixco, 2015, Teranishi et al., 2015). This implies that it would be useful to understand what information faculty and staff in high schools and colleges do have in regards to the undocumented community. In turn, recommendations for the content of professional trainings and professional development could better address the gaps of the knowledge within the faculty and staff of educational institutions.

Limitations and Implications

Due to the nature of data collection of the current study, most of the interview participants were open about their status and have revealed their status to others in the higher education context and outside of it, such as in the media. Only one interview participant stressed that she preferred to keep others' knowledge of her status to a restricted number of individuals. This poses a limitation of the study as the experiences of support perceived by individuals in regards to their undocumented identity may be different depending on whether they are out or not. In addition, interviews as a methodological tool for research, helps researchers understand only the experiences of a select few, not a whole community. Hence, the suggestions provided and the behaviors that were perceived as supportive in this study may not be fully representative of the experiences and desires of the undocumented community.

Another limitation of the study was the nature of data collection regarding the frequencies of social supports. To gather data regarding the overall frequencies, the researcher asked participants within the online survey to read and understand the social supports framework that was used in the study and then, list the individuals who supported them in accessing and continuing their academic studies. Some participants may not have taken the time to think about all the individuals in their lives who provided support and categorize which supports they perceived from those individuals. Hence, this poses a limitation to understanding the overall frequencies of social supports that was presented in the current study.

Despite the limitations of the current study, there are still some important implications to consider from the results. Perez et al. (2009) discussed the importance of environmental factors such as social support that helps undocumented individuals achieve academically. This study sought to understand what that support looked like and how that support could be provided. The participants of the study were able to cite instances of support and suggest what systematic changes needed to be made to further support their community. By growing up in America and receiving DACA and thus, a social security number and legal authorization to work, and in attaining a higher education degree, there is a privilege amongst the participants in the current study as compared to other members of the undocumented community. However, despite this, they still reported undergoing unique emotional and psychological struggles and reported the need for increased accessibility to opportunities and resources. This goes to emphasize the necessity for greater and more active institutional support.

In *Plyler v. Doe* U.S. 202 (1982), the justices decided that undocumented status was not a reasonable ground for denying an education to individuals because “the deprivation of education takes an inestimable toll on the social, economic, intellectual, and psychological well-being of

the individual, and poses an obstacle to individual achievement”, which is a central tenet to American values of meritocracy. Although this court ruling gave Dreamers a fundamental right to a K-12 education, our society has evolved such that a higher education degree is now necessary. However, there has been little support for the undocumented community in accessing higher education. As Dreamers came out of the shadows and the research regarding this community expanded, the concerns expressed by the Supreme Court Justices have been realized. It is clear from past research and this study that the undocumented community experiences lower levels of well-being and discordance in identity development particularly when they are deprived of higher education. At a time when the ability to access DACA is being considered in the highest court of the land, it is necessary for higher education institutions to be aware of the ways in which they can support these Dreamers. Every year, about 98,000 Dreamers graduate from high school (Zong & Batalova, 2019) with little federal support for overcoming the structural barriers for accessing higher education. However, it is clear from this research that higher education institutions and their faculty and staff have the potential to provide greater avenues of support for Dreamers and hence, increase institutional support for the undocumented community, locally and nationally. With this support, Dreamers can better access the kind of education that the justices sought to establish as a right with the 1982 landmark case: the right to an education that would allow any human being to achieve their American Dream.

APPENDIX A

Informed Consent

This project has been approved by members of the Institutional Review Board of Mount Holyoke College. The following informed consent is required by Mount Holyoke College for all participants in human subjects research.

Study: DACA Recipients & Social Supports in the Higher Education Context

Investigators: Soohyun Jung & Dr. Janelle L. Gagnon

Procedures: The procedures to be followed in the project will be explained to you, and any questions you may have about the aims or methods of the project will be answered.

The purpose of this project is to understand the supports that DACA students have received in pursuing their goal to attend a higher education institution and/or currently support them in continuing higher education. In the following study, you will be asked to confirm your status as a DACA recipient and answer some questions regarding your educational background. Then, you will be asked about the people who have supported you in accessing and continuing higher education. Next, you will be asked how satisfied you are with the support that you currently receive/received in higher education contexts. You will then be asked to describe areas in which your higher education institution made you feel particularly supported/unsupported and how you think higher education institutions could better support DACA students. Finally, you will be asked some demographic questions. At the close of the survey, you will be given an opportunity to enter into a raffle to win a \$25 Amazon Gift card and to participate in a follow-up interview. This survey should take approximately 20 minutes to complete.

Risks of Being in the Study: There are minimal risks to participating in this survey study. All survey responses will be stored in an encrypted system. Additionally, any identifiable information provided (to enter the raffle and/or express willingness to participate in an interview) will be collected on a separate platform so that your identity is not connected to your survey responses.

Confidentiality: All survey information related to DACA topics will remain strictly anonymous and confidential. Only the researchers will have access to the results. The data collected through this study will be used to write a paper and present at conferences, but your identity will not be disclosed in any way. If you should reveal your identity to enter into a raffle, then this information will be collected on a separate platform and this information will be destroyed after a winner has been selected. All data will be kept under locked accounts and password-protected computers.

Voluntary Nature of the Study: Your informed consent is essential to participating in our study. If you agree to participate, please note that you are free to withdraw from the study at any time, without penalty. You can find an “Exit” button on the upper right-hand corner of the screen. And though beneficial to our study, please note that you are not required to answer all the questions in the survey nor to report your contact information.

Benefits of Being in the Study: At the end of the study, you will be asked if you would like to enter into a raffle to win a \$25 Amazon gift card.

Contacts and Questions: If you have any concerns or questions, please feel free to contact the researchers listed below. Additionally, if you have questions or concerns about your rights as a human subject, please contact the Mount Holyoke Institutional Review Board.

Mount Holyoke Institutional Review Board
institutional-review-board@mtholyoke.edu

Soohyun Jung
jung25s@mtholyoke.edu | 9179412003

Dr. Janelle L. Gagnon
jlagnon@mtholyoke.edu

Statement of Consent:

I have read and understand the above information. I am 18 years of age or older. I consent to participate in the study. I allow my data to be used for research purposes.

Yes

No

--Skip Logic--

You have reached the end of the survey. Thank you for your interest in taking this survey, but all participants must provide informed consent to participate in this survey.

Survey
DACA Recipients & Social Supports in the Higher Education Context

The purpose of this study is to understand the supports DACA students are receiving from individuals in their life and from their higher education contexts as well as their overall satisfaction of the supports they have received. Hence, the target population are those who are currently receiving DACA or have received DACA and those who are currently in college/university or completed college/university. Please verify by checking “Yes” below that you are receiving or have received DACA status.

Are you, or have you ever been a DACA recipient?

Yes

--Skip Logic—

Are you attending or have you attended a higher education institution (college/university)?

Yes

--Skip Logic—

Skip logic to the beginning of survey: “Education”

No

--Skip Logic—

Thank you for your interest in this study. However, because this study is meant to gain a deeper understanding of the DACA population who have attended or are currently attending college/university, you are not eligible for this study.

No

--Skip Logic--

Thank you for your interest in this study. However, because this study is meant to gain a deeper understanding of the DACA population in particular, you are not eligible for this study.

Education

Are you currently attending college/university?

Yes

No

Which description best matches your undergraduate college/university?

2-Year Community College/Vocational/For-Profit Institution

4-Year Public College

4-Year Private College

4-Year Public University

4-Year Private University

Not listed: (Please explain)

What is the highest level of education that you have completed?

High School/GED

First/Second year of Undergraduate College/University

Third/Fourth year of Undergraduate College/University

Some Master's Degree

Master's Degree

Graduate school beyond a Master's Degree

Doctoral or professional degree

What year will you complete/did you complete your undergraduate degree?

What is/was your GPA as an undergraduate? If you are a first-year in your first semester, please look at the next question.

If you are a first-year in your first semester, what was your GPA in high school? Otherwise, write N/A.

In what state are you attending/did you attend your undergraduate institution?

Is your undergraduate college/university a sanctuary campus? *A sanctuary campus is a campus that has adopted policies meant to protect their undocumented community.*

Yes

No

I don't know

Four Types of Social Supports

According to research, there are four categories of social support. The four categories are:

1. Emotional Support (E)

Providing feelings of empathy, trust, and love

2. Instrumental Support (I)

Providing resources such as money, labor, or care

Ex: Childcare, Loaning Money

3. Informational Support (F)

Providing information that could help someone cope during personal or environmental difficulties (advice)

Providing information such as tutoring, job opportunities, academic knowledge, etc.

4. Appraisal Support (A)

Providing evaluative information one could use to evaluate themselves

Ex: Feedback, Constructive Criticism, Praise

Social Supports

List the people who have helped you pursue college/university and/or continue(d) to support you throughout college/university. **Please do not provide the names of the individuals.** Please only provide their relationship/role to you (e.g., mother, teacher, friend, etc.) and which support(s) they have provided (E=Emotional, I=Instrumental, F=Informational, A=Appraisal). Your responses can include people from either inside or outside your higher education institution. The order does not matter.

Example:

1

Relationship to you

Which type(s) of support did this person make available to you? (E, I, F, A)

2

Relationship to you

Which type(s) of support did this person make available to you? (E, I, F, A)

Choose one person from the list above who has been the greatest support to you while pursuing college/university and continuing higher education. Please describe how that person helped you pursue college/university and/or have continued to support you throughout college/university. If there is more than one person, feel free to write about more than one person.

Social Support Satisfaction

This next section will ask you about your overall satisfaction with the social support you received *within the higher education context*. As you respond to the following questions, please only think about the social supports that have been made available to you during the time period in which you were in a higher education context. These social supports could have come from anyone within the higher education context, such as college administration, faculty/staff, peers on campus, and etc.

Overall, how satisfied are you with the emotional support (providing feelings of empathy, trust, and love) made available to you in a higher education context in pursuing your goal to attend higher education and continue higher education?

1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6

Very	Fairly	A Little	A Little	Fairly	Very
Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Satisfied	Satisfied

Overall, how satisfied are you with the instrumental support (providing resources such as money, labor, or care, for example, childcare or loaning money) made available to you in

a higher education context in pursuing your goal to attend higher education and continue higher education?

1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6

Very Fairly A Little A Little Fairly Very
Dissatisfied Dissatisfied. Dissatisfied Satisfied Satisfied Satisfied

Overall, how satisfied are you with the informational support (providing information that could help someone cope during personal or environmental difficulties for example, providing advice; providing information such as tutoring, job opportunities, academic knowledge, etc.) made available to you in a higher education context in pursuing your goal to attend higher education and continue higher education?

1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6

Very Fairly A Little A Little Fairly Very
Dissatisfied Dissatisfied. Dissatisfied Satisfied Satisfied Satisfied

Overall, how satisfied are you with the appraisal support (providing evaluative feedback one could use to evaluate themselves, for example, feedback, constructive criticism, praise) made available to you in a higher education context in pursuing your goal to attend higher education and continue higher education?

1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6

Very Fairly A Little A Little Fairly Very
Dissatisfied Dissatisfied. Dissatisfied Satisfied Satisfied Satisfied

Social Support Satisfaction

This next section will ask you about your overall satisfaction with the social support you received *outside the higher education context*. As you respond to the following questions, please only think about the social supports that have been made available to you outside a higher education context. These social supports could have come from anyone outside the higher education context, such as family, community members, K-12 teachers/staff, peers off-campus, and etc.

Overall, how satisfied are you with the emotional support (providing feelings of empathy, trust, and love) made available to you outside the higher education context in pursuing your goal to attend higher education and continue higher education?

1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6

Very Fairly A Little A Little Fairly Very
Dissatisfied Dissatisfied Dissatisfied Satisfied Satisfied Satisfied

Overall, how satisfied are you with the instrumental support (providing resources such as money, labor, or care, for example, childcare or loaning money) made available to you outside the higher education context in pursuing your goal to attend higher education and continue higher education?

1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6

Very Fairly A Little A Little Fairly Very
Dissatisfied Dissatisfied. Dissatisfied Satisfied Satisfied Satisfied

Overall, how satisfied are you with the informational support (providing information that could help someone cope during personal or environmental difficulties, for example, providing advice; providing information such as tutoring, job opportunities, academic knowledge, etc.) made available to you outside the higher education context in pursuing your goal to attend higher education and continue higher education?

1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6

Very Fairly A Little A Little Fairly Very
Dissatisfied Dissatisfied. Dissatisfied Satisfied Satisfied Satisfied

Overall, how satisfied are you with the appraisal support (providing evaluative feedback one could use to evaluate themselves, for example, feedback, constructive criticism, praise) made available to you outside the higher education context in pursuing your goal to attend higher education and continue higher education?

1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6

Very Fairly A Little A Little Fairly Very
Dissatisfied Dissatisfied. Dissatisfied Satisfied Satisfied Satisfied

Support in the Higher Education Context

For the following questions, please only consider the people, institutions, programs, etc. that have provided you support in the higher education context specifically.

Are/Were there any clubs, departments, professors, etc., that made you feel particularly **supported** in your college/university? If so, please describe.

Are/Were there any clubs, departments, professors, etc., that made you feel particularly **unsupported** by your college/university? If so, please describe.

Improving Support: What do you think colleges/universities could do to better support you and/or other DACA students who are in higher education contexts?

Demographics

How old are you?

What is your racial/ethnic background? (Select all that apply)

Native American/Indigenous

Asian/Asian American

Black or African American

Hispanic/Latinx

Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

White/Caucasian

Not Listed: (please explain)

What is your country of birth?

What is your gender identity?

Male

Female

Transgender male

Transgender female

Non-Binary

Gender Non-Conforming

Not Listed: (please explain)

What label best describes your social class?

Poor

Working Class

Lower-Middle Class

Middle Class

Upper-Middle Class

Upper Class

Not Listed: (please explain)

What is your estimated family income?

In what state do you reside?

What is the highest level of education that your mother completed?

- High School/GED
- Some College
- Associate's Degree
- Bachelor's Degree
- Some Master's Degree
- Master's Degree
- Graduate school beyond a Master's Degree
- Doctoral or professional degree
- Mother is not present in my life
- Not Listed: (please explain)

What is the highest level of education that your father completed?

- High School/GED
- Some College
- Associate's Degree
- Bachelor's Degree
- Some Master's Degree
- Master's Degree
- Graduate school beyond a Master's Degree
- Doctoral or professional degree
- Mother is not present in my life
- Not Listed: (please explain)

Interview

Would you be interested in earning an additional \$10 Amazon gift card for participating in a brief follow-up interview (phone, Skype, or in-person) about your experiences in higher education? Please note that you will be interviewed by someone on the research team who also has DACA status and your identity will only be revealed to this individual.

Yes

--Skip Logic--

Please click on the link below, or copy and paste to the address bar, to be forwarded to another secure survey to express willingness to participate in a brief, follow-up interview:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/UnderstandingExperiences>

If you opt to not click on this link, please go to the previous screen and choose "No" to have the option to enter the raffle.

No

Raffle

Would you like to enter the raffle to win a \$25 Amazon gift card?

Yes

--Skip Logic--

Raffle

Please click on the link below, or copy and paste to the address bar, to be forwarded to another secure survey to enter the raffle:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/giftcardraffleentry>

No

End of Survey

You have reached the end of the survey. Thank you so much for your participation! The purpose of this study was to gain a deeper understanding of the social supports DACA students receive from individuals in their lives and from their higher education contexts. Please be sure to exit out of all screens. If you have any questions or concerns and/or if you would like a report of the results at the end of this study, please don't hesitate to reach out to Soohyun Jung at jung25s@mtholyoke.edu or (917) 941-2003.

Understanding Experiences Interview Survey

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/UnderstandingExperiences>

Thank you for your interest in participating in a brief follow-up interview about your experiences in higher education. Please provide us with your email and phone number in case we would like to contact you for a follow-up interview.

Email

Phone Number

When is the best time to call you?

Early Morning

Late Morning

Early Afternoon

Late Afternoon/Evening

Would you like to enter the raffle to win a \$25 Amazon gift card?

Yes

--Skip Logic--

Raffle

Please click on the link below, or copy and paste to the address bar, to be forwarded to another secure survey to enter the raffle:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/giftcardraffleentry>

No

End of Survey

You have reached the end of the survey. Thank you so much for your participation! Please be sure to exit out of all screens. If you have any questions or concerns and/or if you would like a report of the results at the end of this study, please don't hesitate to reach out to Soohyun Jung at jung25s@mtholyoke.edu or (917) 941-2003.

Raffle Entry Survey

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/giftcardraffleentry>

Please answer the following questions to enter the raffle to win a \$25 Amazon gift card.

If you win the raffle, we will contact you through email. What is your email?

End of Survey

You have reached the end of the survey. Thank you so much for your participation!
Please be sure to exit out of all screens. If you have any questions or concerns and/or if you would like a report of the results at the end of this study, please don't hesitate to reach out to Soohyun Jung at jung25s@mtholyoke.edu or (917) 941-2003.

APPENDIX B

Verbal Informed Consent (Oral)

This project has been approved by members of the Institutional Review Board of Mount Holyoke College. The following informed consent is required by Mount Holyoke College for all participants in human subjects research.

Study: DACA Recipients & Social Supports in the Higher Education Context

Investigators: Soohyun Jung & Dr. Janelle L. Gagnon

- A. Your participation is voluntary.
- B. You may withdraw your consent and discontinue participation in this study at any time. You will not be penalized in any way if you decide not to participate.
- C. The procedures to be followed in the project will be explained to you, and any questions you may have about the aims or methods of the project will be answered.
- D. All of the information from this study will be treated as strictly confidential. No names will be associated with the data in any way. Your responses to the questions will be audio recorded, and all recordings will be destroyed once transcription of the interview is complete. The data and recordings will be stored in locked computers and password-protected accounts and the data will be accessible only to the investigators.
- E. The results of this study will be made part of a final research report and may be used in papers submitted for publication or presented at professional conferences, but under no circumstances will your name or other identifying characteristics be included. Files containing identifiable information will be destroyed as soon as interviews are finished so to ensure that there is no way to identify you.

If you understand the above, and agree to participate in the project, please repeat the following statement of consent below:

I understand the information about the study and my rights as a participant. I can confirm that I am 18 years of age or older. I consent to participate in the study and have my responses recorded. I allow my data to be used for research purposes.

Procedures

The purpose of this project is to understand the supports that DACA students have received in pursuing their goal to attend a higher education institution and/or currently supports them in

continuing higher education. In the following interview, you will be asked to answer some questions regarding your experience as an undocumented individual and as an undocumented student in higher education. Additionally, you will be asked to answer some questions about the individuals you mentioned in your survey response and how those individuals have helped you access higher education and support(ed) you during higher education. Finally, you will be asked to answer some questions regarding how you feel higher institutions could better support DACA students and what resources you would like to see. At the close of the interview, you will be given a \$10 Amazon Gift card as an appreciation for your participation. The interview should take approximately one hour to complete.

Interview Questions

1. What does it mean to you to be undocumented/an undocumented student?
Probe: What do you perceive are the unique experiences of DACA/undocumented students? What do you perceive are the unique experiences of DACA/undocumented students in higher education contexts?
2. At what age did you first learn that you were undocumented?
Probe: Can you recount that experience? What was your initial response? What changes, if any, did you see in self-perception?
3. Can you tell me about a time when your DACA identity was especially obvious to you?
Probe: Can you tell me about a time when your DACA identity was especially obvious to you in a postsecondary educational context? Why are these moments so memorable?
4. What do you attribute to your success in accessing higher education?
Probe: How did each of the people you listed in the survey help you access college and/or continue to support you throughout college?
5. How open are you to revealing your status to others?
Probe: Have you revealed your status to others in your higher education institution? What factors influence your decision to reveal your undocumented status to someone in your higher education institution?
6. What do you see are structural (institutional) barriers of access to higher education for yourself and/or for other DACA recipients?
7. Do you plan on pursuing another degree, such as graduate school or professional training?
Probe: How did you come to this decision?
8. What motivated/motivates you to continue college and/or higher education?
9. How do you think faculty, staff, and the administration in a higher education context can better support DACA students?
Probe: What is something you wish people in your higher education context knew about your experience as an undocumented immigrant?
10. Can you recount any experiences where you felt really supported by faculty/staff on your campus? By peers?
11. In previous research, some DACA students have reported that in revealing their status, their institutions exploited them and their stories, using them as a poster child. What are your thoughts on that?
Probe: Have you ever felt like that before? If so, can you describe the situation?
12. In previous research, many DACA students have requested a safe space on campus for students identifying as undocumented. If this space existed on your campus, how do you envision this space being used? If this space already exists on your campus, what activities are especially supportive and helpful to you?
Probe: What resources would you want to see? What would the content of meetings look like?
13. Do you have any other thoughts on undocumented students and their experience in higher education that you'd like to share?

Interview Debrief

Interviewees will be told the following information:

Thank you so much for your participation! The purpose of this study was to gain a deeper understanding of the social supports DACA students receive from individuals in their lives and from their higher education contexts. If you have any questions or concerns and/or if you would like a report of the results at the end of this study, please don't hesitate to reach out to Soohyun Jung at jung25s@mtholyoke.edu or (917) 941-2003.

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