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A review of the literature on internships for Latinx students at Hispanic-Serving Institutions: Toward a Latinx-serving internship experience

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Abstract

Internships are a widely promoted "high-impact practice" (HIP) across the postsecondary landscape, particularly among minority-serving institutions (MSIs) where they are seen as potentially transformative vehicles for students' career success and social mobility. However, little research exists on if and how the design, implementation, and ultimate effects of college internships may (or should) vary according to the unique institutional contexts of MSIs such as Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) and students' racial identities and cultural backgrounds. This idea is based on research demonstrating that a "one-size-fits-all" approach to classroom teaching, student advising, and broader approaches to student engagement ignores both historic and structural inequalities while also overlooking the unique needs, circumstances and potentials of a diverse student body. Consequently, our main goal in this paper is to review the literature on internships in HSIs and with Latinx college students to determine if internship program design, implementation and student experience varies based on the unique institutional contexts of HSIs and/or the racial and cultural attributes of Latinx college students.

To address this issue we conducted an integrative review of the literature on HIPs in general and internships in particular as they relate to Latinx students and HSIs. Our results indicate a small but growing body of empirical research on these topics, some that highlight how specific features of HSIs (e.g., institutional missions, "servingness") and Latinx students (e.g., family capital, cultural perspectives on work) influence how HIPs and internships are designed and experienced. These insights underscore the importance of accounting for cultural, structural and historic factors when studying and designing internship programs. We conclude the paper with a review of existing theoretical frameworks for studying HSIs and a proposal for a new research agenda that pays close attention to the role of culture at individual, group, institutional and societal levels. Ultimately, we contend that while certain universal principles of internship design and implementation are likely to be applicable for HSIs and Latinx students, there are critical differences and opportunities for internships in these institutions and for these students that should be acknowledged and incorporated into HIPs-related policymaking and practice.

Introduction

Internships are widely viewed as a "high-impact practice" (HIP) that improves college students' career outcomes, with some calling for postsecondary institutions to mandate internships as a graduation requirement (Busteed & Auter, 2017) or to at least strongly encourage students to participate in them during their college careers (Kuh, 2008). Advocacy for internships is supported by a growing body of interdisciplinary and international research demonstrating that internships can have positive impacts on students' employment (Nunley et al., 2015), academic achievement (Parker III et al., 2016), and developmental outcomes such as confidence in one's career trajectory (Ocampo et al., 2020). Coupled with growing pressure on colleges and universities to cultivate students' "employability" (Tomlinson & Holmes, 2016), internships are quickly becoming a central feature of institutional strategies for enhancing student success in the early 21st century.

These efforts to enhance student employability and a corresponding advocacy for internships is evident across the entire postsecondary landscape, but in Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs) there is a special focus on these issues given historical inequalities in accessing education, jobs and other opportunities for students of color. In Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) there is a growing emphasis on students' post-graduate career success, fueled by goals ranging from diversifying the workforce (Sansone et al., 2019) to a commitment towards enhancing the social mobility of Latinx students (Martinez & Santiago, 2020).[1]

Although a robust body of literature exists on the unique cultural features of HSIs and Latinx student outcomes in HSIs (Garcia et al., 2019; Nunez, 2014), the experiences of Latinx students with the world of work (e.g., Nuñez & Sansone, 2016) and career development (e.g, Leal-Muniz & Constantine, 2005; Risco & Duffy, 2011), the literature on internship programs in HSIs is not as well developed. This is a critical issue facing the field of work-based learning (WBL), internships and HIPs, as it is possible that the design, implementation and ultimate effects of college internships may (or should) vary according to the unique institutional contexts of MSIs and students' racial identities and cultural backgrounds.

This idea is based on research demonstrating that a "one-size-fits-all" approach to teaching and learning, student affairs, and career development ignores both historic and structural inequalities while also overlooking the unique needs, circumstances and potentials of a diverse student body. For instance, research on culturally relevant pedagogy underscores the need to reject deficit-oriented frames and acknowledge marginalized students' experiences (Ladson-Billings, 1995), and on the racialized (and discriminatory) nature of institutional practices and the allocation of resources (Harper, 2009; Ray, 2019), demonstrate how policies, practices and thus student experiences in higher education are decidedly not "innocent" or race-neutral. This is especially true for Latinx students, as the evidence indicates that students of color often opt out of internships and related career development opportunities due to preconceived concerns about ethnic and racial discrimination, misalignment with college major and employer expectations, and the suitability of employer culture for Latinx populations (Berríos-Allison, 2005; Leal-Muniz & Constantine, 2005; Poon, 2014; Sweeney & Villarejo, 2013).

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1   In this paper we use the term Latinx which is a gender-neutral term that is increasingly used by higher education scholars to refer to peoples with Latin American ancestors (e.g., Salinas & Lozano, 2017). While the term Hispanic is also widely used, some view it as an externally derived and imposed category with the primary referent of colonial Spain (Nunez, 2014). In cases, however, where scholars whose papers are cited in this review use terms such as Latino or Hispanic we will use terms other than Latinx.

This state of affairs suggests that internship design must account for students' racial identities and cultural backgrounds, and how these factors may influence both their experiences at the internship and also their conceptions of what is possible and available to them as they pursue a college education. Consequently, it is essential that faculty, career services and student affairs professionals, and employers understand what the research literature indicates are key principles for effective program design and implementation.

Our main goal in this research brief is to review the literature on internships in HSIs and with Latinx college students to determine if internship program design, implementation and student experience varies based on the unique institutional contexts of HSIs and/or the racial identities and cultural backgrounds of Latinx college students. We used the integrative literature review approach which involves reviewing, critiquing and then synthesizing a body of research in efforts to generate new frameworks or research agendas for future work (Torraco, 2005). For this study we conducted searches in Google Scholar and JSTOR using keywords including, "HIS," "internship," "Latinx," and "work-based learning." Resulting papers were reviewed for applicability to the main question driving this study – if and how features of HSIs as unique institutions and/or Latinx student culture impacted internship programming – and salient papers addressing this question were included. Our analysis begins with a brief review of the history and context of HSIs, we then report the results of our review of the literature on HIPs and internships at HSIs and/or with Latinx students.

What is a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI)?

The formal recognition of HSIs in the U.S. began as a grassroots effort to have Congress recognize these institutions and subsequently provide federal funding for their growth and support. Congressional recognition came in 1992 when HSIs were added to the Higher Education Act (HEA) and became eligible for funding via Title V—a competitive grant program that provides five years of funding to expand the capacity and quality of HSIs to serve Latinx and low-income students (Garcia & Taylor, 2017). Access to additional sources of funding is particularly important for HSIs, which typically receive less funding via public resources compared to PWIs or even other minority serving institutions.

The formal HSI designation requires an institution to be an accredited, degree-granting institution of higher education (public or private not-for-profit) that has 25 percent or more undergraduate Hispanic full-time enrollees. The number of HSIs has almost tripled in the past 25 years, from 189 to 539 (as of 2018-2019), with 350 more institutions now than in 1994 (Excelencia in Education, 2020). This dramatic increase in the number of HSIs is due to the corresponding increase in the Hispanic population in the U.S., which can be seen in the growth of Latinx student enrollment in HSIs from 490,000 to 2.1 million between 1994 and 2018 (Excelencia in Education, 2020). In fact, some estimate that about 12% of postsecondary education institutions meet the definition of an HSI (HACU, 2020), and the anticipated continued growth in both the Hispanic population and the number of "emerging HSIs" suggests additional growth in the coming years. HSIs also represent a diverse range of institution types including public community colleges (40% of all HSIs), public four-year colleges (28%) and private nonprofit institutions (30%) (Anguiana & Navarro, 2020), which demonstrates how they have become deeply ingrained in the postsecondary landscape of the nation.

Historically, HSIs have sometimes begun as Predominantly White Institutions (PWI) in cities and regions whose demographics changed over time. Others have been situated in locales with historically large Hispanic/Latinx populations such as New Mexico and Puerto Rico. In 2017, 83% of all HSIs were located in California, Texas,

Florida, New York, Illinois, New Mexico and Puerto Rico (Excelencia, 2020 ; HACU, 2017; St. Amour, 2020), but as the Hispanic population grows throughout the country, most observers expect the number of HSIs to correspondingly increase in other regions.

Review of institutional context and culture of HSIs

Unique aspects of HSIs and Latinx students that impact on student outcomes

Next, we turn to the question of whether aspects of characteristics of both HSIs as unique types of postsecondary institutions, as well as Latinx students as individuals with distinctive ethnic, racial, cultural and socio-economic identities, could potentially impact student experiences with college internships. While many scholars do not distinguish between these two potential fields or venues of influence – institutions and individuals – and instead see them as inextricably connected, in this section we address each as potentially having distinct levels of analysis and/or venues of cultural activity.

Exploring the intersections of culture, individual experience and environments
While the mission of HSIs has long included the goal of enrolling and supporting Latinx students to persist and complete a college degree, the question of how institutions can serve and support students in this process has come under scrutiny in recent years, particularly the nature of the organizational culture(s) within HSIs (Garcia, 2017). Researchers of MSIs in general and HSIs in particular have long argued that one of the most important aspects of these institutions is the welcoming and even nurturing institutional climate and/or culture that they aim to provide to students of color (Cuellar & Johnson-Ahorlu, 2020; Dayton et al., 2004; Gasman et al., 2008). A welcoming culture or climate for students of color can be fostered via empathetic and attentive faculty-student interactions (e.g., Martinez & Gonzalez, 2015), particularly in PWIs that can represent a hostile environment replete with micro-aggressions, limited opportunities and even outright racist behaviors towards students of color (Harper, 2012; Huerta & Fishman, 2014). It is worth first briefly reviewing what is meant precisely by the terms "culture" and "climate," which can too often be used as underexamined buzzwords without an in-depth examination of their meaning and intent (Lizardo, 2017).

In general, climate is seen as the temporary manifestation of an institutions' norms, beliefs and practices that a given student experiences, whereas culture refers to deep-seated and tacit forms of these phenomena along with ritual, symbolic representations, and so on (Denison, 1996; Martin, 2002; Schneider et al., 2013). Some salient aspects of these long-standing debates about culture theory include the consensus that no single "culture" exists that can adequately describe an entire group, nation or organization, that instead culture is evident at smaller units of analysis (e.g., sub-cultures) and even at the individual level where a person can hold multiple and even contradictory cognitive schema (i.e., knowledge structures) from different social groups that they are members of (DiMaggio, 1997; Strauss & Quinn, 1997).

Internalized from years of exposure to and engagement with various social and institutional worlds, these *cultural models* are deeply held memory structures about a wide range of "normal" tasks (e.g., how to order food in a restaurant), concepts and values (e.g., family comes first), or social institutions (e.g., what constitutes a good marriage) (Shore, 1996). As a result, instead of essentializing a Latinx student by ascribing attributes of "Hispanic culture" to them, it may be more accurate to speak of the different cultural models that they have internalized from their religious training, family history, social class, participation in youth sports, local geography and history, and so on. Regardless of different approaches to and debates about culture theory in

sociology, anthropology and other social sciences, in research on HSIs it is widely perceived that by cultivating a welcoming culture or climate, HSIs can have a positive impact on student success, which theoretically could implicate internship programming through faculty encouragement to pursue internships as well as institutional efforts to make them accessible and available.

Institutional features of HSIs that may impact internship programming
One of the key aspects of an HSI that scholars argue is a unique and influential feature, with respect to how students are treated and experience college life, is the idea of "Latinx-serving," which is a core aspect of many HSI's missions and identities. In a study of this question, Garcia (2017) observes that while metrics such as graduation rates are often used to define successful "servingness," another potential indicator for this concept is that of organizational culture and identity. A literature review conducted by Garcia, Nunez and Sansone (2019) elaborated on these ideas, and identified several non-outcome focused indicators of serving including the development of academic self-concept, leadership identity, racial identity, critical consciousness, graduate school aspirations, and civic engagement. Yet, a majority of researchers and practitioners primarily focus on academic outcomes, and rarely consider nonacademic ones (Garcia et al., 2019), despite their great importance to the academic success of Latinx students in college (Hurtado & Carter, 1997; Rendón & Muñoz, 2011).

Additionally, the important role that faculty and staff play in creating a supportive culture within HSIs underscores the critical role of individuals – as student-facing representatives of the institution – in shaping or otherwise influencing student experiences. In addition to linguistic assistance, some argue that HSIs need leadership and faculty who can act as "cultural conduits" to the Latino community, who understand the experiences and cultural backgrounds of Latinx students, and have established networks that can be accessed to advance student goals and opportunities (Mendez et al., 2015). These administrators, staff and faculty can then act as "institutional agents" (Bensimon et al., 2019) who can be advocates for Latinx students, help them transition to college life, and then to navigate the complex social, academic and bureaucratic features of college and university life.

In our current focus on internship programs, the idea of how an internship program could (or should) be culturally relevant is a critical question, as is the ways that a campus could institute what Garcia et al. (2019) call "structures for serving" (p. 28) that reflect both the institutional capacity and intentionality to serve the unique needs of Latinx students. While campus personnel and institutional systems play an important role in shaping students' experiences, it is also important to consider the unique experiences, perspectives and cultural norms and models that Latinx students themselves bring to campus and to internships.

Attributes of Latinx students themselves that may impact internship programming
Next, we consider how unique aspects of Latinx students themselves may impact their academic and post-graduate success in general, and their experiences with internships in particular. Important to note, is that there is no single, monolithic or homogenous cultural group called "Latinx," but as Nunez (2014) argues, the social category of "Latino" obscures considerable variation on the basis of national origin, gender, social class, immigrant status, and religion. These multiple identity categories often overlap in ways that impact individuals' lives and opportunities, and the social and institutional contexts in which students operate also intersect to "shape Latino college access and success' (Nunez, 2014, p. 34).

Thus, any statements or assertions made about how "Latinx" students' identities and cultural backgrounds shape their college and career experience that rely on broad claims or singular summaries or explanations of this complex identity, should be viewed with suspicion.   That said, research does indicate that some Latinx students do not consider certain careers available to them based on fear (or experience) of discrimination (Berríos-Allison, 2005); may have limited peer, family, and professional support systems and networks (Huerta et al., in press); may bring a familial orientation and goals to enhance social mobility (Nuñez & Sansone, 2016); and sometimes have regional family bonds that keep them from considering non-local career options (Fedynich et al., 2012). With respect to the role of family, studies on "familism" have explored the role that Hispanic families play in college students' pursuits and ambitions (e.g., Rudolph et al., 2005; Desmond & Turley, 2009), with some emphasizing family support systems as a unique form of capital or community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) that can motivate and support students to persist and graduate (Sáenz et al., 2018). These are but a few aspects of Latinx culture and experience that are applicable to families, communities and populations above and beyond the individual.

However, further complicating matters is that different social categories such as race, gender, immigration status and age also shape and constrain an individuals' opportunities in the world (Nuñez, 2014), and different cultural models can also lead to an individual holding diverse and non-stereotypical ideals, goals and plans (Strauss & Quinn, 1997). Such a perspective is not dissimilar to intersectionality theory from legal studies (Crenshaw, 1991), which has been applied to higher education research (e.g., Jones, 2009; Museus & Griffin, 2011; Strayhorn, 2013) as well as studies of student development (e.g., Hurtado et al., 2012), and Nuñez (2014) applied the framework to an analysis of how social categories, identities and subsequent experiences intersect with embodied institutional and individual practices as well as macro-level forces of history, politics and the economy. Given that internships implicate at least three actors that reflect distinct yet overlapping spheres of activity – the labor market, higher education, and students' lives themselves – the intersectional perspective of Nuñez (2014) is especially promising as an analytic lens to capture the complex and multi-level array of individual, organizational and societal forces that likely impact a Latinx student as they seek an internship experiences.

What do we know about HIPs and internships at HSIs?

A considerable amount of research exists on student experiences and outcomes while attending a HSI, and in this section we first review research on HIPs at HSIs, followed by a discussion of the literature on internships at HSIs and studies of the role that race plays in internship experiences across the entire postsecondary sector.

Research on High-Impact Practices at HSIs

One of the primary goals of organizations advocating for the widespread adoption of HIPs, which includes the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) among others, is to make these practices inclusive and available for underrepresented students. In an essay outlining how certain HIPs have been instituted at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christie, Moreno and Shope (2014) write about striving to align their institutional mission as an HSI with faculty develop programming (via culturally relevant pedagogy) and their campus Writing Center. This is but one example of the ways that HIPs at HSIs are a priority area for national organizations engaged in student success initiatives.

Our review also revealed a small but growing body of empirical research on HIPs and HSIs. In a 2015 dissertation, Quintero examined the degree to which HIPs impacted student outcomes for first-year Latinx students at an HSI. Instead of examining the impacts of individual HIPs on students, Quintero (2015) studied "integrated HIPs" which are intentionally combined programs or experiences (i.e., embedded peer support, active learning, writing intensive courses and peer-led learning communities), finding that these experiences led to greater gains on first-term academic outcomes compared to students with better odds of succeeding in their first term (based on pre-college characteristics) who did not participate in integrative HIPs.

Finally, in a case study analysis of culturally relevant practices at one HSI, Garcia and Okhidoi (2015) found that the historical presence of culturally relevant pedagogy and programs and the degree to which they were embedded within institutional structures played a key role in dictating whether diverse students were adequately reached with these practices. In particular, the long-standing Chicana/o Studies Department and the way that its focus on Latinx issues, perspectives and culturally relevant pedagogy had become institutionalized, especially through required courses for first-year students, played a key role in students' experiences.

Research on Internships with Latinx students and/or at HSIs

Examining literature on internships with Latinx students and/or at HSIs, where the object of study is either Latinx college students or the HSI as a unique institutional context that may impact how internships are designed, implemented and experienced. While these lines of inquiry are not particularly large, it is growing and contains key findings that should be considered by scholars and practitioners alike.

More in-depth analyses of the intersections among racial identity, institution type and internship experiences are available in mixed-methods or qualitative studies. In a particularly insightful study, Fedynich et al. (2012) examined experiential learning programs at Texas A&M – Kingsville (TAMUK), where the authors note that many students were dropping out and/or were unfamiliar with employers' skill demands in areas such as Geographic Information Systems, leading to the creation of a program to better help their students learn about job opportunities in agriculture and natural resources. The program included a 3-week off campus course where faculty, students and employer mentors visited natural resources sites and engaged in hands-on learning throughout the Rocky Mountains, followed by an internship program where students pursued either a research experience or more generalized work experience.

The authors emphasized experiential learning as an important way for students to enhance their academic learning (Kolb, 1984) and transfer knowledge to new settings and that underserved students in general benefit from experiential learning through its support of students' confidence and identities, as well as relationships built with peers and mentors. In addition, the authors noted that given that retention is a considerable issue at TAMUK and other HSIs, programs such as internships that appear to enhance student outcomes (i.e., persistence, graduation and immediate employment), internships may be especially important at these institutions. Finally, recognizing that some Latinx students were unfamiliar with other cultural groups and job opportunities outside of South Texas ¬(which led to a tendency to gravitate towards one's familial center), the internship experience led many students to consider moving to where jobs in their field were while also fostering new interactions with students from a variety of cultural backgrounds (Fedynich et al. 2012).

Another study focused on the development of professional identity among a cohort of Hispanic student interns in a counseling program at a regional university in south Texas (Nelson & Jackson, 2003). The authors argued that challenges that Hispanic student social workers face in this process of professional socialization had been understudied, with issues related to the definition of a "Hispanic helper," the degree of student identification with Hispanic culture, the non-academic roles that students play in their lives, and the appreciation of the role of family in Hispanic culture all worthy of closer attention. Nelson and Jackson (2003) identified four themes of their experiences that they viewed as being "mediated by cultural issues that are specific to Hispanic counseling students" (p. 6), including relationships (especially with supportive or disengaged family members and the students' role in their family), a sense of accomplishment, costs of the program (e.g., dealing with poverty, multiple family obligations), and perceptions of the profession which were often inaccurate within students' families and attributed to the tendency for Hispanic families to not seek assistance outside of the family (Nelson & Jackson, 2003).

Research on Latinx students and work-based learning or work-related issues

Next, we briefly review several studies that did not focus on internships per se, but on WBL programs and career development more generally. This growing body of literature provides important insights into the ways that Latinx student identity and experience may impact their college and career development experiences, and thus should be included in conversations around internship design and implementation.

First, scholars have examined ways that cultural and ethnic identity shapes students' thinking about their futures and career opportunities. In some cases, low-income Latinx students often are "foreclosed" to exploring certain careers and internship opportunities due to fear of future discrimination tied to gender and ethnicity (Berríos-Allison, 2005; Leal-Muniz & Constantine, 2005). In the case of internships, these self-imposed constraints may be particularly strong for first-generation students of color, whose internal confidence in navigating higher education may be low and stressed as they attempt to learn the hidden curriculum of college, which can then be compounded by the pressures to forge new professional networks off-campus to secure an internship may be difficult (Moss-Pech, 2021) as what constitutes a good job or internship may be framed by home community context (Hill, 2020) and limited network of support (Huerta et al., in press).

Consequently, when colleges develop targeted support and intervention programs for first-generation and low-income students of color, these efforts may build students' career confidence and aspirations for graduate school and new career opportunities (Sweeney & Villarejo, 2013). These types of interventions may be especially important as they can build students confidence in discussing majors and career exploration with parents and families, which is particularly relevant for the children of immigrants who may only promote economic mobility and social status (Berríos-Allison, 2005; Poon, 2004).

Another study examined how working at part- or full-time jobs influences Latinx student experiences attending college, which is a particularly important issue given the high rates of Latinx students who must work during college in order to pay for tuition, living expenses, and even to support their families (Nuñez & Sansone, 2016). Findings from this interview-based study revealed three key themes regarding the influence of work on student experiences: (1) a family-oriented focus that led to a strong desire to obtain more prestigious and better-paying jobs, (2) the view that work helps to develop key skills and sense of identity and belonging on campus, and (3) that work itself is a satisfying experience (Nuñez & Sansone, 2016).

Finally, as we consider the experiences of Latinx students as they enter the world of work and the labor market, there are some contextual and structural forces that cannot be overlooked. While there are too many issues reflected in the structure of opportunities as well as marginalization that affect Latinx graduates (e.g., immigration law, regional labor market conditions, linguistic discrimination, etc.) here we highlight features of the job market for Latinx students and hiring and workplace discrimination as two especially salient issues.

The first issue to consider is the persistence of hiring discrimination in U.S society. While little research exists on discriminatory practices in internships, a large body of evidence points to the ways discrimination on the basis of race/ethnicity, gender, age and other personal attributes persists in the labor market. For instance, a recent meta-analysis of field experiments on hiring discrimination against Black and Latino applicants found that white applicants receive 36% more callbacks than Black applicants and 24% more than Latino applicants, with educational attainment, occupational group and labor market conditions held constant. (Quillian et al., 2017, p.5).

Consequently, we argue that those engaged in internship design must consider how racial identity often acts as a lever that activates discriminatory or preferential treatment by institutional actors that, in practice, often operates subtly and intersects with other identities (Omi & Winant, 2014; Crenshaw, 1990). The racial discrimination that racially minoritized students may face in securing an internship is often compounded by the longstanding social arrangements that privileged students who have access to financial, social and cultural capital. Additionally, the dominant preferences for the cultural associations connected to normative whiteness and maleness passively work to limit the access points to internships for students of color, and hinders their full participation in internships once at the job site (Boulton, 2015; Levkoe & Offeh-Gyimah, 2020; Shade & Jacobson, 2015). As a result, some argue that the field of internships is one characterized by inequitable forms of access and opportunity, and that they are, "the first step into a career, but a step structured by inequalities" (Swan, 2015, p. 30). It is with these issues in mind that we conclude our paper with a brief discussion of existing theoretical frameworks that foreground these issues, followed by our thoughts on a future research agenda on internships, Latinx students and HSIs.

Theoretical considerations for studying HSI students and internships

Despite a limited number of empirical studies on HSIs and Latinx student experiences in internships, there are promising lines of inquiry emerging in both higher education and WBL studies on internships specifically, and a robust body of both empirical and theoretical work on HSIs and Latinx college students more generally that collectively provide a foundation for a future research agenda.

In addition, to delve more deeply into the cultural aspects of individual-level student identities and experiences, institution-level cultural forces and elements of culture in broader social structures and systems, we draw upon cultural models and intersectionality theory to begin unpacking how these forces may interact to shape students' internship experiences. This effort is part of a larger goal to examine if and how racial identity, culture and systemic forces interact to shape college students' internships at MSIs, with a specific focus on HBCUs and HSIs (see Hora et al., 2020). Any new research agenda necessarily builds upon the labor of previous scholars, and in this case we first review and acknowledge the efforts of researchers who have articulated frameworks for studying student engagement and success in MSIs.

Frameworks for studying internships

It may be instructive to first acknowledge ways that scholars in management and WBL have conceptualized the internship experience. One widely cited framework was developed by the management scholars Narayanan, Olk and Fulkami (2010), who contend that most internship research ignores the interplay among the three actors involved in the experience – students, the college or university, and the company – which led to their framework that focuses on the testing of specific antecedent (e.g., employer and university size and structure, student readiness) and processual factors (e.g., employer and university communications with students) that may contribute to particular outcomes for all three parties. Another framework focused on internships, but with less of a focus on technical matters and more on student development, is that of Sweitzer and King (2013), who outlined four stages of an interns' experience that included anticipation, exploration, competence and culmination. Sweitzer and King (2013) argue that internships are too often not viewed as pedagogical spaces in as serious a manner as a college course or lab experience. These frameworks, however, do not pay close attention to cultural issues that may be implicated in the internship experience, or how a students' racial identity, their institution's MSI status, or structural and socio-economic forces may influence these processes and experiences.

Frameworks for studying students' of color success and engagement in higher education

While these internship frameworks do not explicitly account for students' racial identities or institutional cultures and capacities, others that focus on college student success and development do attend to these issues of racial identity and socio-cultural forces.

For example, Museus (2014) advanced a multi-dimensional model of students' of color success in college that is processual, accounts for influences at the macro-, meso- and micro-levels, and attends to the cultural dimensions of the college experience. One of the aims of this model was to critique the problematic assumption that "racial and cultural bias does not shape institutional environments, programs and practices" (Museus, 2014, p. 190), and as part of the cultural foundations of this new model, the prior work of Tierney (1992, 1999) regarding the limitations of dominant frameworks (e.g., Tinto, 1993) of student success as well as alternative perspectives on culture theory are discussed, which provide an excellent background to theoretical issues salient to models of student success and engagement.

Museus and Quaye (2009) similarly advance a nuanced account of culture as well as Kuh and Love's (2000) work on "culturally based propositions" that impact minority student experiences, to articulate an intercultural perspective that focuses on the dissonance between "students' cultural knowledge and the new cultural information that they encounter" as being inversely related to their positive experiences and success in college (Museus, 2014). The Culturally Engaging Campus Environments (CECE) model then accounts for the various forces (at individual, institutional and macro levels) that impact minority student success. In accounting for "pre-college inputs" such as a students' familial background and demographics, and how these are engaged (or not) with the campus environment, this model is well-aligned with the idea of cultural models theory that travel with students from home to college and beyond.

Another study by Arroyo and Gasman (2014) represents a non-Eurocentric framework of Black student success in HBCUs. This model is grounded in the notion of HBCUs as uniquely supportive institutional environments

for Black students, which is a perspective very similar to arguments that HSIs reflect a similarly nurturing and welcoming environment for Latinx students. Such a supportive environment can facilitate student achievement, identity formation, and the cultivation of strong values (e.g., conservatism, commitment to social justice), which interact with one another as the student goes through their college experience.

These models highlight the role that racial identity and institutional contexts play in shaping student experiences and contribute important insights that can be applied to the study of internships in HSIs. However, frameworks developed specifically to study HSIs are uniquely well suited for this problem, which is the subject of the next section of our paper.

Frameworks for studying Latinx students' success and engagement in HSIs

We first discuss research on the notion of "servingness" in HSIs, which refers to the idea of "Latinx-serving" as a core aspect of many HSI's missions and identities. In a study of this concept, Garcia (2017) observed that while metrics such as graduation rates are often used to define successful "serving-ness," another potential indicator for this concept is that of organizational culture and identity. In a case study of "Naranja State University," Garcia (2017) identified six indicators of an ideal institutional identity for serving Latinx students that included three commonly used metrics for institutional success or efficacy (i.e., graduation, enrollment in graduate school, and employment), and three cultural indicators (i.e., community engagement opportunities, a positive climate, and support programs). Based on interviews with faculty and staff, Garcia (2017) also found that study participants constructed their own professional identities from "environmental cues about social practices" (p. 111) such as student support programs, leading to the conclusion that a Latinx-serving institutional identity should adopt a cultural lens that highlights an institution's student-facing practices rather than a sole focus on outcome metrics.

This question of what it means to be "Latinx-serving" was also the focus of a literature review conducted by Garcia, Nunez and Sansone (2019), which elaborated on Garcia's (2017) study by identifying several non-outcome focused indicators of serving that also include the development of academic self-concept, leadership identity, racial identity, critical consciousness, graduate school aspirations, and civic engagement. Given that these non-academic outcomes are known to be especially important for the academic success of Latinx students in college (Hurtado & Carter, 1997; Rendón & Muñoz, 2011), it is not surprising that many HSIs are intentional in creating opportunities for students to develop these identities, experiences and outlooks while in college (Cuellar 2014; Garcia & Cuellar 2018).

Another important contribution to the study of Latinx students in postsecondary institutions is the framework highlighting the various assets or funds of knowledge that students bring to college (Rendon et al., 2015). Building on the work of Yosso (2005) and Moll et al. (1992) who argued against deficit-minded approaches to student success, and instead emphasized the role that cultural assets or valuable approaches ultimately support student persistence and success, Rendon et al. (2015) introduce four specific types of cultural assets unique to Latinx students: determination (ganas), ethnic consciousness, spirituality and pluriversal cultural wealth. With these and other forms of cultural wealth (e.g., familial and social assets) Rendon et al. (2015) propose a model where students must navigate multiple worlds (e.g., family, peers, work) and with these cultural models and experiences in hand (or mind), they enter a new and unfamiliar college environment, which can result in cultural collision (i.e., choque) and potentially dislocating or disruptive experiences (see also Manoleas & Carrillo, 1991).

Finally, we highlight Núñez's (2014) application of intersectionality theory to the study of how power dynamics and interlocking systems of power shape the lives of Latino populations in terms of educational opportunity and equity. Núñez (2014) traces the concept of intersectionality back to its origins in Critical Race Feminist legal scholarship, which was used to address dimensions of black women's life opportunities and the constraints imposed by "interlocking systems of patriarchy and racism" (p. 85). The theory was later advanced to unpack interconnected issues of "marginalized and privileged identities" (Collins, 1990, 2007, as cited in Núñez, 2014, p. 85).

Taken together, these frameworks highlight how the experiences and outcomes of college students of color are shaped by a complex dynamic of forces that must account for individual-level experiences, identities and agency and how they interact with the institutional environment of a college or university. In some cases these environments will be supportive of the unique experiences, identities and values that students bring to college as a form of cultural congruence, while also offering opportunities for them to acquire new knowledge, develop new skills and social bonds, and celebrate their cultural identities. In the final section of this paper, we conclude with a proposal for a new research agenda on internships for Latinx students at HSIs that builds upon these ideas and how cultural models theory offers a new lens for theorizing and studying these complex phenomena.

Towards a cultural and intersectional analysis of college internships at MSIs

Our results indicate a small but growing body of empirical research on the ways that college internship programs may be shaped by individual-level racial identities and cultural backgrounds (i.e., for Latinx students) as well as institution-level programs, norms, missions and personnel (i.e., at HSIs). In addition, scholars of both internships for Latinx students and at HSIs (e.g., Nelson & Jackson, 2003; Sansone et al., 2019) as well as those studying the forces influencing the success of students of color (Museus, 2014; Nuñez, 2014), emphasize the need to situate students, institutions and programs such as internships within the broader structures of opportunity and oppression that shape U.S. society. In most of these accounts, culture plays a central role in how students perceive their opportunities and self-worth, how colleges and universities enact their commitment to being Latinx-serving, and how both interact with the broader spheres of the labor market, political economy and racialized social structures.

In considering next steps for the study of internships with Latinx students and at HSIs, we build upon these prior efforts by incorporating advances in culture theory from sociology, anthropology and organizational studies, which highlight how knowledge structures (i.e., schemata) of socially acceptable behaviors, norms and worldviews form a key unit of cultural analysis, which in the aggregate (i.e., cultural models) among social groups such as a career services office or an intern host organization can be evident in shared values as well as policies and practices reflecting these norms (DiMaggio, 1997; Lizardo, 2017; Strauss & Quinn, 1997). Critically, how this cultural knowledge is internalized and enacted at both individual- and organizational-levels is not "innocent" or objective, but instead is deeply shaped by racialized discourses of self-worth, value, dignity and positionality (Nuñez, 2014; Ray, 2019).

Before we outline a proposed agenda for the future study of internships at MSIs more generally, we first review five theoretical premises that are the foundation of our approach.

Premise 1: Effective internship design cannot follow a "one-size-fits-all" approach

The first premise we offer is that while there are likely certain universal principles of effective internship design and implementation – such as the development of meaningful tasks for interns (Rogers et al., 2021) and effective supervision and mentoring (McHugh, 2017) – that apply to all internship programs regardless of student racial identity or institutional status (i.e., as an MSI or not), there are critical differences and opportunities for internships in these institutions and for these students that should be acknowledged and incorporated into HIPs-related policymaking and practice. In other words, internship design should not follow a one-size-fits-all approach.

This is not to say that the duration, compensation, type of tasks or supervision in an internship in the geosciences, nursing, or archeology should vary depending on the race and ethnicity of each intern. Internship programs will necessarily vary according to a wide range of factors. Instead, we highlight the fact that some internship programs can and should target specific student demographics for engagement to fields where workforce diversity is a widely acknowledged problem (e.g., STEM fields), such as an HSI program designed to engage Latinx students to jobs in the geosciences (Fedynich et al., 2012). In addition, given established problems with hiring and workplace discrimination, employers and higher education leaders must consider ways to make an internship a positive and professionally productive one, instead of a hostile and potentially traumatic experience. Consequently, the degree to which an institution (whether a college or an employer) is explicit and intentional in providing an experience that is "congruent" (Museus, 2014) with the racial identities and cultural backgrounds of their students and interns should be one of the primary issues facing internships and WBL.

Premise 2: "Culture" as an influential factor in internship operations needs more methodological rigor and precision than is currently available

One of the concepts that is at the heart of our first premise – that of culture – is one of the most influential yet too often used as a generic, catch-all term, with its meaning, location, and embodied forms left unspecified. The culture concept has a long and contested history in anthropology and sociology that is beyond the purview of this paper, with its myriad theoretical interpretations (e.g., structuralism, culture and personality, interpretivism, etc.) and debates, but it is important to note that the common notion that a single "culture" can adequately characterize an entire nation or people (e.g., Japanese culture) has long been discredited.

A similar caution against stereotyping or essentializing entire populations or organizations has been made throughout this paper with respect to HSIs and Latinx students, who may share certain characteristics with students of a similar ancestry, but whose unique upbringing, socialization and life experiences in a particular geography, social class, religious tradition, immigration status, and family situation may make them fundamentally dissimilar from other students with a similar heritage. Consequently, a person can hold multiple and even contradictory beliefs, values and identities from different social groups that they are members of (DiMaggio, 1997; Strauss & Quinn, 1997). In addition, the social categories that an individual inhabits (e.g., race, gender, age, immigration status) also shapes how people develop their identities and value systems.

A similar argument against over-simplification can also be made about organizations, where it is less than useful to speak about the "culture" of an entire college or university, much less an entire category of institutions such as HSIs that vary along many dimensions such as size, location, institutional mission, history, and composition of the student body, to name but a few. Instead, it is far more useful to speak of cultural phenomena operating within smaller sub-units of an organization such as a department or even a work group, and the types of norms, rituals, practices and policies that are instituted and reified over time within these units considered a type of organizational sub-culture (Van Maanen & Barley, 1982).

It is this cognitivist perspective on culture, which Geertz so famously disparaged in favor of focusing on the symbolic forms of culture made public (1973), that we argue is especially well-suited to the analysis of how culture, race, identity and organizations interact when it comes to internships for Latinx students at HSIs.

Premise 3: Cultural models are socially distributed cognitive schemata for acceptable behaviors, norms and worldviews that are operative at individual, organizational and societal levels

Definitions of culture invariably include phenomena that are evident at the group-level, such as shared beliefs, rituals, language, wardrobe, and so on. However, with the cognitive revolution of the 1960s as insights grew into the nature of memory and the brain itself, anthropologists, psychologists and sociologists began to consider how culture may be operating at the individual-level and according to properties of human cognition (e.g., D'Andrade, 1995). Essentially, for some anthropologists (Shore, 1996), discourse analysts (Gee, 2004), and cultural sociologists (Lizardo, 2017), one of the most useful and appropriate units of analysis for cultural studies is the *cultural model* that is held by an individual, with "culture" itself best described as a "distributed network of models" instead of a "single, all-encompassing unit" (Sapir, 1917; Shore, 2000).

With this in mind, instead of thinking of culture in broader terms of "Hispanic culture" or "HSI culture" we can focus on how a Latinx student can have different cultural models that they have internalized from their family history, social class, participation in community service, local geography, and so on. This approach is not inconsistent with the idea of community cultural wealth or funds of knowledge, which can encompass beliefs and values tied to family, peers or work (e.g., Rendon et al., 2015). What cultural models theory enables is a more precise and theoretically informed way to speak about the ideational forms of culture that avoids over-simplified and reductionist claims about the ways that values, beliefs and norms function for people and organizations.

Premise 4: The content and instantiation of cultural models are deeply shaped by racialized discourses

One of the key principles of cultural models theory is that as a person goes through childhood, adolescence and young adulthood, they internalize a dizzying array of norms, cues and behaviors from their social world. The process of acquiring information about matters such as how a society views norms for marriage or taxonomies for color (D'Andrade, 1995; Strauss & Quinn, 1997) is not solely shaped by properties of cognition alone, but is deeply shaped by the social, material, economic and political situations in which the internalization process takes place (see Hutchins, 1995; Lave, 1977). This, however, that has not traditionally been emphasized in cognitive anthropology when it comes to racial identity and considerations of systemic oppression, which is a

lens that is at the heart of intersectionality theory (Crenshaw, 1990; Nuñez, 2014), and we argue that the ways that racialized discourses (and oppressive structures) shape people's cultural models should also be part of the conversation. This is especially important for studies of Latinx students and HSIs, where racial identity and overcoming different, overlapping systemic forces are a central part of the literature and experience.

In addition, one of the key premises of our approach is the recognition that organizational life is not race-neutral (Ray, 2019), and that race and ethnicity influence college students' experiences in numerous ways. As previously mentioned, some models of student success or processes of student experiences with internships either overlook issues of student identity and the potential for these identities to clash (or be congruent with) organizational life (e.g., Narayanan et al, 2010), or adopt an assimilationist approach where students' pre-college lives should undergo a form of ritualistic suicide in favor of embracing the new college "culture" (Tinto, 1993). Instead, perspectives that account for the role of race and ethnicity in college student success should acknowledge issues such as the identities and cultural models that students bring to the institution (Museus, 2004), and then institutional practices such as supportive student-faculty interactions, explicit attention to affirming students' cultural identities, and most salient for our current investigation, the provision (or not) of opportunities for career development (Garcia, 2017; Hurtado & Carter, 1997; Rendón & Muñoz, 2011).

The implications of these foci on race and ethnicity for our first three premises are that internship design and the role of culture (and cultural models) in students' lives and organizational activities must reject a race-neutral and acontextual approach and instead explicitly account for the influence of both of these factors.

Premise 5: Internships can represent the (in)congruence of cultural models among three distinct parties - student, postsecondary institution, and employer – all operating within broader intersecting spheres of influence

Our final premise is that in the case of a college internship, we have the interactions of three distinct cultural models and the contexts in which they are considered "normal"–– that of the individual student, the college or university, and the employer who hosts the intern. Thus, there are considerable opportunities for what Museus (2014) calls cultural incongruence to occur, where the students' identities and cultural knowledge is not affirmed, supported, or even acknowledged in new settings or situations (see also Rendon et al., 2015). This is because as new people enter an institution or a workplace, they bring with them their own cultural models and identities, which then align with (or not) the institution's own norms, practices and so forth. In the case of a Latinx student entering a HSI, they may perceive a hostile environment and/or a lack of structured opportunities for them to pursue internships, while in others their prior cultural models may be in concert with the institutions' (and academic programs') mission, policies and practices, and structures may available to open new doors for them to pursue.

The same process of congruence or incongruence takes place as the student participates in an internship, which can be a daunting introduction to a new professional world. Beyond the expected challenges that a college student may experience when entering a new workplace (with its own unique set of cultural expectations), for students of color and/or those attending an MSI, there are additional considerations regarding hiring and workplace discrimination, as well as potential stereotypes around the quality of MSIs and

their students, that may come into play. It is this complex interplay of cultural, organizational and contextual forces that we conclude are an integral and inescapable part of how Latinx students at HSIs engage (or not) in internships. Thus, some type of multi-dimensional model that explicitly accounts for these issues (e.g., Museus, 2014; Nuñez, 2014) and/or close attention to the five premises outlined above, should guide future research on this important topic.

Conclusion

Our primary goal in this paper was to conduct an integrative review of the literature on internships in HSIs and with Latinx college students to determine if internship design, implementation and student experience may vary based on the unique institutional contexts of HSIs and/or the racial identities and cultural backgrounds of Latinx college students. While the empirical research on internships at HSIs and/or with Latinx students is a small but growing line of inquiry, research on the unique features of HSIs as cultural institutions, the unique experiences of Latinx students with the worlds of higher education and work, and the appreciation of the ways that both institutions and academic programs are decidedly not race-neutral, we conclude that the answer to our motivating question is yes. The next steps for the field of higher education and work-based learning, are to operationalize these concepts and employ them in one of the several theoretical frameworks available for studying student success at MSIs. Such a research program is perhaps one of the most important facing the field, as our society increasingly faces the reality that the playing field of economic opportunities is anything but fair, and that internships may be one of the vehicles for reproducing power, privilege and inequality.

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