How Do Young Latino Men Define Masculinity?

Researchers seek to understand the familial and cultural values of Latino students.

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Latino men in college are increasingly taking leadership roles. A recent study published in the International Journal of Leadership Education looked at how these men define their masculinity and how it shapes their leadership overall, according to a statement from Florida Atlantic University (FAU).

For the study, researchers from FAU in collaboration with San Diego State and Texas A&M universities aimed to understand the experiences of 34 Latino undergraduate males. The researchers examined how the participants defined masculinity and manhood based on their own life experiences through two 60-minute face-to-face interviews with each young man.

Researchers determined that Latino men practice "familismo leadership," a concept defined by shared responsibility, solidarity and loyalty within the family. As a result, young Latino men defined masculinity as a form of strength and consider providing for one's family as a form of leadership.

"'Familismo leadership' is a form of capital that most Latino men and Latin communities learn before enrolling in higher education institutions. It is used as a form of student success and self-awareness to navigate predominantly white spaces," said study coauthor Cristobal Salinas Jr., PhD, an associate professor at FAU's College of Education.

The participants said their fathers were role models of strength and leadership. In addition, the young men said their grandfathers, uncles and older brothers reflected similar qualities within their family.

"The successful retention and completion of Latino men in higher education must be supported by policy and practice that reflect a clear understanding of the familial and cultural values that Latino men students use to navigate a variety of intersectional spaces," said Lazaro Camacho Jr., another study coauthor and an FAU PhD candidate.

Camacho also said institutions of higher learning can create better engagement opportunities for Latino male students by centering how these young men "have been socialized to understand and

conceptualize leadership.”

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