



COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY

14th Annual AHSIE Best Practices
The Future of HSIs: Leveraging Excellence and Cultura
March 29, 2022

Latina Faculty in Academia: Support Factors & Socio Environmental Challenges in the Path to Achieving Promotion and Tenure

Presented by

Karen R. Ferrer-Muñiz, ABD, University at Albany
Interim Vice President of Student Affairs, Utica University

Dissertation Committee
Blanca Ramos, Ph.D. ■ Christine E. Bose, Ph.D. ■ Edna Acosta-Belén, Ph.D.
Latin American, Caribbean & U.S. Latino Studies

Purpose of the Dissertation

Focus on Latina full time tenured and tenure track faculty in higher education in New York State

- ▶ This study explored the complexity of the Latina faculty experience in New York, utilizing a comprehensive conceptual approach to assess 3 focus areas: **socio-cultural factors, institutional support, and professional support networks** that Latina faculty feel impact their tenure status.



Statement of the Problem

- Are there any differences between Tenured and non tenured Latina faculty in their experiences of career support.
- Most of the research is has been based on a few cases and is narrative/non-empirical.
- Very little research has been done on understanding “within group” differences between Latinas.
- A quantitative re-examination of the experiences of the Latina faculty member is warranted...



Data Shows...



The obvious growth in the Latina student population, less growth in the number of Latina faculty.

- ▶ U.S. 2010 census, 10 percent more of Hispanic women completed four or more years of college, compared with 13.9 percent of blacks and 22.3 percent of whites.
- ▶ U.S. Department of Education statistics indicated that less than 2% of full-time faculty members were Latina and only 0.7% were full professors, 0.9% associate professors, and 1.8% assistant professors (Census 2010).

Historical Background

- ▶ Number of Latina students enrolled in college is growing
- ▶ No growth in the number of Latina tenured faculty
- ▶ Data and studies also show that while the number of female tenured faculty in general has grown, the same level of growth has not been seen for Latina tenured faculty.
- ▶ Research focus has been on “differences” between Latinas and their White counterparts. Very little research has been done on understanding “within group” differences of Latina Faculty.

Research on Factors



- ▶ A variety of factors may contribute to Latinas achieving tenure. For example, studies indicate that unique power differentials (DeLuca & Escoto, 2012), discrimination (Gomez & Fassinger, 1994), a reward system biased toward males (Maitland, 1990), and traditional cultural family expectations such as child care roles (Turner, 2002) are factors.



Research on Challenges

- ▶ The common challenges for female faculty in the US have been identified as follows: “bias avoidance” (Drago 2005), employment discrimination, establishing a work/life balance, abstract definitions of collegiality, the negative impact on the academic production on the amount of research projects or publications needed to make progress toward promotions opportunities on campus (Samble, 2008).

The Policy Implications...

- ▶ The core of why the issue being examined is one of support adequacy.
 - Do Latinas who are currently teaching in public and private higher education institutions in New York feel they receive the support they feel they need to achieve career advancement?
 - What support do they see as critical to achieving tenure?





Core Concepts Being Studied

This fundamentally study was based on the impact that three socio-psychological and environmental support factors have on the passage of Latinas through tenure status. These include:

- **personal and psychosocial factors**, which includes ethnic and racial identity, family relations, gender, spirituality and religion;
- **institutional factors** impacting career progression, advancement and opportunities; and
- **professional support** and network factors.

Major facets of the study:

- ▶ Personal and professional characteristics among Latina faculty members;
- ▶ Patterns in the work histories or educational backgrounds of Latinas who have earned promotion and tenure and those who have not;
- ▶ Perceived bias relating to Latina experience in the academy;
- ▶ The psychological challenges encountered;
- ▶ The support systems available or the lack of services and opportunities; and
- ▶ The impact of institutional variables like public vs. private institutions, two-year vs. four-year campuses, and teaching versus research.

Knowledge Generation

- The study went beyond individualized narratives to piece together a macro-level understanding of the socio-cultural, institutional, and professional experiences that support Latinas in their academic pursuits.
- From a theoretical perspective, this study build on prior research findings by creating a holistic framework that identifies the factors that influence Latina faculty in their efforts to achieve tenure.



Conceptual Framework



Methods

The Study Population

- ▶ Latina faculty members working in identified from New York colleges and universities
- ▶ Tenured vs. Non-Tenured



Research Sample

Participants

- ▶ List of 178 Latina faculty in NYS
- ▶ Minimum 72 participants
- ▶ Public and Private
- ▶ New York State



The Research Design

- ▶ The survey questions are pulled from four instruments used by other scholars in earlier studies:
 - The National Latino and Asian American Study (NLAAS);
 - The Social Support Questionnaire Short Form (SSQ6) (Sarason, Levine, Basham, & Sarason, 1983);
 - The Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) at UCLA survey (Hurtado, Eagan, Pryor, Whang, & Tran, 2012); and
- ▶ The Familism survey/scale (Sabogal, Marin, Otero-Sabogal, Marin, & Perez-Stable, 1987). Dissemination: Email solicitation letter with a link to the *online survey instrument*.
- ▶ Data Collection: Qualtrics
- ▶ Data Analysis: SPSS V.23

Variables

- ▶ **Independent Variable: Tenure Status**
- ▶ **Dependent Variables:**
 - ▶ Demographic information:
 - Career preparation
 - Salary
 - Years of experience
 - Titles
 - Degrees
 - ▶ *Socio-cultural factors*
 - ▶ *Institutional Support*
 - ▶ *Professional Support networks*





Research Question

- ▶ *Do the Tenured vs. Non-Tenured groups differ significantly on one or more of the contextual support factors and/or their perceptions of opportunity?*
 - **Null Hypothesis:** There are no significant differences in the medians between Tenured vs. Non-Tenured groups on any given dependent variable or calculated scale.
 - **Research Hypothesis:** There are differences in the medians between Tenured vs. Non-Tenured groups on any given dependent variable or calculated scales.

Potential Hypotheses used to Identify Support and Demographic Characteristics:

- ▶ Latina faculty who achieve tenure are significantly more likely than non-tenured faculty to:
 - ▶ Place greater emphasis across measures related to the importance of academic activities, including teaching, publication writing, and research;
 - ▶ Spend more time performing academic activities such as research, writing publications, and teaching;
 - ▶ Have experienced more opportunities for career development and advancement at the university;
 - ▶ Have higher levels on Stress Items due to socio-personal factors such as childcare, household management, etc.;
 - ▶ Have experienced lesser levels of institutional bias and harassment;
 - ▶ Have experienced greater amounts of professional stress; and
 - ▶ Have greater satisfaction with aspects of the job and their professional career choices.



Analytics

- ▶ Statistical Focus:

to identify and determine if there are significant differences between Latina faculty who have achieved tenure **versus** who have not yet achieved tenure as related to psychosocial cultural attributes and the faculty member's access to adequate institutional and professional support.

- ▶ Primary statistical tests to include:

Kruskal-Wallis/Mann Whitney U test that employs population medians (in contrast to ANOVA's use of means) to assess the impact of group membership on the individual dependent variables.



Sample Recruitment Challenges

1. If a faculty member already identified as a potential interviewee is no longer employed at the institution
2. The published documents and/or the web sites are not up-to-date with accurate information
3. Selection bias: assuring that all members are Latina faculty with working in upstate New York

Analysis and Findings

Socio-Cultural Factors

3 variables were found to be significantly different:

- ▶ Personal stress due to personal finances are significantly lower for Latinas with Tenure as they reflect higher salaries ranges.
- ▶ The Latina's "accent" impedes the ability of others to understand what they are saying especially in the Tenured Faculty group.
- ▶ *Not* being a native English speaker appears to impede their ability to write documents easily.

Analysis and Findings

Professional Support Factors

5 variables were significantly different:

- ▶ Tenured Latinas tend to feel that campus activities are more important than the non-tenured group; they also spend more time on campus activities when compared to their non-tenured colleagues.
- ▶ Tenured Latinas tend to place more importance and spend more time on publications and writing.
- ▶ The degree to which the experiences of Latinas in academia match with their expectations of administrative consideration when making policy was found to be significantly higher in the Tenured group.



Analysis and Findings

Academic Institutional Support

4 variables in Professional Stress with differences between the tenured versus non-tenured group:

- ▶ The stress of Tenured Latinas is higher in the academic setting as it relates to changes in work responsibilities.
- ▶ The experience of professional stress due to job security in the academic setting is significantly lower among tenured Latinas. Same result for how satisfied Latinas are with their job security.
- ▶ Tenured Latinas have significantly higher levels of professional stress in the academic setting due to social expectations to prioritize work over personal responsibilities.

Analysis and Findings

continued...

Academic Institutional Support

- ▶ Tenured Latinas are more satisfied with their freedom to determine course content. This, of course, is expected for tenured faculty.
- ▶ Tenured Latinas have more available opportunities or take more advantage of institutional opportunities. This also is considered true for all tenured faculty.
- ▶ Tenured Latinas experience significantly higher rates of perceived harassment than do their non-tenured colleagues.



Two Additional Analysis

- ▶ **Time Since Tenured:** Was there a generational phenomenon occurring? Recode tenured group into two groups: Recent Tenure (n=23)—those who had been tenured since 2010 (2010-2020); and Earlier Tenure (n=20)—those tenured earlier than 2010 (1981 to 2009).
- ▶ **Three Way Analysis:** Broke down the 72 respondents' sample into 3 groups [Non-Tenured (n=29), Recent Tenured (n=23), Earlier Tenured (n=20)] for a one-way analysis using the Kruskal-Wallis test. The findings revealed 5 additional significant findings



Data Analysis Findings

Time Since Tenure:

- TWO significant measures:
 - * Under socio-cultural personal support
- 1. *Impact of Accent:* the extent to which the Latina's "accent" impeded the ability of others to understand what they are saying is significantly higher in the Recent Tenured group) compared to the Earlier Tenured.
- 2. *Impact on Writing:* the extent to which the Latina/non-English native speaker takes longer to write documents is significantly higher in the Recent Tenured group compared to the Earlier Tenured group.

Data Analysis Findings

3 WAY Analysis on the 3 Focus Areas



► *Socio-Cultural Personal Support factors*

Healthy Balance between Professional and Personal Lives:

Findings indicated that the tenure process does affect one's quality of life. The Not-tenured faculty had much higher ratings of a balanced life than do their tenured cohorts.

This may suggest that the tenure process may “take a toll” as Latinas navigate the challenges of seeking tenure.

Data Analysis Findings

3 WAY Analysis

► ***Institutional Attributes and Support factors***

Formal Mentoring of New Staff: the untenured faculty have lower rates of mentoring new staff formally than the tenured groups. Difference is only significant for the Earlier Tenured group. However, what is clear is that being “tenured” clearly indicates greater time being spent in formal mentoring of peers.

Work Harder than My Colleagues to be a Legitimate Scholar: Variance was significant between the Not-Tenured and the Earlier Tenured group but not for the Non-Tenured and Recently Tenured pairwise comparison. Experiences related to how hard they had to work to gain recognition as a scholar were especially difficult for the Earlier Tenured “older” group.



Data Analysis Findings

3 WAY Analysis

► **Professional Support factors**

Informal Mentoring of New Staff: This variance between non-tenured and the two tenured groups is significant, but it should be noted that all groups have high medians for this measure. This indicates that there is a proclivity among all Latinas to assist other peers.

Benefit of a Latinx Network: It is notable that significant differences emerged between the Non-Tenured and Earlier Tenured groups, but not between Non-Tenured and the Recently Tenured. Overall, the scores for Recent Tenured group were very low indicating little support was being received from their Latinx colleagues. Unsure of how to interpret. Further research is needed.

Seven Hypotheses

► Hypothesis 1:

Latina faculty who achieve tenure are significantly more likely than non-tenured faculty to place greater emphasis across measures related to the importance of academic activities, including teaching, publication writing, and research.

Partially supported:

- Findings indicated mixed results, with tenured Latinas significantly more likely to place importance on writing and publications and writing than their non-tenured colleagues. There were no differences in the importance placed on such activities as community service, demonstrating professional leadership, research, teaching, or mentoring than their non-tenured colleagues.

New Hypotheses continue...

► Hypothesis 2:

Latina faculty who achieve tenure are significantly more likely than non-tenured faculty to spend more time performing academic activities such as research, writing publications, and teaching.

Partially Supported Findings:

- The time spent on these activities were significantly higher for tenured faculty versus non-tenured faculty for *not only* publication writing (significant as an “important” activity) but campus activities and professional leadership as well.
- Tenured respondents did spend significantly more time performing these duties than their counterparts.

New Hypotheses continue...

► Hypothesis 3:

Latina faculty who achieve tenure are significantly more likely than non-tenured faculty to have experienced more opportunities for career development and advancement at the university and in assisting new Latina faculty.

Findings:

- *Fully Supported: On opportunities to Tenure positively impacts the availability and participation in opportunities such as paid sabbaticals, travel, etc.*
- *Institutional Support—Mentoring: Tenured Latina faculty offer institutional support by formally and informally mentoring their new colleagues produced highly significant findings in support of the hypothesis.*

New Hypotheses continue...

► Hypothesis 4:

Latina faculty who achieve tenure are significantly more likely than non-tenured faculty to have higher levels on Stress Items due to socio-personal factors such as childcare and language skills, as well as professional factors such as type of academic work requirements.

Partially Supported Findings:

- *Financial Stability:* stress for the tenured group were significantly lower than for their non-tenured cohorts.
 - Measures like childcare, household demands, spousal relationships, health, self-care, and pressure to prioritize one's personal life over professional life are not significantly different both groups.
- *Impact of Language:* counterintuitive was the finding that the Tenured group had significantly higher scores than the Non-Tenured group on not being understood due to their accent and experiencing greater struggles in their ability to write.
- *Professional Stressors:* Change in work responsibilities was primarily a "tenured" issue, reporting being stressed somewhat or highly.

New Hypotheses continue...

► Hypothesis 5:

Latina faculty who achieve tenure are significantly more likely than non-tenured faculty to have experienced lower levels of bias and harassment.

Findings not supported:

- For the measure of “harassment” due to students and/or colleagues, tenured faculty experienced a significantly **higher** score than their non-tenured counterparts.

New Hypotheses continue...

► Hypothesis 6:

Latina faculty who achieve tenure are significantly more likely than non-tenured faculty to have experienced higher levels of institutional stress.

Partially supported:

- The tenured group experiencing significantly higher levels of stress when compared to their Non-tenured counterparts. These included stress due to changes in work responsibilities and in stress related to social expectations that they prioritize work over personal.
- The Tenured group had significant lower levels of stress than their Non-tenured counterparts on the measure of job security.

New Hypotheses continue...

► Hypothesis 7:

Latina faculty who achieve tenure are significantly more likely than non-tenured faculty to have greater satisfaction with aspects of the job and their professional career choices.

Partially Supported:

- *Satisfaction with Position:* Tenured faculty were significantly more likely to be satisfied with their freedom to determine new course content and their feelings of job security than their non-tenured counterparts.

Contributions

The study will provided:

- ▶ A needed research focus on intra group differences between tenured and tenure track faculty;
- ▶ A study on the effects of campus type or research field on tenured status;
- ▶ A deeper understanding of the factors that Latina faculty see as critical to their success in achieving tenure;
- ▶ Scholars, administrators and policy makers with an enhanced understanding of the realities and needs of Latina faculty in higher education;
- ▶ Better understanding of the recruitment, retention, and career advancement practices as they relate to Latina faculty;
- ▶ Recommendations for fostering greater institutional diversity and inclusive campus climate.



Wrap-up

➔ Q & A



"I could stay by the river and cry forever, like the "Llorona," or I could move on with my challenges and attain my goal of becoming a tenured professor."

Esther Ruiz "La Llorona in Academe"

Collins, Lynn, Joan Chrisler & Katherine Quina (Eds.). *Career Strategies for Women in Academia: Arming Athena*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1998.