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Effectiveness of Higher Education Services for Dreamers

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Effectiveness of Higher Education Services for Dreamers

by

Lesley Nina Sisaket

A Thesis

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Abstract

While empirical studies have focused on the struggles and barriers that Dreamers have faced in their pursuit for higher education, there is a lack of research examining how effective services provided by post-secondary institutions are for Dreamers. This study examined the effectiveness of higher education services for Dreamers using a mixed-method design to support the idea that current services provided by Augsburg University are not effective for Dreamers and that there is a need to improve or cater services to accommodate Dreamers attending the institution. The study included a total of 16 self-identified Latinx, undergraduate students who are non-citizens of the United States; 15 of which are students at Augsburg University located in Minneapolis, Minnesota and one of which attended 2 community colleges located in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Among the 16 participants, 6 immigration statuses emerged from the quantitative responses collected with additional findings indicating that 8 of 10 services were found to be effective for Dreamers. Determining effectiveness of services was rated on a Likert scale of 1 to 5 where a rating of 1 meant that the service was not at all effective and a rating of 5 meant that the service was very effective for the student. Academic accommodations received the highest rating of $M=4.08$ with the least effective service being academic and test preparation having received an average rating of $M=2.50$. Qualitative responses allowed Dreamers to express why certain services failed to meet their needs as well as the need for additional support from institutional agents, accessibility to services, and the need for more adequate resources from certain services that are already offered. Limitations and implications for future research and for higher education administrators are discussed.

Keywords: Undocumented, DACA, Dreamers, Students, Higher Education, Student Affairs

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Every year, roughly 65,000 undocumented high school graduates enter American society with only a handful of opportunities available to them. (Perez, 2010). With no sight of a path to citizenship for undocumented individuals or DACA recipients, also known as Dreamers (Stebbleton, 2011), it is not surprising that the number of undocumented individuals within the United States is expected to grow despite changes to immigration policies. Amongst these growing numbers, colleges and universities across the country have also seen an increase in enrollment of undocumented students as a result of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) policy, which has encouraged eligible undocumented students to pursue higher education in the United States while also creating accessible pathways to other benefits as well. While we know that undocumented students face endless socio-emotional and socio-economic hurdles, through the trials and tribulations of this population, undocumented students have empirically exhibited incredible resilience, motivation and civic engagement compared to their domestic counterparts. (Perez, 2010). Although the numbers within this population continue to grow at a college admissions level, the Latinx population still remains the population with the lowest educational success rate. There is considerable debate as to whether school success is due to agency and structure or if it is due to the student actively building and expanding their network within the institution. (Enriquez, 2011). While undocumented students lack resources from their homes due to their parent's inability to provide tools to assist them in succeeding at a college level, some post-secondary institutions have placed some effort in providing at least the basic of services to undocumented students. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of higher education services for Dreamers while exploring the following research questions:

- Which institutional resources have been of assistance to undocumented and DACA students attending Minnesota's post-secondary institutions and how can said resources better serve Dreamers?
- Which higher education resource needs have yet to be explored?

This study set out to examine current services provided by higher education and its effectiveness for Dreamers.

Terminology

For the purpose of this study, the term Latinx will be used to define all individuals who identify with the Latino community. “Undocumented” will refer to individuals who are not legal residents of the United States of America and are not recipients of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. The terms “DACA students”, “DACA recipients” or “DACAmented” will be used interchangeably and will refer to individuals who are recipients of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals while the term “Dreamers”, which was coined from the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act (DREAM Act), will be used to include all undocumented and DACAmented individuals in America. The undocumented population also falls under the “1.5 generation” which indicates that they are immigrant children who migrated to the United States before the age of 12 and have received most of their K-12 education in the U.S.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

As of 2012, an estimated 11.4 million immigrants living in the United States were reported to be undocumented, with more than 6.7 million of those individuals being immigrants from Mexico. (ProCon). Per the U.S. Department of Education, the Latinx population is “the fastest and largest growing minority group, which will account for 60% of the population growth by 2050” and while these students are intentional about their learning due to the obstacles that they face even prior to applying for higher education, the Latinx population has the “lowest education levels of any group within the United States.” (Stebbleton & Alexio, 2015). As undocumented youth in America, earning a high school diploma does not ease the struggles that this population has already had to experience while navigating the American society. Many students often times feel uneasy about career options due to their residency status since gainful employment within their area of study is often difficult to obtain due to current immigration policies; even with the temporary relief granted from DACA, the endless battle of having to compete against U.S. born and legal residents for employment opportunities have led other undocumented students to strive to further their education in hopes to lessen the gap. Of the 65,000 undocumented high school graduates, 5-10% of these undocumented students will attend some form of higher education, once they have received their diplomas. (Perez, 2010). “Undocumented students often report pursuit of higher education serves to honor the sacrifice and struggles of their families, friends, and an educational system that they feel in debt to.” (Hernandez et. al, 2010).

Plyler vs. Doe (1982)

“While education is not a fundamental right, denying K-12 education to undocumented children amounted to creating a “lifetime of hardship” and a permanent “underclass” of

individuals.” (Gonzales, 2009). This statement, made by Justice Brennan, made an important connection between education and social mobility during the Plyler vs. Doe case in 1982. The point that was made during the trial highlighted the importance of education access for undocumented students, which would later aid in the final decision that would grant all children, regardless of their immigration status, the right to receive K-12 public education. (Cuevas & Cheung, 2015). This Supreme Court ruling declared that under the 14th Amendment, all children including undocumented children are considered persons under the U.S. Constitution thus disabling states’ ability to discriminate against children due to their legal status in regards to offering them public and secondary school education. What the decision failed to extend on, however, were educational opportunities and an access to higher education for these undocumented youth after receiving their high school education, which has presented numerous obstacles for these students post graduation.

Understanding the Policy

Development, relief, and education for alien minors (the DREAM Act). Introduced to Congress in 2001 by Senator Dick Durbin and Orrin Hatch, the DREAM Act was designed to allow undocumented immigrant youth who were brought to the country many years prior as children to “obtain legal permanent resident status if they were to complete their high school education and continue onward to higher education or enlist in the military. (Gonzales, 2009). What sets the DREAM Act apart from the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals is that the DREAM Act would provide a path to citizenship but in order for one to be eligible, the individual must first obtain a conditional resident status. In order to qualify for a conditional status one must:

- 1) Have proof that they entered United States before the age of 16 and must have

- continuously lived in the country for at least 5 years
- 2) Must have graduated from a high school or obtained a GED within the United States
 - 3) Demonstrate good moral character; and
 - 4) Pass a criminal background check and reviews

Once the applicant has obtained a conditional resident status, they must hold onto the status for a period of six years before they are able to apply for permanent residency. “If, within the six-year period, the DREAM Act beneficiaries complete at least two years towards a four-year college degree, graduate from a two-year college or serve at least two years in the U.S. Armed Forces, they would be able to change their conditional status to permanent” (Gonzales, 2009). In order to be eligible for the change in status, the individual must then meet the following set of requirements for permanent residency according to the American Immigration Council:

- 1) The applicant must have attended an institution of higher learning or served in the United States military for at least 2 years and if discharged, have received an honorable discharge
- 2) Pass another series of background checks
- 3) Continue to demonstrate good moral character

In the event that the individual holding the conditional resident status is unable to fulfill the requirements previously stated, they would eventually lose their conditional resident status and be subject to deportation. It is important to note, however, that this policy did not receive enough votes in Congress for it to be enacted into law and is therefore still pending.

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) was an executive order signed by former president Barak Obama and his Administration in June of 2012. To date, the policy has allowed nearly 750,000 undocumented

individuals an opportunity to taste the American Dream by providing a 2-year grant of deferred action, employment authorization, Social Security numbers, and the ability to obtain a drivers license. In order for individuals to be eligible for this action, individuals were required to meet all of the following guidelines, according to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services:

- 1) Were under the age of 31 as of June 15, 2012
- 2) Came to the United States before reaching their 16th birthday
- 3) Have continuously resided in the United States since June 15, 2007, up to the present time
- 4) Were physically present in the United States on June 15, 2012, and at the time of making their request for consideration of deferred action with USCIS
- 5) Had no lawful status on June 15, 2012
- 6) Are currently in school, have graduated or obtained a certificate of completion from high school, have obtained a general education development (GED) certificate, or are an honorably discharged veteran of the Coast Guard or Armed Forces of the United States
- 7) Have not been convicted of a felony, significant misdemeanor, or three or more other misdemeanors, and do not otherwise pose a threat to national security or public safety.

Towards the end of each 2-year deferral, recipients are able to re-apply for the program but are not guaranteed a renewed status.

Threat to DACA. In June of 2017, Texas Attorney General, Ken Paxton, along with nine other state Republican attorney generals threatened to sue the federal government if the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals is not phased out or completely dismantled by September 5, 2017. In the case that the program were to be discontinued, the absence of DACA would leave nearly 800,000 immigrant youth at risk for deportation along with revoked abilities that DACA once

granted them such as the ability to pursue higher education while paying in-state tuition and the ability to work in America's workforce.

Update: Threat to DACA. On the 5th of September 2017, the Trump Administration finalized the decision to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals for roughly 800,000 Dreamers present in the United States as they feel that such an act should have been developed through the efforts of Congress and not through an executive order. With the decision, President Trump has given Congress a period of 6 months, until March 5, 2018, to establish legislation that could save the program and its recipients from deportation and preserve the abilities that they were granted through the deferred action. What this means for those affected is that if their DACA expires before March 5, 2018 then they would be eligible to renew their DACA application as long as they should submit it before October 5, 2017. For those who have a DACA expiration date that does not fall within the September 5, 2017 to March 5, 2018 deadline are ineligible to re-apply for a renewed status but will be protected under DACA until their expiration date. Although DACA is rescinding, the Minnesota Dream Act is still in place for students who qualify and still grants eligibility for work-study opportunities until work authorization for the DACA recipient expires.

Prosperity Act: The Minnesota DREAM Act. Introduced by Senators Sandra Pappas, Carlos Mariani and signed into law by Governor Mark Dayton on the 23rd of May 2013 the Prosperity Act, also known as the Minnesota Dream Act, provides benefits such as in-state tuition at public and private universities as well as state and privately funded financial aid to eligible undocumented individuals whom meet the following requirements per the Office of Higher Education.

- 1) Attended a Minnesota high School for at least 3 years

- 2) Graduated from a Minnesota high school or earned a GED in the state of Minnesota
- 3) And if the applicant is male and between the ages of 18 to 25, they must register with the United States Selective Services

Although DACA has rescinded, the Minnesota Dream Act still remains in effect for those who qualify.

Understanding the Population

Undocumented vs. DACAmented. Often undocumented students and DACA recipients are referred to as Dreamers but it is important to understand that the two populations are not the same. (Adams & Boyne, 2015). Undocumented students are foreign national individuals who have either entered the United States without inspection, valid and authentic documents, or “entered legally as a non-immigrant but violated the terms of their visa status and remained in the U.S. without authorization.” (Hernandez, Hernandez et.al, 2010).

DACA recipients are eligible individuals who have met specific requirements in order to receive the 2-year deferred action that the program grants but the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals “does not grant lawful immigration status to recipients or a path to citizenship but under the United States’ Immigration Services Guidelines, receiving DACA does make one lawfully present in the U.S.” (Adams & Boyne, 2015).

International students vs. Dreamers. When comparing international students and “Dreamers” one commonality is present and that is the fact that both populations are foreign national individuals. However, the two differ in that legally, international students have gained legal entry into the United States through their request for and approval of a student visa such as an F-1 or J-1 visa. An F-1 visa is a long-term visa that is granted to students who are seeking to attend an educational institution as a full-time undergraduate or graduate student whereas J-1

visas are granted to those who are on a short-term, exchange program that is often times sponsored through an educational institution in their original country of residence. While both populations encounter barriers as non-citizens of America, the stressors that international students face while studying in the country differ from those encountered by undocumented and DACAmented students. Olivias and Li reference a study conducted by Kaczmarek, Matlcok, Merta, Ames, and Ross (1994) who were able to identify that the pressing issues that international students face is transition and adjusting to the cultural differences, language challenges, and the U.S. educational system. Olivias and Li also found that language barriers, unfamiliarity of the host culture as well as the differences between their own and the host culture were potential stressors for international students, whereas finances, homesickness and health issues were reported as little concern.

Struggles of Dreamers

Although all students encounter a variety of stressors throughout their college experience, empirical research has uncovered that some unique educational challenges for immigrant students include but are not limited to the lack of information regarding higher educational options, work and family obligations, financial needs, academic preparation, achievement issues, and limited English reading and writing proficiency. (Kim, 2012). In the lives of Dreamers, these stressors overwhelmingly increase as they not only encounter the same stressors as those previously mentioned but additional stressors such as the socio-emotional distress that comes with triple minority status (Stebleton & Alexio, 2015), the pressure to obtain good standing with the federal government for DACA recipients, being charged tuition at three times the rate, and stressed-induced emotions such as guilt, depression, anger, hopelessness, shame, and uncertainty, which could be the result of “migration stressors, college financing, and family deportation.”

(Gonzales, 2010). Negative portrayals of the undocumented population also hinders any opportunity for a healthy identity development thus leaving Dreamers and their families to live in the shadows of the nation due to fear of deportation and stigma that is attached to their identity. (Gonzales, 2010; Stebleton, Alexio, 2015). Often times these students must also convince their families that the threat of deportation does not compare to the reward of earning a degree, even though their struggles continue within the walls of their academic institution.

Coping with Struggles

A dissertation conducted by Teri Jan Albrecht at The University of Texas at Austin explored the challenges and service needs of undocumented Mexican undergraduate students and was able to identify that the common struggles of undocumented students revolved around finance, personal relationships and their college experience (Albrecht, 2007). In the eyes of both the undocumented students and the institutional agents that participated in the study, the needs of the students reflected three areas: 1) accessible information, 2) designated personnel, and 3) legal services. At the time of publication, the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals had yet to be implemented and therefore research zoning in on the institutional resources that have been of assistance to undocumented and DACAmented students as well as their higher educational resource needs had yet to be explored. This study examined the effectiveness of 10 student-focused services for Dreamers using a mixed-method design to suggest that current services provided by higher education institutions are not effective for Dreamers. The goal of this study is to show that there is a need to improve or cater services to accommodate undocumented and DACA students due to their circumstances.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Recruitment

Recruitment of participants involved two methods. The primary method involved the email addresses of Augsburg University's Latinx student population, which was accessed through Augsburg's database program, Agresso. Upon access to the email addresses a blast email was sent out to all students who self-identified on their college application that they are Latinx. Information regarding the study as well as the link to the Google Form that housed the assessment was included in the email, which eligible participants were able to access without the need to sign into . Outreach for recruitment was also done using a social media website, Facebook, where a link to the Google Form and information regarding the study was posted by the primary investigator, encouraging eligible participants to complete the study. The use of this recruitment method encouraged other Facebook users to share the original post from the primary investigator, which at times lead to a snowball effect. In order to participate in the study, participants were asked to meet the following criteria:

- A. Must be 18 years or older
- B. Must have completed at least one academic semester at a 2- or 4-year institution within Minnesota
- C. Self-identifies as Latinx
- D. Self-identifies as undocumented or is a DACA recipient or
- E. Experienced at least one semester as an individual who was either undocumented or a DACA recipient but is now a legal resident (e.g. Green Card holder) or an American citizen.

Participants

Overall, the study was able to collect responses from 16 students. Of the overall sample, 15 participants indicated that they were affiliated with Augsburg University with only one having indicated that they were either attending or had attended North Hennepin Community College (NHCC) and Minneapolis Community and Technical College (MCTC). Amongst the participants, 9 identified as male while the remaining 7 participants identified as female with their ages ranging from 18 years to 23 years. As expected, the majority of the participants (n=14) indicated that Spanish was their first language, but they now use English as their primary language for communication (n=15). Fifteen participants submitted responses pertaining to their eligibility for the Minnesota Dream Act with 13 of the 15 indicating that they were eligible. The question pertaining to immigration status received an array of responses where 10 indicated that they were DACA recipients, 3 indicated that they were under Temporary Protected Status (TPS), 1 participant was undocumented, 1 received asylum, and the last participant had received U.S. residency.

Instrument

The mixed-method assessment was created through the use of Google Forms. A quantitative survey along with two qualitative prompts examined the effectiveness of student services, offered at Augsburg University, for undocumented and DACA students. The qualitative prompts encouraged participants to express their needs and why certain services were not as effective as others. An example of the instrument can be found in Appendix 5. The Google Form did not require participants to sign into the assessment in order for them to access it. This was done to eliminate the possibility Google retaining IP addresses of participants.

Chapter 4: Results

The use of descriptive statistics was used to analyze the data collected since the way in which the questions were asked resulted in responses that is best presented using this method.

Quantitative Findings

The quantitative survey asked participants to rate the effectiveness of 10 student-aimed, services found in higher education on a 1-5 Likert scale. Services receiving a 1 indicated that the service was not at all effective for the student whereas a rating of 5 indicated that it was very effective. Overall, each service area did not receive the same amount of responses due to the fact that the instructions asked participants to leave services that they had not utilized blank. The quantitative survey can be found in Appendix 5.

Writing resumes and cover letters. A total of 13 participants (N=13) submitted a rating for services aimed towards resume and cover letter writing. This service received an average rating of 3.69 (M=3.69) with a standard deviation of 1.38 (SD=1.38). Breaking the sample down into subgroups based on immigration status showed that 3 participants identified as Temporary Protected Status, providing an average rating of 4.33 (M=4.33, SD=1.15), 1 identified as being undocumented (M=5.00), 1 identified as being a United States Resident (M=4.00), 1 being an individual with asylum (M=5.00), and 7 individuals indicating that they are DACA recipients (M=3.00, SD=1.14).

Career exploration. In rating the effectiveness of services aimed towards career exploration a total of 13 participants indicated an average rating of 3.39 with a standard deviation of 1.19. Based on the immigration status subgroups, 3 participants identified as Temporary Protected Status, providing an average rating of 4.00 (M=4.00, SD=1.00), 1 identified as being undocumented (M=4.00), 1 identified as being a United States Resident (M=3.00), 1 being an

individual with asylum ($M=5.00$), and 7 individuals indicating that they are DACA recipients ($M=3.00$, $SD=1.41$).

Personality and professional assessments. Services pertaining to personality and professional assessments received a total of 14 responses ($N=14$) with an average rating of 3.57 ($M=3.57$, $SD=1.45$) in regards to effectiveness of the service for Dreamers. Amongst the responses, 3 participants identified as being under Temporary Protected Status ($M=4.33$, $SD=.58$), 1 indicated that they are under undocumented status ($M=5.00$), 1 participant indicated that they were a U.S. resident and rated the service as effective ($M=4.00$), 1 student under asylum indicated that the service was very effective ($M=5.00$), and lastly, 8 students reported that they were undocumented with DACA and provided an average rating for services pertaining to providing personality and professional assessments a 2.88 ($M=2.88$, $SD=1.55$).

Test or academic preparation. Services pertaining to test or academic preparations received an average score of 2.50 ($SD=1.55$) from 10 participants ($N=10$). Three of the responses provided were reported from students who were under temporary protected status ($M=3.67$, $SD=.58$), 1 student identified as a U.S. resident and rated the service a 1 on the Likert scale, and 6 undocumented students with DACA provided an average rating of 2.17 ($SD=1.47$).

Student records. Of the 15 responses ($N=15$) that were reported ($M=3.73$, $SD=1.16$), 3 temporary protected students rated services pertaining to accessing student records as a 4 ($SD=0.00$), 1 undocumented student, 1 U.S. resident, and 1 student under asylum rated such services as very effective ($M=5.00$) with the remaining 9 undocumented students with DACA indicating that such services have been somewhat effective for them ($M=3.22$, $SD=1.20$).

Academic forms. Services pertaining to making academic forms accessible to students received an overall response from 15 participants ($N=15$) who provided an average rating of 3.73

(SD=1.16). Three temporary protected students rated such services an average of 4.33 with a standard deviation of .58. One undocumented student and one U.S. resident rated such services as very effective (M=5.00) whereas 1 student under asylum status reported a rating of 4 out of 5 leaving the remaining 9 students, having indicated that they are undocumented but with DACA, rating such services an average of 3.22 (SD=1.20).

Understanding program prerequisites. Services aimed towards helping students understand their program prerequisites received an average rating of 3.60 (SD=1.40) from 15 participants (N=15). Three participants indicating that they are under temporary protected status rated the services an average of 3.67 (SD=1.53), a rating of 5 was provided by a student identifying as undocumented as well as by a student under asylum, 1 student identifying as a U.S. resident rated such services as effective (M=4.00), leaving the remaining 9 undocumented students with DACA, reporting an average rating of 3.22 (SD=1.48).

Academic accommodations. Twelve participants provided an average rating of 4.08 (SD=1.08) for services that provided academic accommodations for students. One student indicating that they were undocumented and 1 U.S. resident rated the said services a 4 out of 5, 1 asylee rated the service as very effective (M=5.00), and 6 DACA students rated such services and average of 3.83 with a standard deviation of 1.47. Three students under temporary protected status rated such services an average of 4.33 (SD= .58).

Housing accommodations. Services pertaining to housing accommodations such as meal plans and independent living spaces received an average rating of 3.23 (SD=1.54) from 13 participants (N=13). An average of 4.00 with a standard deviation of 1.00 was received from temporary protected students. One undocumented student rated such services as very effective (M=5.00) along with one student under asylum status, whereas one student stating that they are a

U.S. resident gave this area of service a 3 out of 5. The remaining 7 undocumented with DACA participants reported an average rating of 2.43 with a standard deviation of 1.51.

Short-term individual counseling. 12 participants who have utilized short-term individual counseling services provided an average rating of 3.83 (SD=1.03) in regards to its effectiveness. Three temporary protected students rated such services an average of 4.00 on the Likert scale with a standard deviation of 1.00, while one U.S. resident student, 1 asylum student and 1 student indicating that they are undocumented rated short-term individual counseling services a 4 out of 5. An average rating of 3.67 with a standard deviation of 1.37 was reported by 6 students who identified as being DACA recipients.

Qualitative Findings

Two open-ended questions were included at the end of the quantitative survey where participants were able to state other services that they have utilized and found to be effective for them as they pursued higher education while also having the opportunity to express why certain services failed to meet their needs and how said services could improve to better serve members of the undocumented population. Including these questions was an attempt to answer the following research questions that the researcher proposed:

- Which institutional resources have been of assistance to undocumented and DACA students attending Minnesota's post-secondary institutions and how can said resources better serve Dreamers?
- Which higher education resource needs have yet to be explored?

From the responses collected, the researcher was able to categorize additional services utilized within the past academic semester into one of three categories surrounding the topics of diversity and inclusion, educational programming or accessibility. Themes were established by the

researcher based on the kinds of services that were mentioned as well as the purpose and mission of each service. Services mentioned can be found in the table below.

Question: Please list any other services (and their departments) that you have utilized in the past semester.

Service	Department	Category	Frequency
*Augsburg Latin American Students Organization		Diversity & Inclusion	1
* Augsburg Student Activities Counsel		Diversity & Inclusion	1
	*Campus Activities And Orientation	Diversity & Inclusion	1
College Possible		Accessibility	3
Equity Housing Program		Accessibility	1
Genesys Works		Accessibility	1
Center For Global Education And Experience	Study Abroad	Educational/Accessibility	1
Latinx Student Services	Multicultural Student Services	Diversity & Inclusion	2

*Indicates that the original response as been revised to include more information for the reader

Responses in regards to services receiving a rating of 3 or lower from some participants were categorized into either or both of the following categories, which were either due to inadequate resources or the service lacked support. Ratings below a 3 indicate that the service was either not at all effective or not effective for the student. Reasons for some students not utilizing or finding services to be not at all effect or not effective ranged from not knowing that such services were available, the service provided lacked support and/or was unable to fulfill the needs of the student or the student felt uncomfortable or unequipped to seek out assistance. Additional responses can be found below.

Note: Numbers found after the service indicates the rating that the participant gave the service in regards to how effective the student found the service to be. Also, responses with an asterisk (*) indicate that the response does not reflect a specific service mentioned and therefore does not fall into any theme.

Qualitative Responses

Question: For any service that you rated as a 3 or lower, please discuss why the service was not effective. Then, discuss what could be improved about the service to better meet your needs.

Participant 1

Immigration Status: Undocumented with DACA

Services Rated: Writing Resumes & Cover Letters (1), Personality and Professional Assessments (1), Career Exploration (1), Housing accommodations (1)

Response: I have not heard of them, * I had a mindset of my major before going to college because I had experience in my field already

Category: Inadequate Resources

Participant 2

Immigration Status: Temporary Protected Status

Services Rated: Understanding Program Prerequisites (2)

Response: I have not received really good guidance when it comes to what is required to complete my major. Sometimes I feel like I'm completely lost. I would like the institution to be clearer when it comes to what is needed and maybe have a set way of completing the courses.

Category: Lack of Support

Participant 3

Immigration Status: Undocumented with DACA

Services Rated: Housing Accommodations (1), Understanding Program Prerequisites (2), Personality and Professional Assessments (2), Test or academic preparation (2), Student Records (3), Academic Forms (2)

Response: Our housing accommodations are sub-par in comparison with other surrounding universities. Also, forced meal plans are verging a few degrees away from extortion.

Category: Inadequate Resources

Participant 4

Immigration Status: Undocumented with DACA

Services Rated: Housing Accommodations (2), Understanding Program Prerequisites (2), Personality and Professional Assessments (2)

Response: More clear in instructions. More understanding.

Category: Inadequate Resources & Lack of Support

Participant 5

Immigration Status: Undocumented with DACA

Services Rated: *The participant did not provide a rating of less than 3 for any services*

Response: Academic advisor wasn't too helpful

Category: Lack of Support

Participant 6

Immigration Status: Undocumented with DACA

Services Rated: Understanding Program Prerequisites (2)

Response: Felt rushed and some questions that I asked were answered not clear. Sometimes, I felt uncomfortable and didn't know what I had to ask.

Category: Lack of Support

Participant 7

Immigration Status: Undocumented with DACA

Services Rated: Test or academic preparation (1)

Response: Essentially I've only seen one place where prep material is available for these exams and that is in the honors lounge there is no other resource I've found and I have seen the posters they post for classes to help with these grad school exams. I attend events at the University of Minnesota to get information and help on how to prepare for these exams since their graduate MBA program is so close to Augsburg.

Category: Inadequate Resources

Chapter 5: Discussion

Referring to the Likert scale used to determine the effectiveness of certain post-secondary services for Dreamers, the data indicates that 8 out of the 10 services that received an average rating within the scale of 3 to 4 are services that are somewhat effective to effective for undocumented and DACA students. The researcher concludes that the reason for this is due to the fact that many of these services, such as resume and cover letter writing, individual counseling, and academic accommodations are services that are offered within departments that strive to encourage the overall wellness and development of the student. Often times these services are housed within departments such as a career center, counseling center, or disability/accessibility center, which tend to be places more likely to be referred to the student by other institutional agents. The areas of need that were identified from the qualitative responses slightly aligned yet differed from the empirical research that was conducted at the University of Texas at Austin which found that their undocumented population had a need for accessible information, a designated personnel, as well as legal services. Participants of this study indicated that their needs as Dreamers (undocumented status, DACA status, Temporary Protected Status, Asylum, and U.S. Resident) revolved around needing better academic support from institutional agents, the need for accessible information and opportunities as their counterparts, and the need for better quality from services that are already offered.

Writing resumes, cover letters, personality & professional assessments, and career exploration. Services that aim to evolve the competencies of students' regarding the construction of professional materials as well as encouraging the establishment of professional aspirations and identifying a career path are generally found within career service departments. The averages that the overall sample provided for each of these services indicate that they are

somewhat effective for Dreamers. Faculty members often advertise such services as some may incorporate it into their curriculum and require students to create and submit examples of their professional material a part of their assignment. It is with no surprise that majority of the sample provided a rating for these services and that each service received a rating between 3-4 on the Likert scale. Since students will find that they need to utilize such services for academic or professional purposes, the researcher feels that this increases the hosting department's awareness to provide effective services for their students.

Test or academic preparation. It is with little surprise that services pertaining to test or academic preparation, such as GRE or graduate education preparation, received the lowest rating ($M=2.50$, $SD=1.55$) compared to other services mentioned in the quantitative survey. As mentioned in previous sections, immigrant students are faced with obstacles such as financial barriers, lack of information regarding higher educational options, and lack of academic preparation to name a few as they pursue their undergraduate education. For these reasons, the researcher can assume that the idea of pursuing a graduate education creates hesitation due to the existing barriers mentioned, in which undocumented students must still consider. There is also the possibility that since these services are future orientated, Dreamers often find themselves in a state of survival as a result of their immigration status and may find it difficult to be future oriented individuals.

Student records & academic forms. The average rating given to services pertaining to the access of student records and academic forms (i.e. transcripts, graduation forms) indicate that they have been effective for Dreamers. Where the researcher could have furthered acquired information in regards to the effectiveness of these services was to inquire if the student sought

in-person assistance to access these forms or if they utilized an online request system, which could have influenced the rating that these services could have received.

Understanding program prerequisites. Often times, services pertaining to assisting students in understanding their program requirements and prerequisites are hosted through departments that focus on academic advising. Here, it is common for institutional agents in academic advising positions to assist students in understanding the general requirements of the institution as well as the requirements for their major in order for them to obtain their degree. Seeing that this service received an average rating of 3.60 from 15 participants, this does not come to a surprise to the researcher since most students are required to meet with their advisor prior to registration. Nearing registration time at Augsburg University, students are unable to register for classes and even have a hold placed on their accounts until they meet with their faculty advisor.

Housing accommodations. With an average rating of 3.23, the researcher finds this rating to be a bit surprising knowing that on-campus living at Augsburg is an additional charge, on top of tuition and student fees. Having mentioned earlier that a common barrier that Dreamers face is in regards to finances, this indicates that Dreamers are utilizing on-campus housing options even though this creates an additional expense and stressor for the student. The most interesting, qualitative response collected stated that meal plans were nearing extortion of students. What this statement is calling for is the reconsideration of forced meal plans to see if such services are financially hurting its students especially since meal-plans, like housing, are an additional cost on top of tuition and other fees.

Short-term individual counseling & academic accommodations. The rating that short-term counseling services received was a surprise to the researcher due to the fact that issues and

conversations surrounding mental health are still seen to be an area of taboo amongst Latinx individuals, especially with parents and elders who did not grow up in the United States. What the rating indicates is that students are utilizing and finding these services to be effective for them as they embark on their undergraduate education. The researcher assumes that mentions of mental health within mainstream media and in light of debates around gun control may have influenced and encouraged students to utilize such services as conversations surrounding mental health have become more common in higher education, stripping away a lot of the stigma that was attached to the terms *counseling* and *mental health*.

Academic accommodations received the highest average amongst all of the services mentioned in the qualitative survey, which leads the researcher to wonder if there is a correlation between the two services.

Limitations

Internal limitations. Prior to the launch of the study, the researcher failed to acknowledge other, possible, immigration statuses that non-citizens may obtain. The following information touches on the additional immigration statuses that were mentioned by those who participated in the study.

Temporary protected status. Three participants who contributed to the study indicated an immigration status under Temporary Protected Status, also known as TPS. According to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, TPS is granted to individuals from countries that are undergoing certain circumstances that “temporarily prevent the country's nationals from returning safely, or in certain circumstances, where the country is unable to handle the return of its nationals adequately.” The decision to designate a country and its nationals for TPS is made by the Secretary of Homeland Security based on the conditions that the country is facing such as

an ongoing armed conflict, an environmental disaster or epidemic, or other extraordinary and temporary conditions which may hinder the country's ability to protect its nationals, as previously stated.

Temporary Protected Status may be granted to nationals from an entire country or parts of the country that are facing situations as previously mentioned; nationals who have already arrived in the United States but resided in the designated country can also receive TPS. Being granted TPS indicates that the individual is protected from deportation, they are eligible to work in the U.S. and can obtain an employment authorization document (EAD), and the individual can receive permission from the Department of Homeland Security to travel abroad. According to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, TPS is a temporary benefit that does not lead to lawful permanent resident status or give any other immigration status. Current countries under TPS include El Salvador, Haiti, Honduras, Nepal, Nicaragua, Somalia, South Sudan, Syria, and Yemen.

The end of TPS. In January of 2018, the Trump Administration rescinded Temporary Protected Status for the country of El Salvador. What this means for nearly 200,00 individuals granted TPS is that they will be required to leave the United States by September 19, 2019. (CNN). The country was originally granted TPS in March of 2001 when a 7.7-magnitude earthquake struck the country that January. According to the Department of Homeland Security, the reason from rescinding the benefit is due to the fact that the original conditions that resulted from the earthquake are no longer present in the country, 17 years after the disaster.

Asylum & resident status. Asylum is an immigration status that is granted to individuals seeking protection from the United States for reasons such as the fact that they have suffered persecution from their original country of origin or fear that they will suffer persecution due to

their race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, and/or political opinion. (United States Citizenship and Immigration Services). Those who have entered the United States and are eligible for asylum are permitted to stay within the country but are required to apply for asylum within one year of their arrival. Those who are granted asylum from the United States are eligible to work but as an asylee, they are not required to have an employment authorization document (EAD). After one year of an individual being granted asylum and having been present in the United States for one consecutive year, the asylee would be eligible to apply for a Green Card by filing an Application to Register Permanent Residence or to Adjust Status (Form I-485). Upon approval of their application, these individuals would be considered Permanent Residents of the U.S. and would be eligible to work and live in the United States, permanently.

Another limitation that the primary researcher identified was found within the primary recruitment method that was used for the study. In utilizing Augsburg University's list serves to advertise and recruit participants, students who did decide to participate in the study were Augsburg University students. As a result, the investigator's original intent to analyze responses from students attending post-secondary education across universities and colleges within Minnesota was only limited to the services and students from Augsburg.

External limitations. The current political climate within the United States and the current crackdown from the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency on detaining and deporting undocumented individuals are factors that limit the validity of the study. The current emphasis that ICE has placed to detain and deport members of the undocumented population may or may not have influenced the ability for participants to openly express and utilize this platform to its full advantage due to fear and/or other feelings that they are experiencing in regards to their social environment.

Implications for Higher Education

The findings identified academic and test preparation services to be the least effective for Dreamers amongst other services. Qualitative responses indicated that the students were unaware of such services or that they felt as though they were inaccessible for students who were not considered to be high achieving scholars. What this may mean for higher education is explore ways on how to advertise “future oriented” services to this population while encouraging Dreamers to consider opportunities after their undergraduate education. Higher education should continue to encourage and push for competency amongst institutional agents surrounding undocumented students by creating staff trainings, informational sessions regarding updates on immigration policies, and open forums to encourage open conversation around how to better serve undocumented students. Institutions should also advocate for a department, space and/or agent to primarily work with undocumented students as a way to offer additional support for Dreamers pursuing higher education.

Directions for Future Research

Suggestions for future research could strive for a more inclusive sample that looks at other undocumented groups aside from Latinx, undocumented individuals. It is important to note that while a large chunk of the undocumented population is comprised of Latinx individuals, others who are undocumented may not have fallen into their undocumented status as a result of having an unauthorized entrance into the United States nor do all undocumented members self-identify as members of the Latinx community. Recruitment of other participants can also include other marginalized, ethnic groups or future research can be compared to international students, whose authorization to enter and remain in the United States are granted through other federal policies and regulations. Another suggestion would be to utilize local organizations that work

with undocumented students and families and to recruit participants through them in an attempt to reach students attending the various institutions within Minnesota.

Conclusion

For many students, pursuing higher education comes with stressors, sacrifices, and the need for mental, emotional, and spiritual support. For Dreamers, these factors are still present but with many more barriers and hurdles to overcome as a result of their immigration status. While one may like to believe that higher education is accessible and equitable for all those who pursue a post-secondary education, the reality is that opportunities and services within the realm of higher education are not equal for undocumented students. The findings of this study show that while most services were found to be somewhat effective or effective for Dreamers, there is still room for these services to improve in order to better serve undocumented students in order to accommodate the needs of Dreamers in areas such as the need for better academic support from institutional agents, the need for accessible information and opportunities as their counterparts, and the need for better quality from services that are already offered.

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Appendix 1: Recruitment Announcement Via E-Mail

Subject: Participation Requested: Service Needs of Dreamers

Hello,

I am writing to let you know of an opportunity to participate in a research study that is exploring the higher educational service needs of Dreamers; this study is being conducted by Lesley Sisaket, a current graduate student at Saint Cloud State University. You are receiving this email because the researcher requested assistance from Latinx Student Services to relay this opportunity to all Augsburg University students who self-identified as Latinx on their college application. The goal of this study is to further encourage post-secondary institutions to find ways to support Dreamers as they strive to reach their full academic potential.

To be eligible to participate, participants must meet all of the following requirements:

- 1) Must be 18 years or older
- 2) Must have completed at least one academic semester at a 2- or 4-year institution within Minnesota
- 3) Self-identifies as Latinx
- 4) Self-identifies as undocumented or is a DACA recipient or
- 5) Experienced at least one semester as an individual who was either undocumented or a DACA recipient but is now a legal resident (e.g. Green Card holder) or an American citizen

For any questions that you may have, you can contact the researcher at LNSisaket@stcloudstate.edu. Request for more information does not obligate you to participate in this study.

Thank you for considering this research opportunity.

Lesley N. Sisaket

Appendix 2: Recruitment Announcement Via Facebook

Calling all DREAMers! I am conducting research to explore the higher educational service needs of Dreamers in hopes to further encourage post-secondary institutions to find ways to support DREAMers as they strive to reach their full academic potential.

Participants must meet all of the following requirements:

- 1) Must be 18 years or older
- 2) Must have completed at least one academic semester at a 2- or 4-year institution within Minnesota
- 3) Self-identifies as Latinx
- 4) Self-identifies as undocumented or is a DACA recipient or
- 5) Experienced at least one semester as an individual who was either undocumented or a DACA recipient but is now a legal resident (e.g. Green Card holder) or an American citizen

For any questions that you may have, please feel free to contact me at

LNSisaket@stcloudstate.edu. Request for more information does not obligate you to participate in this study.

Your participation is appreciated and for those who are ineligible to participate, I kindly request that you forward this research opportunity along to others, if you are able to. Thank you.

Appendix 3: Implied Consent

You are invited to participate in this study, which aims to understand the higher educational service needs of Dreamers (undocumented and DACA students) within Minnesota's higher education institutions. You have been selected because you self-identify as undocumented or you are a DACA recipient. The research is being conducted by Lesley Sisaket, for their graduate thesis.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to focus on higher educational resources that have been of assistance to undocumented and DACAmented students as well as any service needs that remain or could be improved in the eyes of the undocumented and DACAmented students who have been recently enrolled in Minnesota's higher educational institutions.

Procedure

Should you agree to participate, you will be asked to complete a 10-minute survey via Google Forms. The survey is anonymous.

Risks

There are no foreseeable risks correlated with your participation in this study.

Confidentiality

As previously stated, completion of the survey will be done anonymously. Raw data collected from this study will be destroyed once the researcher has received their degree.

Research Results/ Contact Information

If you are interested in learning of the results for the survey or if you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact the researcher at LNSisaket@stcloudstate.edu or the faculty advisor, Seth Christman, at SChristman@stcloudstate.edu.

Voluntary Participation/Withdrawal

Participation in this study is voluntary. Should you feel the need to withdrawal from the study, you may do so at anytime without any penalty.

Acceptance to Participate

Completion and submission of the survey indicates that you have met the requirements making you eligible to participate and you consent to participating in the study.

Disclaimer

It is advised that you log out of any Google service prior to clicking on the link

Appendix 4: Demographic Questionnaire

What is your first language?

- English
- Spanish
- Other

What language do you currently use most often?

- English
- Spanish
- Other

What gender do you identify as?

- Male
- Female
- Other

How old are you? _____

What is your country of birth? _____

What is your immigration status?

- Undocumented
- Undocumented with DACA
- Temporary protected status
- Other

Are you eligible for the Minnesota Dream Act?

- Yes
- No

Which higher educational institution are you attending? If not currently attending any institution list all higher education institutions attended in the past. _____

What is the city and state of the institution you are attending or attended in the past? _____

What degree(s) are you pursuing?

- None
- Associates
- Bachelor of Science/Bachelor of Arts
- Master of Science/ Master of Arts
- Other

What degree(s) have you earned?

- None
- Associates
- Bachelor of Science/Bachelor of Arts
- Master of Science/ Master of Arts
- Other

Appendix 6: Qualitative Questionnaire

Please list any other services (and their departments) that you have utilized in the past semester

Long answer text

For any service that you rated as a 3 or lower, please discuss why the service was not effective. Then, discuss what could be improved about the service to better meet your needs.

Long answer text

Appendix 7: Summary of Descriptive Statistics for Overall Sample

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Writing resumes & cover letters	13	1.0	5.0	3.692	1.3775
Career Exploration	13	1.0	5.0	3.385	1.1929
Personality and Professional Assessments (e.g. Myers Briggs, StrengthsQuest)	14	1.0	5.0	3.571	1.4525
Test or academic preparation (e.g. GRE/GMAT preparation, graduate school application review)	10	1.0	4.0	2.500	1.4337
Student records (e.g. transcript requests)	15	1.0	5.0	3.733	1.1629
Academic Forms (i.e. intent to graduate, change of major)	15	1.0	5.0	3.733	1.1629
Understanding program prerequisites	15	1.0	5.0	3.600	1.4041
Academic accommodations (e.g. additional time for exams, need for a note taker)	12	1.0	5.0	4.083	1.0836
Housing accommodations (e.g. meal plan, independent living space)	13	1.0	5.0	3.231	1.5359
Short-term individual counseling (often offered through the institution's counseling center)	12	1.0	5.0	3.833	1.0299
Valid N (listwise)	9				

**Appendix 8: Summary of Descriptive Statistics for Overall Sample
without Rating of MCTC/NHCC Student**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Writing resumes & cover letters	12	1.0	5.0	3.917	1.1645
Career Exploration	12	1.0	5.0	3.583	.9962
Personality and Professional Assessments (e.g. Myers Briggs, StrengthsQuest)	13	1.0	5.0	3.769	1.3009
Test or academic preparation (e.g. GRE/GMAT preparation, graduate school application review)	9	1.0	4.0	2.667	1.4142
Student records (e.g. transcript requests)	14	2.0	5.0	3.929	.9169
Academic Forms (i.e. intent to graduate, change of major)	14	2.0	5.0	3.929	.9169
Understanding program prerequisites	14	2.0	5.0	3.786	1.2514
Academic accommodations (e.g. additional time for exams, need for a note taker)	11	4.0	5.0	4.364	.5045
Housing accommodations (e.g. meal plan, independent living space)	12	1.0	5.0	3.417	1.4434
Short-term individual counseling (often offered through the institution's counseling center)	11	3.0	5.0	4.091	.5394
Valid N (listwise)	8				

Appendix 9: Summary of Descriptive Statistics for Undocumented Participants

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Writing resumes & cover letters	1	5.0	5.0	5.000	.
Career Exploration	1	4.0	4.0	4.000	.
Personality and Professional Assessments (e.g. Myers Briggs, StrengthsQuest)	1	5.0	5.0	5.000	.
Test or academic preparation (e.g. GRE/GMAT preparation, graduate school application review)	0				
Student records (e.g. transcript requests)	1	5.0	5.0	5.000	.
Academic Forms (i.e. intent to graduate, change of major)	1	5.0	5.0	5.000	.
Understanding program prerequisites	1	5.0	5.0	5.000	.
Academic accommodations (e.g. additional time for exams, need for a note taker)	1	4.0	4.0	4.000	.
Housing accommodations (e.g. meal plan, independent living space)	1	5.0	5.0	5.000	.
Short-term individual counseling (often offered through the institution's counseling center)	1	4.0	4.0	4.000	.
Valid N (listwise)	0				

**Appendix 10: Summary of Descriptive Statistics for
Undocumented with DACA Participants**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Writing resumes & cover letters	7	1.0	4.0	3.000	1.4142
Career Exploration	7	1.0	4.0	3.000	1.4142
Personality and Professional Assessments (e.g. Myers Briggs, StrengthsQuest)	8	1.0	5.0	2.875	1.5526
Test or academic preparation (e.g. GRE/GMAT preparation, graduate school application review)	6	1.0	4.0	2.167	1.4720
Student records (e.g. transcript requests)	9	1.0	5.0	3.222	1.2019
Academic Forms (i.e. intent to graduate, change of major)	9	1.0	5.0	3.222	1.2019
Understanding program prerequisites	9	1.0	5.0	3.222	1.4814
Academic accommodations (e.g. additional time for exams, need for a note taker)	6	1.0	5.0	3.833	1.4720
Housing accommodations (e.g. meal plan, independent living space)	7	1.0	4.0	2.429	1.5119
Short-term individual counseling (often offered through the institution's counseling center)	6	1.0	5.0	3.667	1.3663
Valid N (listwise)	5				

**Appendix 11: Summary of Descriptive Statistics for
Temporary Protected Status Participants**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Writing resumes & cover letters	3	3.0	5.0	4.333	1.1547
Career Exploration	3	3.0	5.0	4.000	1.0000
Personality and Professional Assessments (e.g. Myers Briggs, StrengthsQuest)	3	4.0	5.0	4.333	.5774
Test or academic preparation (e.g. GRE/GMAT preparation, graduate school application review)	3	3.0	4.0	3.667	.5774
Student records (e.g. transcript requests)	3	4.0	4.0	4.000	.0000
Academic Forms (i.e. intent to graduate, change of major)	3	4.0	5.0	4.333	.5774
Understanding program prerequisites	3	2.0	5.0	3.667	1.5275
Academic accommodations (e.g. additional time for exams, need for a note taker)	3	4.0	5.0	4.333	.5774
Housing accommodations (e.g. meal plan, independent living space)	3	3.0	5.0	4.000	1.0000
Short-term individual counseling (often offered through the institution's counseling center)	3	3.0	5.0	4.000	1.0000
Valid N (listwise)	3				

Appendix 12: Summary of Descriptive Statistics for Asylum Participants

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Writing resumes & cover letters	1	5.0	5.0	5.000	.
Career Exploration	1	4.0	4.0	4.000	.
Personality and Professional Assessments (e.g. Myers Briggs, StrengthsQuest)	1	5.0	5.0	5.000	.
Test or academic preparation (e.g. GRE/GMAT preparation, graduate school application review)	0				
Student records (e.g. transcript requests)	1	5.0	5.0	5.000	.
Academic Forms (i.e. intent to graduate, change of major)	1	4.0	4.0	4.000	.
Understanding program prerequisites	1	5.0	5.0	5.000	.
Academic accommodations (e.g. additional time for exams, need for a note taker)	1	5.0	5.0	5.000	.
Housing accommodations (e.g. meal plan, independent living space)	1	5.0	5.0	5.000	.
Short-term individual counseling (often offered through the institution's counseling center)	1	4.0	4.0	4.000	.
Valid N (listwise)	0				

Appendix 13: Summary of Descriptive Statistics for U.S. Resident Participants

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Writing resumes & cover letters	1	4.0	4.0	4.000	.
Career Exploration	1	3.0	3.0	3.000	.
Personality and Professional Assessments (e.g. Myers Briggs, StrengthsQuest)	1	4.0	4.0	4.000	.
Test or academic preparation (e.g. GRE/GMAT preparation, graduate school application review)	1	1.0	1.0	1.000	.
Student records (e.g. transcript requests)	1	5.0	5.0	5.000	.
Academic Forms (i.e. intent to graduate, change of major)	1	5.0	5.0	5.000	.
Understanding program prerequisites	1	4.0	4.0	4.000	.
Academic accommodations (e.g. additional time for exams, need for a note taker)	1	4.0	4.0	4.000	.
Housing accommodations (e.g. meal plan, independent living space)	1	3.0	3.0	3.000	.
Short-term individual counseling (often offered through the institution's counseling center)	1	4.0	4.0	4.000	.
Valid N (listwise)	1				