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The Relationship between Acculturation and Parental Involvement in Latino Parents.

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The Relationship between Acculturation and

Parental Involvement in Latino Parents

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ACCULTURALTION AND PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN LATINO PARENTS

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University of Nebraska, 2008

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Parental involvement has received a lot of attention for being a crucial part of a child's academic success. However, there are differences between the types of involvement seen in White, middle-class parents and types of involvement seen in Latino parents. These cultural differences, specifically acculturation to the dominant culture, have had an impact on children's academic success. Unfortunately, there is little knowledge regarding the relationship between acculturation and the types of parental involvement seen in the Latino population. Therefore, the present research examines the relationship between acculturation and parental involvement in Latino parents by analyzing parent responses on questionnaires. Results suggest that both Anglo and Latino parents are involved mostly in homework help, reading, and providing general support. However, Latino parents tend to be more involved in these activities compared to Anglo parents. On the other hand, Anglo parents tend to be more involved in school and extracurricular activities compared to Latino parents. Implications for school psychologists are also discussed.

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The United States has traditionally been home to people from a variety of cultures

and diverse backgrounds. Recently, one minority group has been growing significantly

faster than others. In 2005 the Latino population became the largest minority group in

the United States, making up 13% of the country's population (United States Department

of Education [USDE], 2003). Most immigrants or have an ethnic heritage from Mexico,

Puerto Rico, Cuba, and Central and South America. The United States Department of

Education has projected that by 2050 the Latino population will grow to make up 50% of

the United States' population.

As the years go by, schools are seeing more and more Latino students in their

classrooms. In fact, by the year 2020 the USDE (2003) is predicting that one in five

children under the age of 18 will be of Hispanic or Latino descent. The growing number

of Spanish speaking Latino families in U.S. schools is causing educators across the

country to take notice of factors concerning this population. Many immigrants and

Latino citizens have limited experience with the English language. Consequently,

educators are confronting challenges in their classrooms and schools when trying to

instruct and communicate with Spanish speaking students and their families. Latino

children are less likely to receive pre-educational services and have higher dropout rates

when compared to White and Black children. Most importantly, there is a significant gap

in academic achievement between Latino students and White students (USDE, 2003).

The growing number of Latino students and families are facing numerous barriers in U.S. schools. Language barriers can cause many difficulties when Spanish speaking students attempt to succeed in U.S. schools. Speaking a different language can impede their understanding of teacher instruction and their ability to actively engage in classroom discussion. The language barrier also causes difficulties when trying to communicate with teachers and school personnel. In addition, these students face many cultural barriers because of the pressure to acculturate to the dominant culture. Students coming from the non-dominant culture tend to be marginalized because their beliefs and behaviors are perceived to be inferior to the beliefs and behaviors of the dominant culture (Kincheloe, 2005). Cultural barriers can be damaging because U.S. schools tend to orient themselves to best serve the dominant, White, middle-class while ignoring the non-dominant cultures (Olivos, 2004).

Many of the minorities that traditionally struggle in schools are those minorities that have been forced to conform to the dominant culture (e.g. Mexican Americans that were colonized in Southwest United States). These minorities may verbally endorse the value of education but their personal beliefs may be quite different. They are more likely to attribute their difficulties to "institutionalized discrimination," which cannot be overcome through hard work and education (Ogbu, 1992). Although education is perceived as the key to success for minority families, some minorities distrust school personnel because educators control the societal institutions that attempt to maintain the minorities' marginalized group identities by refusing to break down cultural boundaries. This distrust and helplessness might help explain why some minorities coming from a

low socioeconomic class are also less involved in their children's education (Crozier, 1999; Griffith, 1998; Hickman, Greenwood, & Miller, 1995).

Latino students are coming to school with different experiences than educators are accustomed to seeing. Their experiences and knowledge are commonly perceived as inferior to those of the dominant culture. One difference commonly seen between Latino families and other American families is the role of the parents in the child's education (Martinez, DeGarmo, & Eddy, 2004; Velez-Ibanez & Greenberg, 1992). Recently, parental involvement has received a lot of attention for being a crucial part to a child's academic success (e.g. level of education attainment, grades, and academic aspirations). However, Latino parents may be engaged in different types of parental involvement due to factors such as cultural differences or different levels of acculturation to the dominant culture. There is a gap regarding knowledge about the relationship between acculturation to the dominant culture and parental involvement. Therefore, it is vital to understand the relationship between acculturation differences and the role these differences play in the types of parental involvement seen in Latino families. By understanding the relationship between acculturation and parental involvement, schools might be better able to serve the culturally diverse families.

Relevance to School Psychology

School psychologists have a broad role in schools. These professionals are trained in many areas to help improve school environments and students' functioning in the school. One important role of the school psychologists is to work directly and indirectly to facilitate student achievement at school (Ysseldyke et al. 1997). Therefore,

educators must be familiar with factors that may increase or decrease the chance of

students succeeding academically and socially in school. If parental involvement is one

of a few key factors in students' overall success then school psychologists must

understand this relationship and know how to facilitate parental involvement. Another

role of school psychologists is to promote home/school collaboration (Ysseldyke et. al.).

They need to be aware of ways to strengthen this relationship and to understand cultural

issues that may impact this collaboration. School psychologists should also help schools

and parents develop socialized and competent children by helping parents raise their

children in an environment that supports education. To accomplish these goals, school

psychologists should be sensitive to and aware of differences in parenting techniques and

involvement. They should strive to understand the strengths that each family brings to its

child's education and then capitalize on these. By knowing more about the effects of

cultural differences and acculturation to the dominant culture, school psychologists are

better able to facilitate the parental involvement process.

<div align="center">Literature Review</div>

Parental Involvement

Several types of parental involvement are commonly cited in the research (Bacete

& Remirez, 2001; Barge & Loges, 2003; Epstein, 1995; Hong & Ho, 2005; Kelly-Vance

et al., 2006). Firstly, monitoring and supervising children's academics are frequently

cited types of parental involvement. This includes activities such as helping the child

with homework or checking completed homework assignments. A second type of

parental involvement is communicating with teachers and school staff, which involves

discussing the student's progress or sharing what is going on at home. Volunteering to assist in activities at the school, whether in or out of the classroom, is a third type of parental involvement. Examples of volunteer activities include helping with classroom parties or projects, planning school activities, and helping with fundraising efforts. The final type of parental involvement is participating in extracurricular school and community functions. Parents may get their children involved in sports, take them to the library or museums, and interact with other parents to provide a community based child support system.

Education experts are prematurely demanding increases in parental involvement in all cultures and socioeconomic classes without thoroughly looking at the definition of parental involvement and what it implies (Barge & Loges, 2003; Lightfoot, 2004). Minority families are often shown in a negative light with regard to their involvement in their children's education. Traditional variables and parent involvement measures are more valid for the White, middle-class than for low-income minority parents (Desimone, 1999; Lightfoot; Valencia & Black, 2002). Many of these original definitions are derived from other studies that focus on the dominant culture and socioeconomic class in society. Because of the systemic and societal influences that negatively affect the non-dominant culture more than the dominant culture, previous findings on parental involvement using traditional variables may not be representative of the Latino population (Desimone). In many cases, minorities living in a lower socioeconomic class may lack the resources needed to be actively involved in their children's education (Hickman, Greenwood, & Miller, 1995).

A concise conclusion has not been made on the exact effects of parental involvement on school success. Current researchers hypothesize that involvement by the parents models the importance of education to the child, leading to higher academic aspirations. Parental involvement may also help a family increase their social and cultural resources which in turn could positively affect academic success. Other researchers hypothesize that parental involvement may influence the children's attitudes towards themselves (Edlung, Luckner, Whaley, & Egeland, 2004; Hong & Ho, 2005; Ibanez, Kupermine, Jurkovic, 2004). Nevertheless, parental involvement can be a potential way to facilitate success in school (Bacete & Remirez, 2001; Hong & Ho, 2005; Lightfoot, 2004). However, significant discrepancies are found when different parties define parental involvement (Barge & Loges, 2003; Lopez, G., Scribner, & Mahitivanichcha, 2001). Barge and Loges specifically looked at the different definitions of parental involvement in 80 parents and 63 teachers. Information regarding parent and teacher perceptions of parental involvement was collected over 6 months through focus group sessions. Overall parents were found to have a broader view of involvement while teachers have a much narrower view. The parents report involvement in monitoring homework, building relationships with teachers, getting their children involved in extracurricular activities, rallying the support community resources, and being involved in curriculum and instructional decisions.

Teachers, on the other hand, expect parents to initiate and maintain contact with the teacher as well as communicate with their child on a daily basis about the activities at school (Barges & Loges, 2003). Teachers also expect parents to be available to help out

in the classrooms and at other school functions (Lawson, 2003). In general, teachers emphasize that all involvement, no matter where it occurs, should enhance learning and be centered on the activities taking place at school. Other teacher beliefs about parental involvement include good parenting, such as providing good nutrition, school supplies, clothes, and food. Teachers also expect parents to enforce some type of discipline at home and to support the discipline measures at school (Barge & Loges). In general, educators define parental involvement as supporting academic achievement and participating in school functions as well as initiating contact with the schools.

Bacete and Remirez (2001) specifically looked at teacher perceptions of the relationship between parental involvement and school success. Teachers were asked to assess parental involvement in the school and estimate the cultural or acculturation levels of 150 Spanish seventh grade students and their families. The findings suggest that teachers believe parental involvement to be a crucial factor in their students' school success. They specifically view involvement at school to be most important and that noninvolvement potentially creates negative school outcomes. In fact, these teachers' beliefs about parental involvement influence the evaluation of their students. Teachers favor families who had a physical presence in the school and who possess high levels of education and professional status. The way teachers perceive and feel about their students affects the way they teach, how they interact with their students, and how they evaluate their students (Desimone, 1999). Teachers have an expectation of what parental involvement entails and if parents are not fitting this mold then their involvement is ignored and their child may suffer as a result.

The different definitions of effective involvement can lead to high levels of friction between teachers and parents. Both teachers and parents emphasize the importance of building positive relationships with each other and monitoring children's progress (Barge & Loges, 2003). Yet, teachers expect the parents to initiate this relationship and parents expect teachers to initiate the contact. Another conflicting difference was that teachers emphasized the importance of communicating with parents while the parents thought it was more important to communicate with community resources (Barge & Loges, 2003). Understanding the different perspectives of effective parent-teacher involvement is important to building a positive relationship between teachers and parents.

Cultural Differences in Parental Involvement

Not only are there differences between the beliefs of teachers and parents but there can also be different beliefs about parental involvement between cultures. Understanding the differences in beliefs is important due to the growing diversity seen in U.S. schools. Children from culturally diverse backgrounds are frequently stereotyped. "Deficit thinking" blames the victim instead of holding the oppressive and inequitable education system responsible (Valencia & Black, 2002). Schools are rarely held responsible for producing the significant differences seen between low-income, minority students and middle class, White students. Instead, the low income, minority families are held responsible for their failures usually blamed on some deficit or internal defect that hinders their ability to be involved and succeed (Valencia & Black).

Being from a non-dominant culture does not mean these children are less equipped with knowledge and resources. However, schools commonly ignore the cultural resources an ethnic group possesses. Velez-Ibanez & Greenberg (1992) found that Latino children are coming to schools with widely different experiences compared to the White, middle-class child. Latino children are socialized and taught differently (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992). These children are expected to learn independently by asking questions and engaging in their own play. They are encouraged to experiment and failure is not a negative consequence. Children of migrant workers often work with their parents and therefore learn about agriculture, weather, machinery, construction, business, and adaptive or survival strategies. Latino children are bringing a wealth of knowledge to school with them, but it is up to the educators to make use of these resources. In fact, once educators take an active role in learning about their students and the cultures they come from, it is easier to understand their background knowledge. Educators can then take advantage of these resources and engage their students while encouraging development within their own cultures (Gonzalez et al. 1995).

Culturally diverse parents are often blamed for not getting involved or for not having the right attitudes about school (Lightfoot, 2004; Valdes, 1996; Valencia & Black, 2002). Some educators feel these parents are not preparing their children for school. Differences between Latino culture and the dominant White culture could account for the different roles these parents take in their children's education. Gandara (1995) found that Latino parents teach their children by providing solutions without self discovery, which

may limit the independence of learning commonly emphasized in the U.S. school culture.

Latino parents also tend to engage in more authoritarian parenting styles by developing

and enforcing rules with minimal input from their children which could limit the

independence and self-efficacy in their children. However, independence and self-

efficacy are emphasized in the Latino culture in other ways. Independence is modeled in

the work ethic possessed by the adults in the family. Latino families also appear to create

a world of possibility for their children. They wanted their children to believe they can

do and accomplish whatever they want to. As a result, cultural differences affect

parenting styles, which in turn affect the ways minority parents may be involved in their

children's education.

Prejudgments or biases are often made towards low income or minority parents

that change their involvement in their children's education. The middle-class, majority

parents are viewed as "overflowing" with valuable resources and knowledge that

contribute to their children's education (Lightfoot, 2004). However, many educators

view the minority parents as incompetent and lacking resources (Lawson, 2003;

Lightfoot; Valencia & Black, 2002). Minority parents are seen as "empty" and deficient

in knowledge (Lightfoot). Many of the parent programs commonly seen in low income

communities focus on teaching parents what they should know instead of taking

advantage of the resources and knowledge they already bring to their children's education

and lives (Lightfoot). Latino children are exposed to numerous experiences that facilitate

cognitive growth and development. These children develop a knowledge base that is

quite different from the typical knowledge base of a child from the dominant culture. Yet

sadly, the importance of the Latino family's experiences and knowledge are often ignored or overlooked by educators (Moll et al., 1992).

Many educators believe that Latinos do not value education (Valencia & Black, 2002). Educators think that Latino parents do not encourage academic achievement or engage in parental involvement. Many educators perceive these parents as less involved than parents from higher socioeconomic classes (Bacete & Remirez, 2001). However, Lopez, Sanchez, & Hamilton (2000) looked at parental involvement in 393 Mexican American parents. Questionnaires were distributed in both Spanish and English to the parents of elementary school children. Mothers, specifically, were generally supportive of their children and their children's education. Immigrant parents were actively involved in their children's education by helping with homework, attending meetings and school functions, volunteering at school, and participating in fundraising events. And most importantly, findings confirmed that Latino parents valued education as a way of moving up.

Minority families deal with discouraging obstacles on a daily basis that could potentially hamper their interest and involvement in schools. The obstacles often include not being welcomed at school because of language or racial barriers, or needing their children to help them financially because of the low and unfair wages earned by the parents (Olivos, 2004). Families living in a lower socioeconomic class may also lack resources (e.g. time, money, transportation) needed to be more involved in school activities (Hickman, Greenwood, & Miller, 1995). Many schools do not offer language support for these bilingual families, for example, having a translator at meetings with the

school board and teachers (Olivos, 2004). Based on these findings, Latino families have a harder time being involved in their children's schools in the specific way deemed ideal by the teachers. However, this does not imply that Latino parents are not involved in their children's education outside of school.

Olivos (2004) wrote a compelling narrative about his personal experiences with Latino parents and public schools. Through his work he found that Latino parents do have an interest and desire to participate in their children's education but they are not aware of the political structures that hinder the involvement of low-income, bilingual parents and communities. Latino parents report disrespectful office staff or administrators who do not understand the culture of the community or who leave them out of important decision making processes as quite discouraging. Public schools have a historic reputation of imposing values and wishes of the dominant culture onto the bicultural students and parents (Olivos). Schools tend to reproduce the inequities seen in society (Kincheloe, 2005). So while many Latino families have the desire to participate they may lack the necessary resources to access valuable information about the education of their children. Furthermore, they may lack the appropriate resources to be a change agent and repair some of the educational injustices.

School personnel must understand the culture of the families they are serving. Not only must educators understand the general culture of their student population they must also understand how these families view their world and their place in it. Some minorities feel their difficulties are due to institutional factors that cannot be overcome by hard work and education (Ogbu, 1992). Educators must recognize whether or not

families interpret cultural differences as merely different or oppositional. Families who view cultural differences as non-oppositional interpret barriers in the schools as challenges to overcome. However, families who have an oppositional stance, view barriers in the schools as ways to maintain their identity as the non-dominant, marginalized culture (Ogbu). Many conflicts seen between Latino parents and schools are products of their differing views and values. The lack of communication between the schools and parents could also be the source of many problems. The barriers experienced by minorities may help explain the differences seen in their types of involvement.

Latino parents have different beliefs about how they should be involved in their child's education (Ramirez, 2003; Valdes, 1996). When interviewed, Latino parents report that they feel it is not their place to be in schools. They feel the teachers are better suited to educate their children. Latino families view their role as instilling values into their children and providing a safe and healthy environment for them (Valdes). Furthermore, some parents perceive teachers to have lower expectations for their children and even lower expectations of the parents compared to children and parents coming from higher socioeconomic schools (Ramirez). Valencia and Black (2002) proposed a commonly held belief that children lacking two parents who read to them, observably value education, and reward them for success are socially disadvantaged. These destructive ways of thinking need to be contested, replacing them with more accurate ways of thinking. One way to do this is to recognize the differences between cultures and to highlight each culture's strengths as well as the barriers in place. Latino parents are involved in their children's education; however, Latino parents experience cultural and

language barriers on a daily basis that impede their involvement in schools (Martinez, et

al., 2004; Moreno, 1999). Therefore, they tend to be more involved in their children's

home life because they view their responsibility as teaching values and providing a safe

and healthy environment for their children. Not all involvement has to take place in the

school for Latino children to benefit from it. By communicating with children and

encouraging academic achievement Latino parents can have a significant impact on their

children's academic successes (Englund et al., 2004; Fantuzzo, McWayne, & Perry,

2004; Hong & Ho, 2005; Ibanez et al., 2004; Martinez et al., 2004). Ibanez, et al.

questioned 129 Latino high school students, both immigrant and U.S. born children of

immigrants. A positive correlation was found between parental involvement, educational

expectations, achievement motivation, and the importance of school. A longitudinal study

found Latino parental communication and parental encouragement to be crucial in

improving Latino students' aspirations to achieve higher educational levels (Hong & Ho).

Data was gathered from 24,599 eight graders coming from numerous ethnic backgrounds

(Asian Americans, African Americans, Hispanics, and Whites), which showed that more

communication at home significantly helped Latino children to aspire to achieve higher

levels of education. Higher levels of aspiration then led to greater academic achievement

with long term effects. The same results were found in another longitudinal study done

by Englund and colleagues (2004). Their participants were low income mothers with

Caucasian and African American backgrounds. The findings suggested a bidirectional

relationship. When parents are involved in school by attending parent-teacher

conferences, building a relationship with teachers, and having higher achievement

expectations, their children tend to have higher achievement expectations.

In general, home-based involvement was more strongly correlated with positive

school outcomes than school-based involvement in low-income, urban families.

Different types of involvement may be more helpful to children from different cultural

backgrounds. Furthermore, the types of involvement parents engage in are definitely

affected by their cultural background. By summarizing the research findings discussed

above, Latino parents experience more barriers to participating in schools than non-

Latino parents. Therefore Latino parents may be more involved in their children's lives

at home than at school and this type of involvement may actually be better for their

children.

Acculturation

Across cultures, parents are involved differently in their children's education.

Many of these cultural differences may be due to the families' levels of acculturation into

the dominant white culture. Therefore it is important to understand how acculturation

can impact parental involvement and school success. Acculturation is a common

measure used to assess the degree to which immigrants assimilate to a new culture.

Redfield, Linton, & Herskovits (1936) define acculturation as the phenomena that results

when groups of individuals from different cultures come into continuous first-hand

contact with changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups.

Acculturation can happen for many reasons. Some people voluntarily move and naturally

engage in the acculturation process. Other people are forced into a new culture and

therefore forced to engage in the process. Unfortunately, many immigrants are forced to acculturate to the dominant culture even when they do not want to.

Traditionally, there are four types of acculturation: assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalization (Cabassa, 2003; Cueller, Arnold, & Maldonado, 1995). Assimilation happens when the individual loses their original cultural identity as they acquire a new cultural identity. Integration occurs when the individual is oriented towards both cultures; in other words he/she feels comfortable functioning in both cultures and identifies with each. Separation takes place when the individual maintains identity with his/her original culture and resists adapting to the new culture. And lastly, marginalization happens when the individual completely gives up the original cultural identity to solely identify with the new culture but then is rejected by the new culture. Therefore, people are not able to identify with either culture.

Acculturation and School Success

Strong links have been established between parental involvement and school success. However, there are many discrepancies between the types of parental involvement seen in immigrant parents compared to American parents. Since parental involvement has been linked to school success, it is crucial to understand the relationship between acculturation and school success. Many educators believe that children from different countries or cultures come to U.S. schools with a disadvantage (Valdes, 1996). Minority, immigrant children are seen as culturally deprived or not having the educational experiences that are valued in U.S. schools. In fact, cultural discrimination has been influencing U.S. schools since the early 1900s. During these times, immigrants

from Ireland and Italy were commonly placed in lower educational tracks because American educators did not believe immigrants had the intellectual abilities to succeed in traditional subjects (Valdes). Parental expectations and educational aspirations then diminished. Without being inspired and pushed by their parents, these children remained in the lower tracks and continued on this path into the work force. Sadly, one hundred years later this type of cultural discrimination is still evident in U.S. schools (Manaster, et al., 1992; Martinez, et al., 2004).

The link between acculturation and school success has been well established. For example, Manaster et al. (1992) examined the acculturation differences between two groups of Latino migrant students by looking at information collected on questionnaires regarding demographic and background information. One group of students was retained a grade (unsuccessful group) while the other group was on a normal educational track (successful group). A higher percentage of the retained group (44.6%) and their parents (82.5%) were born in Mexico compared to the successful group (17.9%) and their parents (56.1%). Furthermore, the successful group came from parents with higher levels of education and better jobs. The students from the successful group were in a more acculturated position towards the U.S. culture compared to the retained students. Thus, higher acculturation levels, assimilation or integration, are predictive of greater success in school.

Not only are less acculturated students perceived as struggling in academics, but they also appear to be less involved in school. Immigrant students have a harder time getting involved in schools. Latino students report experiencing more barriers when

attempting to participate in school activities compared to non-Latino students (Martinez

et al. 2004). The barriers make it challenging to encourage Latinos to get involved and

see the importance of school. Some minorities may believe barriers further suppress the

minority students and maintain their inferior identity to the dominant culture (Ogbu,

1992). This belief may lead to feelings of resentment and defeat. Marginalized

minorities may give up the idea of being involved and being academically successful in

schools because of these feelings.

Masten and Plata (2000) examined the characteristics of 87 White and 63

Hispanic fifth grade students and their teachers' perceptions of them. Results showed

that students who were more assimilated to the United States culture were perceived by

their teachers as possessing desired learning characteristics, motivation, creativity, and

leadership when compared to less acculturated students. Students born in the United

States reported higher levels of perceived competence and higher aspirations, whereas the

students born outside the United States reported lower levels of perceived competence

and lower aspirations. In fact, greater levels of acculturation predicted a lower likelihood

of dropout and better school outcomes (Martinez et. al., 2004). Based on these findings,

it appears that higher levels of acculturation (assimilation or integration) are positively

correlated with higher levels of academic success. Acculturation may actually play a part

in students' attitudes about school (Ibanez et al., 2004). When Latino parents are more

involved in their child's school, the students who are more acculturated to American

society perceive the importance of school to be higher. Higher levels of acculturation

may also lead to more shared beliefs between minorities and the dominant culture with

regards to the importance of parental involvement in their children's schools, their educational expectations, and their perception of the importance of school.

Acculturation is a construct created by the dominant cultures that may heavily influence how people view immigrants or minorities. People from the dominant culture may view acculturation as a necessity and the only way to succeed in the dominant culture. Therefore, their judgments of less acculturated people may be negative in nature. The perception of acculturation may have more impact on people's judgments and acceptance regardless of how successful or adaptive the minority student or family has become. Acculturation could be potentially harmful to families or larger cultural groups. Gandara (1995) found that rapid assimilation to a new culture can actually be detrimental to some children. The most academically successful children remained tied to their own culture in one way or another. Therefore, while higher levels of acculturation are positively correlated to school success, it is important to remember that retaining an identity with their primary culture is also important to these students' success (e.g. integration). The importance of assimilating to a new culture may differ depending on the individual or the family involved along with the perceptions and judgments of the dominant culture.

Acculturation and Parental Involvement

The link between parental involvement and school success has been well established (Bacete & Remirez, 2001; Edlung et al., 2004; Fantuzzo et al., 2004; Hong & Ho, 2005; Ibanez et al., 2004; Martinez et al., 2004). There is also evidence of a positive correlation between high levels of acculturation and high levels of achievement

(Manaster et al., 1992; Martinez et al., 2004; Masten & Plata, 2000). However, little is known about the effects of acculturation on parental involvement. Recently immigrated Latino parents face unique challenges. The process of acculturation can be quite stressful. Much of their social support is lost when they move from their country to the United States. Most Latinos place a high value on social and family ties so the loss of this support can be detrimental (Smart & Smart, 1995). Many of these immigrants continue to move back and forth between their country and the United States (Smart & Smart). They never fully identify with the American culture or learn the language. All of these factors make it challenging to be actively involved in their children's education, specifically at school. Particularly, Latino and less acculturated parents have reported more barriers to participation in school activities (Martinez et al., 2004; Moreno, 1999). They may feel less welcome at school due to cultural and language barriers. Moreno found that less acculturated mothers reported lower levels of perceived efficacy and less knowledge of school activities compared to the more acculturated mothers. However, no differences were found with respect to the quantity of parental involvement. Immigrant parents are still very much involved in their children's lives, just in a different way than parents of the dominant culture. Acculturation levels may in fact affect the types of involvement these parents engage in. More acculturated parents may be more involved at school while less acculturated parents may be more involved at home, due to the barriers they are more likely to experience.

Summary

Contrary to commonly held beliefs, Latino parents do value education and want their children to succeed in school (Valdes, 1996). Latino parents hold positive views towards education; however, they have different beliefs regarding the role they should play in their children's education (Lawson, 2003; Valdes). They hold the responsibility of instilling values and providing safety and good health to their children. Latino and other minority parents deal with many cultural barriers that make it difficult for them to engage in their children's education through school exchanges. Some minorities distrust educators because of their position in institutions that suppress or marginalize the non-dominant culture (Ogbu, 1992). Minority parents do not always feel comfortable interacting with the teacher and school personnel because of language barriers and unwelcoming interactions (Lopez, G. et al., 2001; Martinez et al., 2004; Moreno, 1999; Olivos, 2004; Valdes). Immigrant parents are also dealing with the stress of moving to a new country and adapting to a new culture and way of life (Smart & Smart, 1995).

The links between acculturation and parental involvement in schools has been supported. Lower acculturation levels appear to correlate with more barriers to participation, lower levels of perceived efficacy in the parents, and less knowledge about school activities (Martinez et al., 2004; Moreno, 1999). On the other hand, higher levels of acculturation are related to higher levels of perceived efficacy, more knowledge about school activities, and more access to resources within the school (Martinez et al.; Moreno). Parents with strong Latino identities feel it is the teachers' responsibility to formally educate their children at school. Latino parents feel that teachers are better

suited for the education of their children while they are better suited to provide support and care at home (Ramirez, 2003; Valdes, 1996). Latino parents who are less familiar with U.S. schools experience more barriers when attempting to get involved at school (Valdes). Understanding how acculturation relates to parental involvement could be an important part of the puzzle for educators in understanding the role of minority parents in their children's education. By knowing the expectations of Latino parents, schools could make changes to the resources provided and the expectations of these parents. Hopefully, by aligning the expectations of schools and parents, more collaboration and greater success in Latino students will be produced.

Current Study

The current study specifically examines the relationship between acculturation and parental involvement. Parents were recruited from a Dual Language (Spanish and English) program in a Midwestern school. Information was gathered related to the levels of acculturation to the dominant culture and types of involvement by parents in their children's education. Parental involvement information was gathered using an open-ended question to let the parents personally define their involvement. Acculturation was measured using a revised version of the Acculturation Rating Scale for Mexican-Americans-II (ARSMA-II) (Cuellar, Arnold, & Maldonado, 1995).

Less acculturated or more Latino oriented parents appear to have less resources within the school at their disposal and experience more barriers to school participation; however, these parents are still very involved in their children's education (Moreno, 1999). Furthermore, Lawson (2003), Ramirez (2003), and Valdes (1996) provide

information suggesting that less acculturated Latino parents view their role as supporting

and nurturing their children at home. Latino parents feel that teachers are better suited to

educate their children at school. Latino parents also report feeling less welcome at

schools (Martinez et al, 2004). However, as parents become more oriented to the

American culture and school structure, they begin to adopt traditional roles of

involvement. They experience fewer barriers to participating (Martinez et al) and they

are more aware of school activities (Moreno). Because of the limited research

specifically looking at the relationship between acculturation and parental involvement,

the proposed study set out to examine this relationship in more depth.

Method

Participants and Setting

The current study was part of a larger project involving a research team

(psychology professors and psychology graduate students) from a university setting.

Parents were recruited from a Midwestern elementary school with a Dual Language

Program (English and Spanish). Teachers and other school personnel assisted in

recruiting parents to participate in the study. Participants included 164 total parents,

however only 138 parents provided a complete set of responses to the questionnaire. Of

these 138 participants, 92 were Spanish speakers and 46 were English speakers. The

groups of speakers were established based on the language in which the participant chose

to complete the questionnaire. Therefore, the number of bilingual parents is unknown.

The Spanish speakers' countries of origin included largely Mexico, but also Guatemala,

Honduras, Paraguay, and Puerto Rico. The English speakers' country of origin was the

United States. Participants in the first generation group included 119 participants, 8

identified as second generation, 4 identified as third generation, 9 identified as fourth

generation, and 24 identified as fifth generation. Four participants did not report

generation levels, however; all of these participants were Spanish speaking and had lived

in the United States for 19 years or less. The Spanish-speaking group consisted of all

Latinos while the English-speaking group consisted of 8 African Americans, 10 Latinos,

21 Caucasians and 7 in the Other category.

The Dual Language program had been implemented in grades K-4 for five years.

Parents were able to decide if their child participated in the Dual Language program or in

the traditional classrooms when enrolling them in Kindergarten. Parents who chose to

enroll in the Dual Language program had to commit to keeping their child in that

program throughout their elementary schooling. The parents also had to complete a

minimum of twenty volunteer hours per school year. Half of the students in the Dual

Language program were native English speakers and half were native Spanish speakers.

The majority of the students (75%) was eligible for free and reduced lunch.

Dual Language Education Programs

A Two Way Immersion (50/50) Bilingual Education program is the current model

used in this school. Language majority (English) and language minority (Spanish)

students are educated together in the same bilingual class; they work together at all times,

and act as peer teachers (Thomas & Collier, 1997). Academic instruction was evenly

distributed between the two languages. The ratios are necessary for students to develop

high levels of non-English language proficiency among native English speakers and to promote academic achievement in language minority speakers (Howard et al, 2005).

Thomas and Collier (1997) suggest that by developing a child's primary language first, the knowledge base needed to acquire another language is in place which helps students succeed academically in the second language. Without first language support, students often fall behind the typical native English speaker and continue to stay behind through secondary school. In fact, typical bilingually educated students who achieve on grade level in their first language achieve in the 50th percentile in their second language in 4 to 7 years. The numbers are similar for native English speakers enrolled in a Dual Language program. However, immigrant students who are schooled only in their second language do not reach the 50th percentile until 7 to 10 years of schooling and the majority of these students never make it to the 50th percentile unless they receive some type of support in their first language.

Dual Language programs have become quite prevalent in many parts of the country. Since the 1960's when the programs were first developed in Canada to current day, the prevalence in the United States has increased from 1 program in 1960 to 315 programs in 2004. Most of the current programs are in California (104 schools) and Texas (52 schools) and are an English/Spanish model (234). Most of the Dual Language programs are only implemented in the early elementary to upper elementary grades. (Center for Applied Linguistics [CAP], 2005)

Instruments

A questionnaire, part of the larger research project, was developed in English and then translated to Spanish by a fluent Spanish speaker and then back-translated by another fluent Spanish speaker to assure the translation matched the original intent of each question resulting in the final version of the questionnaire in both Spanish and English. The original questionnaire included items measuring parents' definitions of school success, reported parental involvement, and reported barriers to involvement experienced by parents. For the purpose of this study only one open-ended question addressing parental involvement was used: What sorts of things do you do – either at home or at your child's school – to help your child be more successful at school? Parents were asked to write out their responses to the question regarding their involvement in their children's education. Typically, forced checklists are used to assess parental involvement. However, traditional measures of parental involvement may not be applicable to or reflective of involvement in a minority population. Allowing parents to provide their own definitions of parental involvement allowed for a variety of perspectives and unique perspectives of involvement.

An adapted version of the Acculturation Rating Scale for Mexican Americans-II (ARSMA-II) was used to assess acculturation levels by looking at the behavioral aspects of the acculturation process (Cuellar, et al., 1995). The wording in the original was changed from Mexican Americans to Latinos to reflect the diverse ethnic background of the current participants. The original ARSMA-II has good internal reliability (Coefficient alpha for all items-Anglo oriented scale [n=13] = .83, Latino oriented scale

[n=17] = .88) and test-retest reliability (Anglo oriented scale = .94, Latino oriented scale = .96). The validity of the scale is also shown when comparing it to the previous version of the ARSMA. A Pearson product moment correlation coefficient of .89 was obtained between the first version of the ARSMA and the present version. Participants were asked to complete a self rating scale using a 5 point rating scale from "not at all" to "very much" on 21 items and "almost never" to "almost always" on 19 items.

Five levels of acculturation were developed from the adapted version of the ARSMA-II: Latino oriented (low assimilation and integration), Latino oriented to approximately bicultural (integration), Slightly Anglo oriented bicultural (integration), Anglo oriented (assimilation), and Very assimilated. The scales used to measure acculturation (Latino Orientation Scale and Anglo Orientation Scale) specifically identify an individual's location on a continuum between assimilation and integration. Having the different levels on a continuum is important when measuring acculturation because most scales are one dimensional, only allowing a person to identify with one culture. Just because one increases their orientation in one culture does not necessarily mean there is a corresponding decrease orientation to the other culture (Cuellar et. al, 1995). Acculturation as measured by the ARSMA-II is seen as a process that develops over time, is quite dynamic, and includes numerous dimensions. The ARSMA-II primarily measures behavioral aspects of acculturation (e.g. language use, ethnic identity, and ethnic interaction or distance) but also attempts to assess affective measures by asking for positive and negative affirmations of one's ethnicity.

Acculturation levels were derived by finding the mean of the Anglo Orientation

Scale (Items 2, 5, 8, 11, 13, 19, 22, 28, 30, 33, 34, 40) and Latino Orientation Scale

(Items 1, 3, 4, 6,7 ,9, 10 ,12, 14, 15, 17, 18, 24, 27, 31, 36) and then subtracting the

Latino Orientation Scale from the Anglo Orientation Scale. Next, acculturation levels

were obtained by using the cut off scores developed by Cueller, et al. The Latino

oriented group was identified as having a score lower than -1.33. The Bicultural group

was identified as scoring between -1.33 and 1.19. Lastly, the Anglo oriented group

included all participants scoring 1.19 or higher. The scales and levels of classification

were used on the original and current measure because they allow participants to identify

with both cultures instead of having to choose one or the other.

The original groups outlined by Cueller, et al. were collapsed into three groups for

the purpose of this study; Latino oriented, Bicultural, and Assimilated or Anglo oriented.

The two bicultural groups, Latino oriented to approximately bicultural (n=15) and

Slightly Anglo oriented bicultural (n=41) were collapsed because the two original groups

were more similar than different. In other words, participants in these categories had

similar responses with regards to number of years in the United States as well as their

native language and country of origin. The Anglo oriented (n=14) and Very assimilated

(n=20) groups were also similar with regards to the before mentioned responses;

therefore, these two groups were also collapsed. By collapsing groups, more participants

would be in each group allowing for a better comparison between the acculturation

groups. More detail about the three acculturation groups can be found in Table 1 and

Table 2. The Latino oriented group consisted of 92 first generation parents, all from

Latino or Hispanic origin. The first and second generation participants in the Bicultural group were of Latino origin. The fourth and fifth generation participants from the Bicultural group were Caucasians with spouses of Latino origin. The 1 second generation participant in the Assimilated, Anglo oriented group was Latino. The third generation participants in the Anglo oriented group were all Caucasians. The fourth generation Anglo oriented participants included 3 Caucasians, 2 others, 1 African American, and 1 Latino. Lastly, the fifth generation participants from the Anglo oriented group consisted of 14 Caucasians, 7 African Americans, and 1 other.

Procedures

The questionnaires were distributed to parents at a meeting held at the elementary school during the 2003-2004 school year in both the fall and in the spring. Fliers in both Spanish and English were sent home with students. The fliers contained information about the study and the dates of data collection. Teachers also encouraged parents to attend the meeting. In addition, research team members from the university made phone calls to encourage participation. Data was collected across two evening sessions held at the school cafetorium (a room that served as the cafeteria and the auditorium). Parents arrived with their children and were served dinner. Child care was provided free of charge during the questionnaire administration. The procedures for completing the questionnaires were explained in both English and Spanish. Parents were able to choose to complete the questionnaire in English or in Spanish. Depending on which language they chose, they were split into two groups. The study was introduced and the parents' rights were described within these small groups. After obtaining parent permission, the

researchers read the questionnaires in the appropriate language for each group.

Additional members of the research team were available to assist parents in completing

the questionnaires. At the end of the night, each parent was paid $10 for participating.

Data Coding and Analysis

To prepare the data, a Spanish-speaking college student translated all responses

from Spanish into English so that the research team of English speakers could accurately

code the responses. The research team was made up of university psychology professors

and psychology graduate students. Responses were listed and organized by participant in

a spreadsheet. The spreadsheet contained subject number, guardian (mother, father, or

grandparent), language, ethnicity, gender, grade level, reported parental involvement and their

responses on the acculturation scale (adapted version of the ARSMA-II). Responses to each

question were analyzed separately to identify the complete set of unique responses that

were provided to each question. In other words, each reported parental involvement was

treated as a discrete item. The unique responses were then considered in developing the

coding scheme and in data analysis.

Next, the research team developed a coding scheme. Each response was listed on

an index card and sorted according to similar content. For example, helping with

homework and checking math homework would be placed in the same category. After

all individual participation responses were organized according to content area the groups

were named and operationally defined. The responses that did not fit into a category

were put into the "Other" category. The "Other" pile was then re-examined for possible

emerging categories or responses that fit into previously existing categories. This process was

General Support. This category was also broken down into subcategories: emotional support, praise and encouragement, talking about child's day at school, talking with child about general topics not related to school, and spending time with child. Examples were given to help define each subcategory. Motivating child to complete homework or rewarding them for successes were examples under the subcategory of praising and encouraging the child.

Life Skills. The next category was defined and labeled as teaching the child life skills or values. The subcategories of this domain included: modeling good behavior, teaching appropriate behavior, telling child to behave, teaching the value of education, and teaching good study habits. Examples were again provided for each subcategory. For example, teaching table manners was a case of teaching appropriate behavior.

Establishing a Routine. This category included responses related to both providing a structured schedule as well as creating set meal times.

Extracurricular Activities. The subcategories included: playing games together, community activities, daily activities, and other extracurricular activities. Again, examples were provided for each subcategory to help define them. For example, encouraging participation in cooking and cleaning was included under the daily activities subcategory.

School Involvement. Direct involvement, helping the teacher and helping with school activities, as well as communicating with teacher through conferences and meetings were examples of involvement within this category.

repeated numerous times; each time new categories emerged until the remaining responses were either ambiguous, too general, or did not relate to the question being asked. This experimental process is similar to the constant comparative method outlined in Bogdan and Biklen (1992) which involves categorizing, coding, defining categories and connecting them. Eleven categories, including the "Other" category were formed through this process.

Homework. Homework was defined as assisting with homework or school work. This category was broken down into five subcategories: participating in the homework process, helping with math, helping with language arts, reviewing old homework, and then other homework related responses that were not included in the above domains. Each subcategory was operationally defined and examples were given for each. For example, the category of helping with language arts included specific comments about helping with spelling, grammar, and the Spanish or English language.

Reading. Reading could be considered an activity that would fall under the homework category. However, since this activity was highly reported by parents, it became a separate category. The reading category also included three operationally defined subcategories: reading to or with their child, having their child read, and talking about or explaining content of read material. Examples were also provided to help explain each subcategory. For example, discussing themes of a book or explaining vocabulary words would fall under the last subcategory of talking about or explaining content of read material.

Parent Factors. The category labeled parent factors included activities such as the parents continuing their education or language development.

General Help. The general help category included reported activities that related to the parent assisting their child in some way but did not fit into any of the above defined categories.

Other. The Other category included statements that did not fit into any category.

None. Lastly, the None category included parent questionnaires that were left blank, with no written response.

Trained coders piloted the coding scheme by analyzing 10 responses and calculating inter-rater reliability. Training was provided by a research team member (psychology graduate student). The categories were described and examples of each were provided from the data. The piloting process was repeated until inter-rater reliability was established at 100%. The coding scheme was continually checked for understanding, consistency, and comprehensiveness throughout analysis. The remaining data was then coded and inter-rater reliability was established at 90%.

A descriptive analysis of the data was conducted. Participants were assigned to groups (Anglo oriented, Bicultural, and Latino oriented) based on their acculturation scores derived from the adapted version of the ARSMA-II. The responses of each parent were grouped according to the type of parental involvement mentioned in the open ended questions. Types of parental involvement were then compared across acculturation levels. Percentages were calculated by adding the number of responses in each specific involvement category and dividing by the total number of responses in all involvement

categories for each acculturation group. For example, the Anglo oriented total number of responses in the homework category was divided by the total number of responses in all involvement categories and then multiplied by 100 to obtain the percentage of reported parental involvement of homework in the Anglo oriented group.

Results

The types of participation activities by language group are reported in Table 3. In general, all three groups reported more involvement at home (homework, general support, and reading) than at school. However, the Latino oriented group had a higher percentage of their total responses related to at home involvement (68.1%) (combining homework, support, and reading) compared to the Bicultural (50.7%) and Anglo oriented groups (56.4%). Homework activities included participating in the homework process (e.g., helping with homework, correcting homework, asking questions about homework, monitoring homework, making sure homework is turned in), helping with homework for specific subjects (e.g., math and language arts), and reviewing old homework. Reading activities included reading (English and/or Spanish) to and with their children as well as talking about stories read together. Support activities included praising and encouraging their child, talking about the child's day, talking in general with the child, and spending time with the child.

A pattern was found when comparing the three acculturation groups across extracurricular and school involvement. The Anglo oriented group reported the most involvement in this area compared to the Bicultural and Latino oriented group, with the Latino oriented group reporting the least amount of involvement in extracurricular and

school activities. School activities included helping out at school or participating in the PTA as well as communicating with teachers. Extracurricular activities included playing games together, encouraging participation in daily activities such as cooking and cleaning, and participating in community activities.

A slight pattern in support and life skills activities was found when comparing the Anglo oriented and Latino oriented group. The Latino oriented group reported teaching more life skills and providing more support to their children (e.g. emotional support, praising and encouraging their children, talking about their day, or spending time with their children) when compared to the Anglo oriented group. Activities related to teaching life skills were reported less in the Anglo oriented group compared to the Bicultural and Latino oriented group. The Anglo oriented group also reported fewer activities associated with establishing a routine for the children (e.g. providing structure or eating dinner together) compared to the Latino oriented group.

Some of the less reported areas of involvement for all three groups included providing good nutrition and engaging the child in early learning activities. Another rarely mentioned activity was related to parental factors such as improving educational abilities of the parent or learning by the parent to speak another language.

Discussion

Because of the limited research specifically looking at the relationship between acculturation and parental involvement, the present study set out to examine this relationship in more depth. Open-ended questions, designed to allow for a more broad perspective of parental involvement, were given to parents asking them to report the type

of parental involvement they engaged in. An acculturation scale was also part of the questionnaire so that parental acculturation levels (Anglo oriented, Bicultural, and Latino oriented) could be determined and compared to their reported parental involvement activities. Noteworthy trends in reported involvement activities were found when comparing acculturation groups. Parents in all three acculturation groups reported the most amount of involvement taking place at home engaging in homework help (e.g., helping with homework, correcting homework, asking questions about homework, monitoring homework, making sure homework is turned in), reading (reading to or with the children or having the child read to the parent), and providing general support (praising and encouraging child, talking with child, and spending time with child.) However, the Latino oriented group reported the most involvement in these activities. When looking at parental involvement outside of the home, the Anglo oriented group reported the most involvement in extracurricular (e.g. playing games together, going to the library or museum, encouraging participation in cooking or cleaning) and school activities (e.g., any school based involvement or communication with teacher).

Past research findings have shown similar trends with home related involvement as a commonly cited type of parental involvement across different ethnic groups (Bacete & Remirez, 2001; Barge & Loges, 2003; Epstein, 1995; Hong & Ho, 2005; Kelly-Vance et al., 2006). Previous research findings have suggested that less acculturated or more Latino oriented parents appear to have less resources within the school at their disposal and experience more barriers to school participation (Kelly-Vance et al.; Moreno, 1999). They may also be more likely to attribute these difficulties to "institutionalized

discrimination," which cannot be overcome through hard work and education (Ogbu, 1992). Some minorities distrust school personnel because educators control the societal institutions that attempt to maintain the minorities' marginalized group identities by refusing to break down cultural boundaries. This distrust and helplessness might help explain why some minorities coming from a low socioeconomic class are also less involved in their children's education at school (Crozier, 1999; Griffith, 1998; Hickman, Greenwood, & Miller, 1995). Furthermore, Lawson (2003), Ramirez (2003), and Valdes (1996) provide information suggesting that less acculturated Latino parents view their role as supporting and nurturing their children at home. However, as parents become more oriented to the American culture and school structure, they may begin to adopt traditional roles of involvement. This is evident by looking back at the types of school and extracurricular involvement engaged in by the fifth generation Anglo oriented parents. They may experience fewer barriers to participating (Martinez et al, 2004) and they may be more aware of school activities (Moreno).

A pattern was also found when comparing the three acculturation groups across extracurricular activities and school involvement. The Anglo oriented group reports the most involvement in this area compared to the Bicultural and Latino oriented group, with the Latino oriented group reporting the least amount of involvement in extracurricular and school activities. These results may suggest that while Anglo oriented parents feel comfortable engaging in school based activities; the Latino oriented parents may experience barriers that inhibit their involvement in school based activities (Kelly- Vance et al., 2006).

It is possible that Latino families face barriers to school based involvement that Anglo oriented families do not. These barriers or obstacles could include not feeling welcomed at school because of language or racial barriers or not having the resources (e.g. time, money, transportation) needed to be more involved in school based activities (Kelly-Vance, et al. 2006). Because of these possible barriers, Latino families may feel more comfortable participating in their children's education at home by providing emotional support and modeling valuable life skills. Another possible explanation is that Latino parents possess different beliefs about how they should be involved in their child's education. Past research suggests that Latino parents view teachers to be better suited to educate their children while they take on the responsibility of instilling values into their children (Ramirez, 2003; Valdes, 1996). This feeling may be justified if parents attain lower levels of education and therefore feel less competent to educate their own children. Some recent immigrant families may also face systemic obstacles such as not being informed about school activities or not knowing where to obtain the right information.

Some educators believe that Latinos do not value education and are therefore not involved in their children's education (Bacete & Remirez, 2001; Valencia & Black, 2002). In some instances, minority parents are viewed as incompetent and lacking the resources or desire to participate in their children's education compared to majority parents (Lawson, 2003; Lightfoot, 2004; Valencia & Black). However, the present findings suggest that Latino parents are involved in their children's education by engaging in educational activities at home. These findings expand our current notions of what constitutes involvement. All three groups of parents reported being involved in

home activities most frequently (e.g. helping with homework, reading with their children, providing emotional support). Overall, the Latino oriented parents reported the most amount of home based educational activities compared to both the Anglo oriented and Bicultural parents.

Parental involvement across different ethnic or acculturation groups may be more similar than educators had previously thought. Although the exact role parental involvement plays in contributing to academic success is unknown, it is likely different for each individual or family. In fact, not all involvement has to occur in the schools for Latino children to benefit. Latino parents can make a significant impact on their children's academic success by providing support and encouragement at home (Englund et al., 2004; Fantuzzo, McWayne, & Perry, 2004; Hong & Ho, 2005; Ibanez et al., 2004; Martinez et al., 2004). The present results suggest that Latino parents do in fact participate in their children's education by providing support and homework help at home. Their type of involvement may help facilitate their children's academic successes.

Implications for School Psychologists

These findings are important for school psychologists to take consider. The results contribute to a better understanding of how parental involvement is seen in different groups of parents. Some educators believe that some groups of parents do not value education and do not want to be involved (Valencia & Black, 2002). However, it is clear from the present study that most parents questioned are involved in their children's education regardless of their level of acculturation. However, the acculturation levels of parents did play a role in the types of parental involvement most reported by the parents.

By understanding how different parents are involved in their children's education, school psychologists can capitalize on parents' strengths in order to facilitate academic success in their children. There is no clear path between what type of parental involvement best facilitates academic success. In fact, specific types of parental involvement may facilitate academic success in different types of students (Ibanez et al., 2004). In the present study, support was a highly reported type of parental involvement in Latino parents. Support at home may be more beneficial to Latino students compared to non-Latino students. Therefore, parental involvement in any form should be encouraged.

Parental involvement plays an important role in the home/school collaboration. It is important for school psychologists to understand where this collaboration already exists and where improvement is needed. Differing expectations of parents and teachers can lead to unwanted conflict in schools (Barge & Loges, 2003). Many of these expectations deal with the ways parents are involved in the school. Therefore, by aligning parents' and teachers' expectations with the reality of each others' involvement, conflict may be reduced and collaboration between the two parties may be strengthened. The present findings suggests that Latino oriented and Bicultural parents are more likely to be involved outside of the school compared to the Anglo oriented parents. There could also be barriers that are inhibiting Latino oriented and Bicultural parents from becoming more involved in school based activities. Schools can provide resources for parents such as opportunities to learn, varying times for meetings and school activities, or having cultural liaisons to facilitate a relationship between the school and the community

(Brilliant, 2001). By eliminating or breaking down barriers schools can give parents more opportunities to be involved (Lopez et al., 2001).

Lastly, school psychologists must continually be sensitive to cultural differences found in their students and their families. Based on the current findings cultural differences are evident in reported parental involvement. While all groups of parents were involved in their children's education, their type of involvement was different. The Anglo oriented group was more likely to report being involved in school based activities such as attending PTA meetings or visiting the classroom. While the Latino oriented group was more likely to report being involved in home based activities such as helping with homework and providing emotional support for their children. This study did not examine the reasons behind these differences but it is important for school psychologists to question and understand the reasons for differing types of involvement. School personnel should focus on capitalizing on the parents' strengths while empowering them to make a difference instead of attempting to fix their shortcomings.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

The instrument and methodology were not without limitations. The original questionnaire was written in English but because the sample of parents had many Spanish speakers, the questionnaire was translated to Spanish. The Spanish-speaking parents' responses also had to be translated back to English in order for data analysis. Therefore, some of the meaning of the response or questions could have been lost in translation. The open-ended questions that were used to examine reported parental involvement allowed for responses to be broad and general. The Spanish-speaking parents had a

higher percentage of statements that did not fit into any category. These statements were either too general or did not match the question that was asked.

A more quantitative analysis could have been done if parents were forced to choose from a list of common involvement activities. The descriptive analysis used in the present study provides unique insight into the relationship between parental involvement and acculturation levels. Still it was not a true experiment and is therefore hard to generalize to a larger population as well as provide extensive external and internal validity. Furthermore, no data was collected on actual time of involvement or the child and teacher perspectives.

The scale used to assess acculturation (ARSMA-II) also has limitations. The scale only measures how adequately an individual is adapting or assimilating to a new, dominant culture. Nothing is known about how the dominant culture is attempting to include the new individual. Because of this, an established culture can put the blame on newcomers instead of taking responsibility for some of the hardships and barriers experienced by these immigrants. The construct of acculturation is also heavily biased. People from the dominant culture assume that immigrants or minorities must acculturate to the dominant culture in order to be successful. If immigrants and minorities do not assimilate, they may be perceived as inadequate or failures. Furthermore, acculturation and socio-economic class are highly correlated constructs. Yet, little is known how these two constructs are related and different. Educators and researchers must be careful not to substitute one for the other when making generalizations and drawing conclusions about certain populations.

The sample used in the present study was somewhat small and restricted to parents from a single school and geographic area who all participated in the Dual Language program. Therefore, the results may not be representative of the larger population. Given a larger and more diverse sample size a statistical analysis of the data could have provided more insight to the relationship between acculturation and parental involvement. There was an unequal distribution of parents in the three acculturation groups. The Latino oriented group consisted of 92 parents while the Bicultural oriented and Anglo oriented only had 38 and 34 parents respectively. The responses may be more representative of a larger population if there were more parents in the Bicultural and Anglo oriented groups. Interestingly, both Latinos and non Latinos were equally targeted and recruited but more Latino parents took part in the study.

The unique requirements of the Dual Language program encouraged parents to be involved in their child's education through school or home activities. Many of the parents in the sample were already involved in school functions. It would be of interest to examine the reported involvement of parents in schools where their participation is not required.

There are endless possibilities for future research opportunities. In the present study parental involvement was examined across acculturation levels. However, it is unknown how academic achievement is influence by acculturation and parental involvement. Students in one acculturation group may benefit academically from one type of parental involvement while students in another acculturation group may benefit more from a different type of parental involvement. Another question to consider is

whether the amount of parental involvement or the type of parental involvement is more important to students' academic success. If there is a difference between time and type of activity, parents could make better use of their time and energy engaging in the appropriate activity for the most beneficial amount of time. Although the economic background of participants is unknown, it would be interesting to examine the different parental perceptions of involvement between social classes. Lastly, parental perceptions of involvement may be quite different from their children's and the teachers' perceptions of involvement. Future research could look at the different perceptions and examine their similarities or discrepancies. Because there are parents representing different cultures, it would be of interest to see which cultural group's perceptions best match the perceptions and expectations of the school and teacher.

Conclusion

The relationship between parental involvement and acculturation has not been well established. Past research has shown that less acculturated or more Latino oriented parents appear to have less resources within the school at their disposal and experience more barriers to school participation; however, these parents are still very involved in their children's education and have high aspirations for them (Moreno, 1999). Furthermore, Lawson (2003), Ramirez (2003), and Valdes (1996) provide information suggesting that less acculturated Latino parents view their role as supporting and nurturing their children at home. Latino parents feel that teachers are better suited to educate their children at school. Latino parents also report feeling less welcome at schools (Martinez et al, 2004). The present study shows similarities across all three

acculturation groups in terms of helping with homework. The Latino, Bicultural, and Anglo oriented group all reported homework help as the type of involvement they engaged in most often. However, differences between the acculturation groups were found when examining involvement in school and extracurricular activities. The Anglo oriented group reported the most involvement while the Latino oriented group reported the least involvement in school activities. On the other hand, the Latino oriented group reported more involvement in providing support compared to the Anglo oriented acculturation group.

The present study suggests that parents from all acculturation groups are actively involved in their children's education. However, parents from different acculturation groups may be involved in different activities. The Latino oriented group is more involved in providing support and helping with homework. While the Anglo oriented group is more involved in school and extracurricular activities. Parents coming from different cultural backgrounds continue to be actively involved in their children's education. Schools must recognize different types of involvement and capitalize on the strengths all parents possess.

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Table 1

Acculturation Groups and Generation Levels

Anglo Oriented		Bicultural		Latino Oriented	
Fifth Generation	22	Fifth Generation	2	Fifth Generation	0
Fourth Generation	7	Fourth Generation	2	Fourth Generation	0
Third Generation	4	Third Generation	0	Third Generation	0
Second Generation	1	Second Generation	7	Second Generation	0
First Generation	0	First Generation	27	First Generation	92

Table 2

Acculturation Groups and Chosen Language

Anglo Oriented		Bicultural		Latino Oriented	
English speakers	34	English speakers	14	English speakers	1
Spanish speakers	0	Spanish speakers	27	Spanish speakers	70

Table 3

Actual Participation Activities by Anglo, Bicultural, and Latino Parents

Anglo Oriented (n = 32)		Bicultural (n = 40)		Latino Oriented (n = 66)	
Homework	22.4%	Homework	25.4%	Homework	33.8%
School Invl	18.4%	Reading	18.3%	Support	19.5%
Support	17.7%	School Invl	13.4%	Reading	14.8%
Reading	16.3%	Life Skills	10.6%	School Invl	12.4%
Extrcurriclr	8.2%	Support	7.0%	Life Skills	7.1%
Life Skills	6.1%	Extrcurriclr	6.3%	Routine	4.3%
Other	3.4%	Other	6.3%	General Help	3.3%
Routine	2.7%	General Help	3.5%	Extrcurriclr	2.4%
Parent Factors	2.0%	Routine	2.8%	Other	1.4%
General Help	2.0%	Parent Factors	2.8%	Parent Factors	1.0%
Early Learn	0.7%	Resources	2.1%	Early Learn	0%
Resources	0%	Early Learn	0.7%	Resources	0%
Nutrition	0%	Nutrition	0.7%	Nutrition	0%