Familial Stress, Latino Parental Involvement, and Adolescent Academic Socialization

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy in Psychology

by

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Familial Stress, Latino Parental Involvement, and Adolescent Academic Socialization

by

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Doctor of Philosophy in Psychology

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Given the size and rapid growth of Latinos—and that they tend to fall behind academically—it is important to understand factors that contribute to achievement. This dissertation seeks to contextualize parental academic behaviors by examining the role of stress and family dynamics in their involvement. The first study examines how stress may interfere with the academic involvement Mexican-origin parents provide for their adolescents. Parents of ninth and tenth grade students from two high schools in Los Angeles (N = 428) completed quantitative interviews. Results revealed that chronic stress (i.e., financial strain) predicted less involvement at school—and that acute stressors (i.e., major family life events) predicted less involvement at home, even after controlling for demographics and the other stressor in each model. Furthermore, this study found that these associations were mediated by lower levels of emotional support to adolescents, but not conflict in the home or parental distress (i.e., depressive symptoms and somatic symptoms). Findings suggest that the reason that stress is associated with lower levels of
involvement is because stress may limit the positive relationship quality between parents and adolescents. The second study examined parental involvement in organized after-school activities—as these are beneficial to academic achievement, but Latino students tend to be under-involved. Latino adolescents and their caretakers \((N = 154)\) sampled from four middle schools across the Phoenix-area completed quantitative interviews. Linear regressions controlling for demographics and achievement revealed that parental support—instrumental support, verbal encouragement and activity involvement (e.g., talking to the activity leader)—was linked with adolescent reports of motivation and participation in their organized after-school activity. Furthermore, parental support was associated with higher adolescent motivation in families that reported more chaos—suggesting the importance of parental involvement, especially in disadvantaged families. By acknowledging the salient role of family and stressors in the lives of Latino families, this dissertation contributes to a more complete understanding of the ways families strive to develop academic resilience.
The dissertation of Daisy Estela Camacho is approved.

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2016
I dedicate this dissertation to my husband, Brandon J. Thompson, my immediate family—Estela Quintero, Raúl Camacho Sr., Raúl Camacho Jr., Mayra Vanesa Camacho, Manuel Alejandro Camacho—and my extended family. With your example and your words you have inspired me, taught me persistence, and formed who I am today.
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Study 1 is a version of the following article:

Author Contributions

Daisy E. Camacho-Thompson participated in the design, performed the statistical analysis and interpretation of the data, as well as helped draft the manuscript. Cari Gillen-O’Neel participated in the design and coordination of the study and helped revise the manuscript. Nancy A. Gonzales conceived of the study, participated in its design and coordination, and helped revise the manuscript. Andrew J. Fuligni conceived of the study, and participated in its design and coordination, interpretation of the data and helped draft the manuscript. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Study 2 is a version of the following article:


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Daisy E. Camacho-Thompson participated in the design, performed the statistical analysis and interpretation of the data, as well as helped draft the manuscript. Sandra D. Simpkins conceived of the study, and participated in its design and coordination, interpretation of the data and helped draft the manuscript. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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**Introduction**

Latino adolescents represent a quickly growing population that tends to come from families with disproportionately higher rates of poverty (Stepler & Brown, 2015). Although educational attainment could ameliorate the effects of poverty on social mobility, Latinos are less likely to benefit from this because of their overall lower levels of educational attainment. Latino parent involvement is beneficial for the academics of their adolescents, but current research has neglected to examine this within parents’ financial and familial contexts (Hill & Torres, 2010). Given the salient role of stress and family in this population, the goal of this dissertation is to examine the involvement of Latino parents in adolescent’s education and extracurricular involvement, while situating these practices within the context of family dynamics and acknowledging the challenges that these families may encounter. Doing so will allow for a more complete understanding of parent involvement in marginalized populations.

**Latinos in America**

Latinos in the U.S. are projected to grow from 54 million today to 106 million in the next 35 years, an expected growth of 86%. Currently, Latinos in America hold the place of the largest minority group (i.e., 17.1% of the total population), and between the year 2000 and 2010, Latinos accounted for more than half of the population’s growth. Latinos are also a young population, with a mean age of 28 years ($M_{\text{Latino immigrant age}} = 40$; $M_{\text{Latino native-born age}} = 19$), younger than African Americans ($M_{\text{age}} = 33$), Asian Americans ($M_{\text{age}} = 36$), and White Americans ($M_{\text{age}} = 42$). Given the size and projected growth of this population, understanding the factors that contribute to well-being in this group, could, in turn, ensure the economic success of the U.S. (Vernez, Krop, Rydell, 1999).
Latino families, on average, also show high levels of poverty relative to other ethnic
groups (Stepler & Brown, 2015). Poverty, in turn, can be associated with stressors such as higher
levels of financial strain (Conger & Conger, 2002), lower levels of neighborhood safety (Child
Trends Data Bank, 2013), and higher levels of chaos in the home (Johnson, Martin, Brooks-
Gunn, & Petrill 2008). Financial strain, due to poverty, has been associated with family
functioning factors, such as parental warmth, parental depressive symptoms, and hostile
parenting (Benner & Kim, 2010; Conger & Conger, 2002; Gonzales, et al., 2011). Thus, poverty
among Latinos may exacerbate the lack of social capital, thus perpetuating ethnic disparities in
education between generations. It is important to examine not only socioeconomic variables in
this population, but more proximal stressors associated with poverty, such as financial strain.
Due to its effects on parental support, financial strain could also limit parents’ ability to engage
in academic socialization practices, such as involvement at school, in the home or in after-school
activities.

Educational attainment can ameliorate the detrimental effects of poverty (Hong &
Pandey, 2007), even across generations (Vargas Lascano, Galambos, Krahn, & Lachman, 2015).
Unfortunately, this population also holds the highest high school dropout rates for adults over the
age of 25 at 16%, higher than African Americans (8%), Asian Americans (4%), and White
Americans (5%). Additionally, Latino social mobility has historically tended to remain
consistently low, or even decrease across generations (Gibson, 1997; Portes & Rumbaut, 1996;
Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 1995; Vigil, 1997). Recently college enrollment among
Latinos has increased, but disparities in attainment persist (Krogstad, 2015). Given these
statistics, it is important to study predictors of success to the academic achievement of Latino
adolescents. This will contribute to our understanding of the ways Latino parents academically
socialize their students during a critical developmental period, as their middle and high school experiences prepare them for a successful college experience.

**Parental Involvement**

Research studies find that parent involvement in education is a consistent predictor of adolescent achievement (Chen, 2009; Hill & Tyson, 2009; Jeynes, 2007; LeFevre & Shaw, 2012). In fact, some studies have even found that parent involvement accounts for more than half of the variance in achievement (Coleman et al., 1966; Mosteller & Moynihan, 1972; Wehlburg, 1996). Parent involvement has also been found to be predictive of other educational outcomes, such as standardized test scores (Keith & Lichtman, 1994), motivation and engagement (Gonzalez-DeHass, Willems, & Holbein, 2005; Gonzalez-Pienda et al., 2002), and enrollment in college preparatory courses (Catsambis, 2001; Keith & Lichtman, 1994; Leonard, 2013).

Although some variations in the effectiveness of involvement types have been found between groups (Altschul, 2011; Dumka, Gonzales, Bonds, & Millsap, 2009; Mau, 1997), parent involvement seems to be beneficial across ethnic groups, regardless of socioeconomic status, and gender of the adolescent (Bogenscheiner, 1997; Fan, 2001; Jeynes, 2005). In certain cases, it even seems as though adolescents from families with lower socioeconomic status or from ethnic minority backgrounds benefit more from parental involvement (Boegenscheider, 1997; Hong & Ho, 2005; Viramontez Anguiano, 2004).

Furthermore, some studies have examined the role of parental support within the context of organized after-school activities (Simpkins, Davis-Kean, & Eccles, 2005; Simpkins, Fredricks & Eccles, 2012). Although research has not examined the direct link between this type of involvement and adolescent grades, organized after-school activities have been consistently linked with adolescent achievement (Mahoney and Cairns 1997; Roeser and Peck 2003), with
studies showing that participation may be especially beneficial for Latino youth (Brown & Evans, 2002). Research examining the behaviors that parents engage in to foster adolescent motivation and participation in organized after-school activities is limited, especially with Latino families. Although, studies with White middle class populations show that parental support is important (Simpkins, Davis-Kean, & Eccles, 2005; Simpkins, Fredricks & Eccles, 2012), it is unclear how these behaviors will work in a population that varies by immigrant and socioeconomic status (Vandell, Larson, Mahoney, Watts, 2014). Therefore, this dissertation will also seek to understand how parental support within the context of organized after-school activities are associated with their adolescents motivation and participation in organized after-school activities.

Although numerous studies find that teachers report Latino parents are under-involved (DePlanty, Coulter-Kern, & Duchane, 2007; Lomotey, 2007; Ramírez, 2001), some studies find that parental involvement is comparable across ethnic groups (Fan, 2001). Still, other studies find that Latinos participate less at school and more at home than European American parents (Mau, 1997). Despite this, researchers consistently find that Latino parents value the academic success of their adolescents (Durand & Perez, 2013; Valencia, 2002), with some studies finding that this is even more pronounced in Latino families than European American families (Ryan, Casas, Kelly-Vance, Ryalls & Nero 2010). While seeking to understand parent involvement among Latino families, it is important to take into account unique contextual factors, such as the role of financial and familial variables. Doing so, will inform the methods academic personnel utilize to engage Latino parents.

Additionally, it is important to examine parental involvement among Latinos, because teachers perceive Latino parents to be academically under-involved. These perceptions of under-
involvement are associated with lower grades (Reynolds, 1992) and even standardized test scores (Barwegen, Falciani, Putnam, Reamer, & Stair, 2004). In fact, studies find that the link between parent involvement and achievement is mediated by teacher perceptions of parent involvement (Chen, 2009; Kuperminc, Darnell & Alvarez-Jimenez, 2008). However, there seems to be a discrepancy between parent and teacher ratings of their own involvement. Studies find that teachers and administrators desire higher levels of involvement from Latino parents, but are unsure about how to acquire it (Ramirez, 2003). However, other studies find that Latino parents rate themselves as more participatory in academics than their students’ teachers (DePlanty et al., 2007; Lomotey, 2007). It may be that parents are unsure about how to participate, and actually desire more involvement from teachers (Ramirez, 2003).

Perhaps, the discrepancy between teachers’ and parents’ perceptions of their involvement found in the current literature is an acontextual study of parent involvement. Understanding the contextual markers—such as financial and familial factors—implicated with parental involvement, could shift teacher perceptions of Latino parents and their involvement (Lomotey, 2007; Trumbull, Rothstein-Fisch, & Hernandez, 2003). Given the socioeconomic disparities prevalent in this population (Stepler & Brown, 2015), as well as the importance of family in this population (Stein et al., 2014)—it is important to take into account the financial and familial circumstances of Latino parents when examining parent involvement in academics and after-school activities. Without this contextual examination of parent involvement, the disconnect in perceptions may continue to create a divide in the ways teachers and parents advocate for adolescents’ achievement. Thus, this dissertation seeks to examine parental involvement in various settings (i.e., school, home and organized after-school activities) while acknowledging the financial and familial settings in which these behaviors take place.
Discrepancies between teacher and parent perception could also be explained by within-group differences, such as generational status. For example, earlier levels of generational status have been associated with lower levels of parent involvement (Turney and Kao, 2009). Latina mothers of first graders with less years in the US reported less knowledge about school activities and more barriers to involvement, but higher levels of perceived self-efficacy and higher educational expectations for their children (Moreno and López, 1999). By the third generation, parents may already have become aware of the ways schools expect them to be involved in the academics of their children (Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco & Todorova, 2009). Unfortunately, studies have focused mostly on descriptive demographic predictors of parental involvement (e.g., parental education, income, generational status), to the neglect of understanding how more proximal factors from their contexts might play a role in their academic behaviors (Altschul, 2012; Ceballo, Maurizi, Suárez & Aretakis, 2013; Hill & Torres, 2010).

The involvement of Latino parents may also differ from other groups since it can be embedded in the context of an immigrant narrative (Ceballo, et al., 2014). Latino parents encourage academics (Martinez, DeGarmo & Eddy, 2004), often as a means to make up for the sacrifices of migrating and as a means to improve the family’s socioeconomic standing (Ceballo et al., 2013). Evidence of academic socialization can be found in many studies where parents report high levels of expectations and aspirations for their children (Goldenberg, Gallimore, Reese, Garnier, 2001). Education is even included in the definition of moral development for many Latino parents, as many of them report a child who does well in school as one who is on “the good path” (Azmitia & Brown, 2002). Given the unique settings of Latino families, it is important to examine contextual factors when seeking to understand their academic involvement.
Due to the disproportionately high rates of poverty in this population, acknowledging the financial situation of Latino families would build our understanding of a salient contextual marker that impacts parental involvement. Lower levels of socioeconomic status have been found to be associated with less parental involvement (Cooper, Lindsay & Nye 2000; Kelly, 2004; Melby & Conger, 1996). However, what is it about socioeconomic status that limits parental involvement? If parents have lower incomes they might be faced with financial strain, which might limit their participation in the academics of their adolescents at school and at home. Parent stress has been linked with adolescent GPA (Benner & Kim, 2010; Mistry, Benner, Tan, & Kim, 2009), perhaps the reason for this is that parental stress is associated with lower levels of parent involvement. One of the goals of this dissertation is to understand how stressors that are associated with poverty may play a role in parental academic involvement.

In addition to stressors associated with poverty, stressors associated with family may play a significant role in the academic involvement practices of Latino families. In populations, such as Latinos, where family cohesion is the norm and the role of family is highly valued (Hernández, Ramírez García, & Flynn, 2010; Kuhlberg, Peña, & Zayas, 2010), examining academic involvement without acknowledging family factors is incomplete. For example, parents with multiple child-care or extended family responsibilities may be less involved in school-based activities (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). It could be that stressors regarding family may limit involvement in this population. That is, parents typically respond when their children are not doing well in school (Drummond & Stipek, 2004) and their involvement is then associated with higher levels of achievement (Plunkett, Behnke, Sands, & Choi, 2008; Rogers et al., 2009). Perhaps parents who face high levels of stress are unable to be involved in the academics of their children (Martinez, et al., 2004).
Although family stress may limit involvement, family support could also buffer against the effects of stress (Calzada, Tamis-LeMonda & Yoshikawa, 2013), allowing parents to be involved in the academics of their children. The role of family dynamics when examining parental involvement is unclear. Not acknowledging the important role of family factors—be they protective or risky—critically limits our understanding of Latino parent involvement. Understanding the dynamics implicated with the academic involvement of Latino parents would inform methods utilized to engage parents in the academics of their adolescents. This could disrupt this cycle of stagnant social mobility between generations of Latino Americans in the U.S.

The focus of this dissertation is to examine the involvement of parents in their adolescents' education and extracurricular involvement. These studies contextualize the behaviors that parents engage in to academically socialize their adolescents within the family while considering the role of certain stressors they may be facing. By acknowledging the salient role of family and financial stress in the lives of Latino families, this dissertation contributes to a more complete understanding of the ways families develop academic resilience.

**Current Studies**

Research has extensively documented the benefits of parent academic involvement for Latino youth. However, we do not understand predictors of parent involvement. Given the systemic realities that Latino families face, I seek to understand, first, how financial and familial factors may impinge on parenting practices. Additionally, in an effort to understand parent involvement within contextual factors, I also examine the role of family dynamics in this association. Specifically, I ask:

1) Does stress predict parental involvement?
2) Do family processes help explain this association?

Furthermore, participation in organized after-school activities has been linked with a host of academic benefits, and organized after-school activities are especially beneficial for these youth. However, Latino students tend to participate less than other ethnic groups, and predictors to participation are unclear. Given the salient role of familism, in the second study, I sought to understand the link between Latino parental support and adolescent participation in organized after-school activities, as this has not been studied quantitatively. Finally, in order to situate these findings in the real challenges of Latino families, I also examine family dynamics in this association. In my second study, I seek to understand:

1) What types of parent supportive behaviors are linked with adolescent motivation and participation in organized after-school activities?

2) Does family chaos moderate the association between parental supportive behaviors and adolescent motivation and participation in organized after-school activities?

Together, these studies serve to inform extant research on parent involvement. The use of a Latino population provides the opportunity to study these factors among families that may face higher levels of stress and that place a high value on familial ties. This then, allows us to understand the role of stress and family as parents engage in behaviors to academically socialize their adolescents—serving to contextualize parent academic involvement for adolescents.
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Study 1

Financial Strain, Major Family Life Events, and Parental Academic Involvement during Adolescence
Abstract

Parental academic involvement—whether through school participation and communication, or supervision and assistance at home—often has been cited as a way to enhance academic achievement. Yet, little is known about how the financial and life pressures faced by families can compromise parents’ ability to become involved in their adolescents’ education. In the current study, these dynamics were examined among Mexican-origin families, who often may face challenging financial and familial circumstances, and whose students may have more difficulty in secondary school. Parents of Mexican-origin ninth and tenth grade students from two high schools in Los Angeles (N = 428; 49% female) completed quantitative interviews. The results revealed that financial strain predicted less involvement at school, and major family life events predicted less involvement at home, even after controlling for potentially confounding factors. Moreover, both of the associations between parental stress and parental academic involvement were mediated by lower levels of relationship quality between parents and adolescents, but not by conflict within the parent-adolescent dyad or parental depressive and somatic symptoms. The findings suggest that stress may limit parents’ ability to become involved their adolescents’ education, and highlight the importance of understanding family dynamics when examining parental academic involvement among Mexican-origin families.
Introduction

Examining parental involvement among Latino populations is an imperative, as this group is a quickly growing subsection of the American population that unfortunately lags behind other ethnic groups in high school completion (Grieco et al., 2012). Parental involvement in education—at home and at school—has been shown to be an important component of academic success (Hill & Tyson, 2009), even among middle and high school aged adolescents (Jeynes, 2007; Kuperminc, Darnell, & Alvarez-Jimenez, 2008). Students whose parents are involved academically show higher academic values, grade point averages, standardized test scores, and enrollment in college-preparatory tracks and programs (Altschul, 2012). Few studies, however, have examined the role of contextually embedded family processes in the academic development of Latino adolescents (Hill & Torres, 2010). Studies have focused mostly on demographic predictors of parental involvement (e.g., parental education, income, generational status), to the neglect of how additional factors, such as financial and familial stress, may interfere with involvement (Altschul, 2012; Hill & Torres, 2010).

Family Stress and Parental Involvement

A salient contextual marker of Latino parents is the stress that they face (Gonzales et al., 2011), such as poverty and low-levels of education (Morales, Lara, Kington, Valdez, & Escarce, 2002; Grieco et al., 2012). Although little is known about the role of parental stress as it relates to their academic involvement, the family stress model offers a perspective that could be useful (Gutman & Eccles, 1999; McLoyd, 1990). This model postulates that the association between stress and adolescent outcomes is mediated by family functioning (Conger, Ge, Elder, Lorenz, & Simons, 1994). That is, low socioeconomic status has been associated with developmental risks, and the family stress model posits that the reason for this association is that financial strain...
disrupts parenting (Conger et al., 1994). In this case, parental stress might limit the academic involvement that parents are able to provide, and this might be explained by family functioning.

Socioeconomic status has been found to be associated with parental involvement (Cooper, Lindsay, & Nye, 2000; Kelly, 2004; Melby & Conger, 1996), so it is likely that the stress linked with financial difficulties may be associated with lower levels of parental involvement. In addition to the chronic stress of financial strain, acute stressors such as major life events may play a role in family functioning by impacting daily life activities (Compas, 1987), such as the ability of a parent to be academically involved in the life of their adolescent. Given the importance of family in the lives of these parents (Stein et al., 2014), Latino populations may provide an ideal context to study the role of family stress as a predictor to academic involvement (Parke, et al., 2004). Therefore, our study will first examine whether financial strain and major family life events are associated with lower levels of parental academic involvement at home and at school.

**Parental Involvement Practices**

It is important to examine parental involvement, both at school and at home, since both are associated with achievement (Hill & Tyson, 2009). Research shows that Latino parents are perceived as under-involved by teachers (DePlanty, Coulter-Kern, & Duchane 2007; Ramírez, 2003), but some studies find that parental involvement is comparable across ethnic groups (Fan, 2001). Despite this, researchers consistently find that Latino parents value the academic success of their adolescents (Durand & Perez, 2013; Valencia, 2002), with some studies finding that this is even more pronounced in Latino families than in European American families (Ryan, Casas, Kelly-Vance, Ryalls, & Nero, 2010). Differences in these findings might be attributable to individual or contextual differences. Unfortunately, studies have focused mostly on demographic
predictors of parental involvement (e.g., parental education, income, generational status) (Altschul, 2012; Ceballo, Maurizi, Suárez, & Aretakis, 2013; Hill & Torres, 2010) without taking into account the context of the family.

**School involvement.** School-based involvement has been defined as attending school programs, such as PTA meetings, open houses, volunteering at school, attending extracurricular activities, and communicating with parents and school personnel (Hill & Tyson, 2009; Keith & Lichtman, 1994). This type of parental behavior has been linked with academic achievement (Kuperminc et al., 2008; LeFevre & Shaw, 2012; Shumow & Miller, 2001) as well as motivation, self-efficacy, and engagement (Gonzalez-DeHass, Willems, & Holbein, 2005). However, parents with multiple child-care or extended family responsibilities may be less involved in school-based activities (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). That is, parents under financial or familial stressors may have more of a limited ability to be involved at school.

**Home involvement.** Home-based academic involvement is typically measured as talking with children about school, helping them with schoolwork, and taking children to educational places such as museums and libraries (Hill & Tyson, 2009). This type of involvement also has been defined as creating an environment in the home that fosters learning such as providing books, newspapers, educational toys, and educational materials (Eamon, 2004; Hill & Tyson, 2009). For young Mexican-origin adolescent girls, increased communication about their grades with their mothers was linked with higher math grades and intrinsic motivation for math and reading (Mireles-Rios & Romo, 2010). With the exception of academic pressure from fathers and help with homework, most involvement at home has been linked with academic achievement (Cooper et al., 2000; Hill & Tyson, 2009; Rogers, Theule, Ryan, Adams, & Keating, 2009).
Research has found that Latinos participate less at school and more at home than European American parents (Mau, 1997). Still, predictors of parental participation are unclear. Therefore, this study will examine how financial or familial stressors may limit parents’ ability to be involved in the academics of their adolescents, both at school and at home.

**Parental Depressive and Somatic Symptoms, and Family Relationships as Potential Mediators**

Latinos, generally, have higher levels of family stress (e.g., poverty and mental health) (Gonzales et al., 2011), and extending the family stress model to parental involvement could be an important way to understand barriers to parental involvement in this population. Studies employing the family stress model typically find that parental depressive or somatic symptoms, and parent-adolescent relationships are significant mediators between stress and an adverse outcome. For example, a study with African American families found that parental financial strain was associated with parenting behavior (i.e., low-nurturing involvement), and this was mediated by parental depressed moods (Conger et al., 2002). In this case, parental depressive and somatic symptoms and family relationships could help explain the link between parental stressors and their academic involvement.

**Parental depressive and somatic symptoms.** Depressive symptoms have been linked with lower levels of academic involvement for parents of first grade students (Kohl, Lengua, & McMahon, 2000; LaForett & Mendez, 2010; Valdez, Shewakramani, Goldberg, & Padilla, 2013) and middle school students (Gutman & Eccles, 1999). The role of parental depressive and somatic symptoms and their association with parental academic involvement with high school adolescents, however, is unclear. Parental depressive and somatic symptoms could help explain the association between parental stress and their academic involvement. Previous research has
found that parental depressive symptoms are associated with their parenting behaviors (Conger et al., 2002). In this case, the stress that parents face could limit the positive behaviors they are able to engage in with adolescents—such as school and home involvement—and this may be explained by their depressive and somatic symptoms. Therefore, in this study we tested the mediating role of depressive and somatic symptoms.

**Family relationships.** Although, to our knowledge, previous research has not applied the family stress model to the study of parental involvement, this model provides a useful perspective. The family stress model suggests that family relationships are an important mediator of the effects of financial strain (Conger et al., 1994), suggesting that family relationships could help explain the link between stress and parental academic involvement. It could be that the stress that parents encounter, as the family stress model would posit, may disrupt family relationships—which could explain lower levels of parental involvement. That is, if parents face high levels of stress, this may decrease the parent-adolescent relationship quality and increase conflict between the dyad (Benner & Kim, 2010; Conger & Conger, 2002; Gonzales, et al., 2011). This strain in family relationships, in turn, may limit parental academic involvement.

**Current Study**

Research has extensively documented the benefits of parental academic involvement for Latino youth (Hill & Tyson, 2009; Jeynes, 2007; Kuperminc, et al., 2008). However, subjective predictors of parental involvement beyond demographics (Altschul, 2012; Ceballo, et al., 2013; Morales, et al., 2002) are less clear. Given the systemic realities that Latino families face (Gonzales et al., 2011), we first sought to understand how financial and familial factors might impinge on parenting practices. Specifically we asked whether financial strain and acute family stressors, or major family life events, predict parental academic involvement at home and at
Given previous research with other ethnic groups, we hypothesized that financial strain would be associated with lower levels of academic involvement at school and at home (Gutman & Eccles, 1999). Furthermore, given the salient role of families in this population (Stein et al., 2004), we hypothesized that stress in the family would also be associated with lower levels of parental academic involvement in the school and the home.

Finally, in an effort to expand upon current research to understand parental involvement within contextual factors (Hill & Torres, 2010), a secondary goal of this study was to examine the role of family dynamics in this association. To frame this question, we drew from the family stress model (Conger et al., 2002), and hypothesized that family functioning would mediate the link between parental stress and lower levels of parental academic involvement. We operationalized family functioning as parental depressive and somatic symptoms and family relationships (i.e., parent-adolescent relationship quality and parent-adolescent conflict). Given previous research with parents of younger Latino students showing that parental depressive and somatic symptoms were associated with lower levels of parental involvement (Kohl, Lengua & McMahon, 2000; LaFoy & Mendez, 2010; Valdez, Shewakramani, Goldberg, & Padilla, 2013), we hypothesized that parental depressive and somatic symptoms would help explain the association between parental stress and their academic involvement. Additionally, financial strain has been found to be associated with both positive and negative family relationship factors, such as parental warmth and hostile parenting (Benner & Kim, 2010; Conger & Conger, 2002; Gonzales, et al., 2011). Therefore, we hypothesized that both positive (i.e., parent-adolescent relationship quality) and negative (i.e., parent-adolescent conflict) aspects of family relationships would be significant mediators in the link between parental stress and their academic involvement.
Method

Sample and Procedure

A total of 428 parents of ninth (49%) and tenth grade students (49% female; \( M_{\text{age}} = 15.02, \ SD = .83, \) age range: 13-18 years) from two high schools in Los Angeles participated in our study. The schools were predominantly Latino (93.9% and 62.4%) with high levels of students receiving free or reduced lunch (70.8% and 73.2%). The parents (\( M_{\text{age}} = 41.93, \ SD = 6.75 \)) consisted primarily of mothers (83.3%), with the remainder being fathers (13.5%) and grandparents, aunts, or uncles (2.9%). Most parents were born in Mexico (77.1%), with smaller proportions born in the U.S. (17.5%) and other countries (5.4%). The average age of migration for parents was 20.20 years (\( SD = 8.80, \) age range 0 – 55 years). The majority of parents (82.5%) were first generation (i.e. both they and their parents were born in Mexico), 11.2% were second generation (i.e. they were born in the US, and at least one of their parents was born in Mexico), and the remaining 6.3% were third generation or more (i.e. them and both of their parents were born in the US).

Parents reported, on a scale where 1 = “Some Elementary School,” 2 = “Completed Elementary School,” 3 = “Some Junior High School,” 4 = “Completed Junior High School,” 5 = “Some High School,” 6 = “Graduated from High School,” 7 = “Trade or Vocational School,” 8 = “Some College,” 9 = “Graduated from College,” 10 = “Some Medical, Law or Graduate school,” and 11 = “Graduated from Medical, Law or Graduate school,” their current level of education \( (M_{\text{first generation}} = 4.07, \ SD = 2.46; \ M_{\text{second generation}} = 6.45, \ SD = 1.90; \ M_{\text{third generation}} = 6.05, \ SD = 2.17).\)

Parents also reported their income \( (M_{\text{first generation}} = $35,440.68, \ SD = 28,345.61; \ M_{\text{second generation}} = $51,544.44, \ SD = 30,033.28; \ M_{\text{third generation}} = $50,081.92, \ SD = 32,154.95; \) range = $0-$270,000).
The families were recruited throughout the academic year using class presentations, home mailings, and phone calls to parents. Approximately 60% of the families were reached by phone. Of those reached, 63% (N=428) were determined to be eligible by having a Mexican background, regardless of current immigrant status, and were willing to participate in the study. Interviewers collected data at families’ homes using a computer-aided personal quantitative interview. Interviews and questionnaires were completed in Spanish (87%) and English, and took approximately 45-60 minutes to complete.

Measures

School involvement. Parents reported involvement at school by responding to four items (i.e., “You talk to your child’s teachers at school,” “You go to school functions (e.g., Back-to-School Night, parent-teacher conferences),” “You go to activities in which your child is involved in school,” and “You do volunteer work at your child’s school,” 1 = almost never, 5 = almost always; α = .70; adapted from Jeynes, 2007). All items were averaged, and validity of the scale was demonstrated by its correlation with adolescents’ grade point average acquired from school records (r = .14, p = .009).

Home involvement. Parents reported their level of academic involvement at home by responding to eight items (e.g., “You know your child’s grades” or “You talk to your child about their plans for after high school,” “You talk to your child about planning his/her high school classes,” or “You make sure that your child has done his/her homework,” 1 = almost never, 5 = almost always; α = .87; adapted from Jeynes, 2007). The items were averaged, and the composite score was significantly associated with adolescents’ grade point average (r = .18, p < .001).

Financial strain. Parents rated their family’s level of financial hardship using a nine-item measure (e.g., “Think again over the past three months. Generally, at the end of each month did
you end up...” 1 = with more than enough money left over, 4 = very short of money, “Your family had enough money to afford the kind of home/ car/ food/ utilities you needed.” 1 = not true at all, 4 = very true α=.90; Conger et al., 2002).

**Major family life events.** Parents indicated acute stressors in their family by responding to six items (e.g., “You took on financial responsibility for a parent, in-law, or other family member,” “You ended a close friendship,” “A family member died” or “You moved far away from family or friends,” 1 = Yes, 0 = No; Holmes & Rahe, 1967). Items were summed for a score of major family life events.

**Depressive symptoms.** Using the Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale, parents reported on 20 depressive symptoms in the past week (e.g., “You felt that you were just as good as other people,” “You felt depressed,” “You felt lonely,” or “You felt sad,” 1 = rarely or none of the time, 4 = most or all of the time; α=.87; Radloff, 1977).

**Somatic symptoms.** Parents reported on 12 physical complaints in the past two weeks (e.g., “Headaches,” “Dizziness,” “Stomachaches or pain,” or “Poor appetite,” 1 = not at all to 4 = almost every day; α=.83; adapted from Resnick et al., 1997; Udry & Bearman 1998).

**Parent-adolescent relationship quality.** Parents reported how much they understood and supported their adolescent with nine items (e.g., “You helped your child talk about his/her difficulties,” “Your child trusted you,” “Your child could count on you when he/she needed to talk about his/her problems,” or “If you knew something was bothering your child, you asked him/her about it.” 1 = almost never to 5 = almost always; α=.82; Armsden & Greenberg, 1987).

**Parent-adolescent conflict.** Parents also reported how much conflict they had with their adolescent by responding to 10 items (e.g., “You and your child got into a serious argument or fight,” “You and your child ignored each other,” “You and your child became very frustrated...
“with each other,” or “You and your child yelled or raised your voices at each other.” 1 = almost never to 5 = almost always; ∝ =.87; Ruiz, Gonzales, & Formoso, 1998).

Results

The maximum likelihood with missing values (MLMV) function in STATA was employed to estimate the values for the regression and mediation models. Given the number of variables in the models, listwise deletion would have only used about 86% of the total sample. Therefore, in order to utilize all available observations and acquire unbiased estimates in the presence of missing data, models were estimated using MLMV.

Every model controlled for parental generational status and education, total household income, and adolescent school, grade, and gender. First, we tested the association between parental stress and parental involvement. Then, we assessed the mediating role of parental depressive and somatic symptoms in any observed association between stress and parental involvement. Finally, we also tested the mediating role of family relationships (i.e., parent-adolescent relationship quality and parent-adolescent conflict) in any association between stress and parental involvement.

Table 1 shows descriptive statistics for the key variables. Parents generally reported higher levels of home academic involvement relative to school involvement, t(427) = 30.25, p < .001. They also reported generally higher levels of support and lower levels of conflict, t(427) = 42.48, p < .001. Measures of stress were correlated negatively both with school and home academic involvement. Parental support was positively correlated with academic involvement and negatively associated with stress measures.

Family Stress and Parental Involvement
First, we tested the association between parental stress and parental involvement. As shown in Model 1 of Table 2, parental stressors were linked with lower levels of academic involvement at home and at school. With both stressors in the model, financial strain was negatively associated with school involvement, but major family life events were linked with lower levels of academic involvement at home. Again, these associations controlled for parental generational status and education, total household income, adolescent school, grade, and gender.

**Parental Depressive and Somatic Symptoms, and Family Relationships as Mediators**

Next, we tested the mediating role of parental depressive and somatic symptoms in the link between parental stress and their academic involvement. Model 2 of Table 2 shows that parental reports of depressive symptoms and somatic symptoms were not significant predictors of school and home involvement, therefore they were not expected to be statistically significant mediators of the initial association of parental stress with academic involvement. Bootstrapping in STATA, using 10,000 iterations confirmed this, both in the link between financial strain and school academic involvement (indirect effect of depressive symptoms = .000, 95% CI = [-.050, .050]; indirect effect of somatic symptoms = -.003, 95% CI = [-.027, .017]), and in the link between major family life events and home academic involvement (indirect effect of depressive symptoms = -.008, 95% CI = [-.028, .438]; indirect effect of somatic symptoms = -.005, 95% CI = [-.025, .011]).

We also examined whether family relationships accounted for the association between parental stress and their academic involvement. Model 3 in Table 2 shows that parental reports of the relationship quality between them and their adolescents, but not conflict between the dyad, were a significant predictor of both school and home involvement. Bootstrapping in STATA, using 10,000 iterations, confirmed the mediating role of parent-adolescent relationship quality in the association between financial strain and school involvement (indirect effect = -.060, 95% CI
= [-.101, -.024]) and the association between major family life events and home involvement (indirect effect = -.081, 95% CI = [-.134, -.034]). Conflict between parents and adolescents was not a significant mediator for the link between financial strain and school involvement (indirect effect\(_{\text{conflict}} = -.005, 95\% \text{ CI} = [-.009, .023]) or the association between major family life events and home involvement (indirect effect\(_{\text{conflict}} = .004, 95\% \text{ CI} = [-.008, .022].)). That is, the link between financial strain and school involvement, as well as the link between major family life events and home involvement were explained by parental reports of the relationship quality between parents and their adolescent, over and above (a) the other stressor, (b) parental depressive and somatic symptoms and (c) parental generational status and education, total household income, and adolescent school, grade and gender.

**Discussion**

Latinos tend to fall behind academically (Grieco et al., 2012), and previous research has found that parental involvement predicts achievement (Altschul, 2012; Keith & Lichtman, 1994). Even though Latino parents tend to report high academic expectations (Goldenberg, Gallimore, Reese, & Garnier, 2001), stress could attenuate their involvement. This study examined whether stress was associated with lower levels of parental academic involvement, and whether this link was explained by family functioning—or parental depressive and somatic symptoms and family relationships.

We found that stressful events were, indeed, associated with lower levels of parental involvement. This was similar to studies showing that financial strain plays a role in the involvement that parents are able to provide (Altschul, 2012; Gutman & Eccles, 1999; McLoyd, 1990). Moreover, we found that different types of stress were differentially linked with parental involvement.
involvement. Specifically, financial strain was negatively associated with school involvement, but major family life events were linked with lower levels of home academic involvement.

Understanding what limits involvement at school is important. A study with Latino middle and high school students found that the association between school involvement and adolescent achievement was mediated by teachers’ perceptions of the student (Kuperminc et al., 2008). That is, parental involvement in school may be helpful to adolescents, because it shifts teachers’ expectations of the student. Our study builds on extant research by showing that financial strain may prevent parents of high school students from participating in school functions (Gutman & Eccles, 1999; McLoyd, 1990), which seems to be especially beneficial for high school students (Kuperminc et al., 2008). It could be that when a parent is concerned for the family’s economic well-being they have to work longer hours, and are therefore unable to attend (Ramirez, 2003). Our findings may serve to inform perceptions of academic personnel regarding Latino parents by contextualizing their academic involvement within financial and familial stressors.

Major family life events seem to function differently, by predicting less academic involvement at home. Acute stressors may impact parents’ daily lives (Compas, 1987), which may limit their time or energy for academic involvement in the home. Our study found that when Latino families faced acute stressors with regard to their family—such as moving away from family and friends, or experiencing a death in the family—parents were less able to provide academic involvement in the home. Participating in academic activities entails that parents invest time and patience (Gutman & Eccles, 1999; McLoyd, 1990), and acute family stressors may deplete these in the home—thus limiting parental involvement in that setting. This is important because some research has found that Latino parents participate at home more than they do at school (Mau, 1997), which may be even more important for academics (Hill & Tyson, 2009).
We then sought to examine whether parental depressive and somatic symptoms helped to explain the link between familial stress and parental academic involvement. Studies with parents of younger children found that parental depressive and somatic symptoms were linked with lower levels of academic involvement at school and at home (Denollet, Smolderen, Broeck, & Pedersen, 2007; Kohl, et al., 2000; LaForett & Mendez, 2010; Valdez, et al., 2013). Our study, however, found that neither parental depressive nor somatic symptoms explained the negative link between parental stress and their academic involvement. It is unclear why our study did not find a similar pattern, but our findings suggest that relationship quality between parents and their adolescents may play a more significant role than parental depressive and somatic symptoms during the years of adolescence.

We also sought to examine the mediating role of family relationships in the association between stress and parental involvement. We found support for the family stress model, which posits that family functioning helps explain the link between stress and adverse outcomes (Conger et al., 1994). Specifically, parental reports of the relationship quality between them and their adolescents mediated the link between parental stress and their own academic involvement both at school and at home. These findings suggest that parental academic involvement may be a function of familial ties and meaningful social connections with their adolescents. Adams and Christenson (2000) found that trust between teachers and parents decreased across development—with more trust being reported in elementary school than high school. Perhaps by the time students are in high school, trust shifts to the adolescent. Thus, if stressors limit the relationship quality that parents are able to foster between them and their adolescents, this could, in turn, affect their academic involvement. Additionally, research with Mexican-origin families also finds that adolescents tend to respond to the daily needs of their parents (Tsai, Telzer,
Gonzales, & Fuligni, 2013). It could also be that a supportive relationship between parents and adolescents ameliorates the effects of stress for parents, allowing them to continue being involved in the academics of their adolescents.

It is important to note, that it was support, and not conflict, that helped explain the link between parental stress and their academic involvement. Other studies have found similar patterns. For example, among Mexican-American adolescents, the link between financial strain and adolescent externalizing symptoms was explained by maternal and paternal warmth, but not harsh parenting (Gonzales, et al., 2011). In another study, resilience in the midst of financial strain was predicted by support from parents, siblings and other adults—but conflict in the family was linked with adolescent internalizing (Conger et al., 1994).

These results should be interpreted with caution, due to the cross-sectional nature of this study. Family stress may reduce positive parenting in a general fashion, rather than setting into motion the mediational model we proposed and tested. This generalized decrease in positive parenting, in turn, may be what is driving lower levels of the relationship quality between parents and adolescents, as well as parents to be less involved in the academic context of their adolescents. Future research employing qualitative and longitudinal data should examine the specific role that Latino adolescents play in the academic involvement of their parents. Furthermore, examining these factors longitudinally would allow us to differentiate between short-term and long-term stressors. For example, would family processes change after many years of stressors (e.g., a new disability in the family)—or even many years of resources (e.g., a former single-parent home gains a caring step-parent)? It is also important to examine immigrant parental awareness and comfort with navigating American school systems across development. The discomfort that parents report feeling when becoming involved in school (Martinez,
DeGarmo, & Eddy, 2004; Monzó, 2013; Ramírez, 2003) may exacerbate as the education system shifts to high school, when there is less contact with teachers (Adams & Christenson, 2000) and course content becomes more difficult (Neild, 2009).

Parental engagement with academic settings may differ based on certain demographic characteristics (McWayne & Melzi, 2014) that were not examined in this study, such as generational status, age of migration, and language use. Earlier levels of generational status have been associated with lower levels of parental academic involvement (Turney and Kao, 2009). Latina mothers of first graders with less years in the US reported less knowledge about school activities and more barriers to involvement, but higher levels of perceived self-efficacy and higher educational expectations for their children (Moreno & López, 1999). Age of migration could also impact the familiarity parents have with the American system. The younger immigrants are when they enter the host country, the more time they have to familiarize themselves with a new system and build social networks. Parents who migrate at older ages tend to lose ties with the institutions and social networks that have raised them. They are also faced with having to relearn social norms as well as a new language in spite of a diminished language capacity (Angel & Angel, 1992). Parents who migrate at older ages may be less aware of the ways they should be involved, so they may be less involved overall, and especially in the face of stress.

Language use and ability has been found to influence parental engagement in school functions. Those who are more comfortable with the English language tend to participate in more traditional ways at school (Kuperminc et al., 2008). Latino parents have reported desires for a bilingual climate (Durand & Perez, 2013) in the form of translators (Ramirez, 2003) as a consideration for their needs (López, 2001). Parents of migrant children have been found to be
less involved (Seyfried & Chung, 2002) even when controlling for barriers like language (Garcia Coll et al., 2002), and teachers report perceiving lower levels of involvement (Suárez-Orozco, et al., 2009). More time in the US and being monolingual was associated with higher levels of school involvement (Turney and Kao, 2009). So, parents who are more fluent in English or have been in the U.S. for longer periods of time may be more comfortable with school systems and therefore be more involved despite stress.

Additionally, the parental measures used in this study were adapted from a meta-analysis that did not specifically focus on Latino adolescents (Jeynes, 2007). Researchers have found differences in family engagement that is predictive of academic outcomes among Latinos, relative to measures that have historically been utilized with European American families (McWayne, Melzi, Schick, Kennedy & Mundt, 2013): foundational education (i.e., creating a positive learning environment at home by educating children on appropriate social interactions and the family’s culture, academic knowledge, and spending time with the child), supplemental education (i.e., providing stimulating experiences such as involvement with older family members, classes outside of school, and involvement in community spaces that foster learning), school-based activities (i.e., attending workshops, volunteering at school, and advocating for children at school), and future-oriented teaching (i.e., socialization towards a positive life and the importance of education). These measures incorporate issues unique to Latino families, however, even these measures were developed with parents of preschool-aged children. It is important for future researchers to also develop measures that focus on parental academic involvement among Latino adolescents (e.g., communication with counselors and school personnel, fostering adolescent self-monitoring and autonomy development). Measures that focus on adolescents are important, given that as children enter adolescence classes become more
challenging (Neild, 2009) and communication with teachers decreases (Adams & Christenson, 2000). Thus, it may be important not just to develop measures that are valid for Latino families, but also measures that take into account this unique developmental period.

Obtaining these reports from adolescents would further strengthen these analyses. Although these measures of family processes have been used many times with Latino and other vulnerable populations (Conger et al., 1994; Gonzales et al., 2011; LaForett & Mendez, 2010; Valdez, et al., 2013), it could be that parents underreport difficulties in the home. A recent meta-analysis with Latino families found that, especially during adolescence, there may be discrepancies between parent and adolescent reports (Stein et al., 2014). The authors, thus, recommended that researchers consider the reason for choosing a particular reporter and ways in which multiple perspectives might be included. Given that the outcome focused on parental involvement, in this study, we solely included parental reports of stress. Future research should examine similar processes from an adolescent perspective. If adolescents respond to the daily needs of their parents (Tsai, Telzer, Gonzales, & Fuligni, 2013), and Latino parents rely on their adolescents for information on how to be involved (Adams & Christenson, 2000), then stressors experienced by adolescents might limit parental involvement as well. Thus, our study would have been further strengthened by adolescent reports of how much they facilitate parental academic involvement. Furthermore, it is still unclear if caretaker or adolescent reports of parental academic involvement differentially impact achievement. Future studies could also examine these reports concurrently and across time. Perhaps parental involvement is most beneficial if adolescents internalize parents’ values for education (Weisner, 2002).

To our knowledge, this is the first study to find that specific stressors are differentially associated with parental involvement at school and home. Additionally, our study may be the
first to examine the parent-adolescent relationship quality as a mediator between this stress and academic involvement. Other studies should examine this model with other ethnic groups. It could be that the mediating role of the relationship quality between parents and adolescents is salient with Mexican-origin families, due to the important role of family and family cohesion in this population (Parke, et al., 2004; Stein et al., 2014). Conceivably, the relationship quality between parents and adolescents would still be a mediator in other groups, but may be more salient for families that value family cohesion (Telzer, Gonzales, & Fuligni, 2013).

The findings from this study show that financial and familial stressors limit Latino parental involvement at school and at home. Supporting families under stress may prove useful for the achievement of their adolescents (Hill & Tyson, 2009; Jeynes, 2007; Kuperminc, et al., 2008), if it means that parents are more able to be involved in the academics of their adolescents. Additionally, although challenging, finding ways to help parents foster higher relationship quality between them and their adolescents may provide a familial context where parents can continue being involved despite contextual stressors.

**Conclusion**

Our study found that parental stress was associated with lower levels of involvement at home and at school. Interestingly, there was a distinction between the type of stressor and the type of involvement it seemed to limit. Financial strain was associated with lower levels of involvement at school, and acute family stressors, or major family life events, were associated with less academic involvement at home. Moreover, we found that the quality of the relationship between parents and adolescents — but not conflict with their teenager, or their own depressive and somatic symptoms — explained both of these associations. That is, our results suggest that the reason that stress is associated with lower levels of involvement is because stress may limit
the positive relationship quality between parents and adolescents. Thus, understanding parental involvement within the context of family dynamics may better inform predictors to the efforts that parents employ—in the form of school and home academic involvement—to fulfill the high academic aspirations that they report for their adolescents.
References


Table 1-1

*Key variable means, standard deviations and correlations*

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<th></th>
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<td>-.13**</td>
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<td>-.13**</td>
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<td>-.09</td>
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<td>.17***</td>
<td>.59***</td>
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<td>.51***</td>
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<td>-.14**</td>
<td>-.19***</td>
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<td>8. Parent-Adolescent Conflict</td>
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<td>-.09</td>
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<td>.12**</td>
<td>.22***</td>
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*Note.* †p < .10, *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001
Table 1-2

Stress Predicting Parent Involvement at Home and at School, Mediated by Parental Depressive and Somatic Symptoms and Family Relationships

<table>
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<td>.00 .11</td>
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Note. Regressions controlled for parent education level, family income, parent generational status, adolescent gender, grade and school.

\( ^* p < .05, \quad ^* * p < .01, \quad ^* * * p < .001 \)
Study 2:
Latino Parents and their Adolescents’ Organized After-School Activity Participation: How does family chaos stress modify link between parent support and adolescent involvement?
Abstract

Although ample research has examined the benefits of participating in organized after-school activities, predictors to participation are still unclear. Most research to date regarding antecedents of participation has focused on demographics and barriers to participation, especially for minority youth. Therefore, Study 2 examines parent characteristics and behaviors that may predict adolescent participation in organized after-school activities—as these are beneficial to academic achievement, but Latino students tend to be under-involved. Latino adolescents and their caretakers \(N = 154\) sampled from four middle schools across the Phoenix area completed quantitative interviews. We employed linear regressions to control for income, parental education, adolescent gender, adolescent age, adolescent GPA, and school. These revealed that parental behaviors—instrumental support, verbal encouragement and activity involvement (e.g., talking to the activity leader)—were linked with adolescent reports of motivation and participation in their organized after-school activity. Furthermore, research with organized after-school activities also finds that youth in disadvantaged settings tend to benefit more from participating. Therefore, we also tested the moderating role of family chaos in the link between parental support and adolescent motivation and participation. We found support for this trend in our study, such that parental support was associated with better adolescent participation outcomes in families that reported more chaos, suggesting the important role of Latino parent involvement, especially in disadvantaged families.
Introduction

Latinos comprise one of the largest and fastest growing ethnic groups in the US (Grieco et al., 2010). Despite their large numbers, Latino students often feel estranged and marginalized in school; and, as a result, often evidence low levels of academic achievement (Bejarano, 2005; Valenzuela, 1999). High quality organized after-school activities can promote school belonging and achievement among minority students (Bohnert, Fredricks, & Randall, 2010; Deutsch, 2008). For Latino youth, these benefits are broad and include school enrollment and connection as well as identity development and academic motivation (Brown & Evans, 2002; Davalos, Chavez, & Guardiola, 1999; Diaz, 2005). Latinos, as a whole, often cannot reap the potential benefits of after-school activities, as they tend to participate less than other ethnic groups (Darling, Caldwell, & Smith, 2005; Davalos, et al., 1999; Fredricks & Simpkins, 2013). That said, there is great variability among Latino youth and some are highly involved in organized activities (Simpkins, Vest, & Price, 2011). In order to promote participation for all Latino youth, research on the predictors of adolescents’ activity participation among Latinos is needed to complement existing research on differences across ethnic and racial groups.

Yet, research regarding predictors to motivation and participation in organized after-school activities is limited, especially among Latino families. Given the importance of families in Latino cultures (Stein et al., 2014), the purpose of this study is to examine the behaviors parents engage in to promote the motivation and participation of organized after-school activities of Latino adolescents. In accordance to positive youth development, it is important to understand what enables youth to attend organized activities, with particular attention to factors that are contextually relevant. Given some of the stressors faced by Latino families (e.g., poverty), a
secondary goal of this study is to examine the protective role of parental support when the family environment is chaotic.

Although ample research has examined the benefits of participating in organized after-school activities, predictors to participation are still unclear. Most research to date regarding antecedents of participation has focused on demographics and barriers to participation, especially for minority youth. For example, research with Mexican-origin families shows that adolescents with foreign-born parents and parents who migrated before adolescence are less likely than adolescents with native-born parents to participate in organized after school-activities (Simpkins, Vest & Price, 2011). Although demographics, such as education level and immigrant status, of Latino parents are associated with their children’s educational outcomes (Taylor Haynes, Phillips, & Goldring, 2010), it is important to understand specific parental support that are associated with achievement. However, research examining parental support that promote participation of Latino adolescents is limited. Furthermore, previous literature has focused on barriers. For example, previous work suggests that Latino youth may experience extenuating circumstances, such as babysitting, that can limit their ability to fully realize their motivation in terms of attendance (Simpkins, Delgado, Price, Quach, & Starbuck, 2012). It is important, however, to focus, not just on barriers for minority youth, but also resilience factors. Therefore, this study seeks to examine parental support, which may be a positive and more proximal predictor of motivation and participation in organized after-school activities.

**Latino Parent Involvement**

The Eccles’s expectancy value theory postulates that parental support lead to adolescent behaviors (Simpkins, 2015; Simpkins, et al., 2005; Simpkins, et al., 2012b; Wigfield et al., 2015). Among Latinos, research with, parental academic involvement during adolescence has
been found to be valuable (Keith & Lichtman, 1994; Martinez, 2004). For example, academic involvement at home, such as encouragement for learning and introducing educational materials into the home, is associated with academic self-concept as well as achievement in math, science and language arts (Rogers, Theule, Ryan, Adams, & Keating, 2009). For young Mexican-origin adolescent girls, increased communication about their grades with their mothers was linked with higher math grades and intrinsic motivation for math and reading (Mireles-Rios & Romo, 2010). Research has also examined Latino parent involvement at school, which is also associated with higher grade point averages for middle and high school students (Kuperminc, Darnell, & Alvarez-Jimenez, 2008). However, parent support that could predict adolescent activity motivation and participation among Latino families are unclear. It is important to study this, given that some research finds that the effects of parental support may be more pronounced for Latino youth (Berry & LaVelle, 2013; Fredricks, Hacket, & Bregman, 2010).

**Parental Support and Adolescent Motivation and Participation**

Research with White middle class families finds that parental support regarding organized activities predict changes in youth’s beliefs and behaviors (Simpkins, 2015). For example, instrumental support (e.g., parental provision of materials) and verbal support (e.g., encouragement or endorsement) have been found to mediate the association between parent attitudes and youth involvement among European American elementary aged children (Simpkins, Davis-Kean, & Eccles, 2005; Simpkins, Fredricks & Eccles, 2012). That is, when parents have the option and ability to encourage organized after-school activities, their support for these is associated with their adolescents’ motivation and participation. It is unclear whether these behaviors would matter in a sample that varies by socioeconomic and immigration status (Vandell, Larson, Mahoney, Watts, 2014).
Research regarding parent involvement in academics for Latinos shows that parental support can function differently in this population. For example, when parents talk about setting their children on “the good path,” they include educational attainment as a core part of the definition of success (Azmitia & Brown, 2002). This strong desire for academic success can be couched in an immigrant narrative that socializes children to place high value on upward social mobility (Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco, & Todorova, 2008). Furthermore, even for Latino families that are not immigrants, academic success has been reported as a means to overcome negative stereotypes regarding their ethnic group (Simpkins et al., 2012a). Latino parent involvement also differs from other groups, in that parents are perceived as under-involved in the academics of their adolescents (DePlanty, Coulter-Kern, & Duchane, 2007). However, research shows that Latino parents are involved in other, non-traditional, but effective ways in the home, such as communicating about grades (Mireles-Rios & Romo, 2010) and fostering the utility and value of education (Ceballo, Maurizi, Suárez, & Aretakis, 2013; López, 2001). The role of Latino parent involvement regarding organized after-school activities is unclear.

This study builds upon extant research by testing whether parental behavior regarding organized after-school activities predicts adolescent motivation and participation in these activities over and above demographics in a population that varies by immigration history and socioeconomic status. Specifically, our study will examine the association between parents’ instrumental support and verbal encouragement in organized after-school activities—constructs that have been previously examined—and adolescent reports of motivation and participation factors in these activities. Furthermore, qualitative research with Mexican-origin parents found that some parents also engage in communicating with activity leaders, or activity involvement (Simpkins et al., 2012a). However, to our knowledge, the benefits of this type of parental support
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for organized after-school activities have not been studied. Therefore, our study will also examine the link between activity involvement in organized after-school activities and adolescent reports of motivation and participation in the activity.

The primary goal of this study is to understand the supportive behaviors that Latino parents engage in to foster the involvement in organized after-school activities of their middle school students. Research supports this model, as studies have found that parent support predicts adolescent motivation and participation in organized after-school activities (Fletcher, Elder, & Mekos, 2000; Mahoney & Stattin, 2000; McMinn, Griffin, Jones, & van Sluijs, 2013), even over time (Simpkins, Vest, Dawes, & Neuman, 2010). However, most of this work has been done with White middle-class families. These families likely have the resources necessary to engage in various supportive behaviors. However, does support for organized after-school activities function the same way in families from an ethnic group that varies by immigrant status and socioeconomic status? Our study intentionally focuses on the behaviors that parents do endorse to support their adolescents, despite potentially limited resources. This resiliency framework is in line with positive youth development and seeks to understand the specific benefits of parent support regarding organized after-school activities.

Family Chaos

Few studies have examined the role of family processes in the academics of Latino adolescents (Hill & Torres, 2010). Therefore a secondary goal of this study is to investigate the role of the family context. In order explore how family dynamics in this population may interact with the support that parents provide, our study will also examine how family chaos (e.g., “There is often a fuss going on at our home”) might change the effects of parent support. It could be that parental support matter most in chaotic family environments. However, this is an exploratory
extension of our study, as there are two rival possibilities regarding how chaos might moderate the relations between parents’ behaviors and youths’ activity-related outcomes. That is, it is unclear if families who report lower levels of chaos will show a stronger association between support and adolescent outcomes—or if families who report more chaos benefit more from parent support.

On the one hand family chaos may be disruptive to family routines regarding the quality of parents’ involvement in organized after-school activities (Weisner, 2010). Given that the eco-cultural family theory posits that chaos in the family context is detrimental to adolescent success (Weisner, 2002; Weisner, 2010), parent support of activities could be less effective among families that endorse high levels of chaos in the home. Low-income families tend to report higher levels of chaos—and the longitudinal effects of poverty on socioemotional adjustment during adolescence seems to be mediated by chaotic family contexts (Johnson, Martin, Brooks-Gunn, & Petrill 2008). For example, Latino families, on average, show high levels of poverty relative to other ethnic groups (Stepler & Brown, 2015) and parents in poverty tend to report lower levels of neighborhood safety (Sampson, 2011). Perceptions of neighborhood safety, in turn, have been linked with lower levels of warmth among Mexican-American parents of high school adolescents (Gonzales et al., 2011). That is, parental support seem to be impacted by external factors such as neighborhood safety and poverty. At high levels of family chaos, then—the quality of parent support may be disrupted, such that adolescents do not show the benefits they would in less chaotic family contexts.

On the other hand, parent support may be especially important in families that endorse high levels of chaos. In more affluent school-contexts, where adolescents tend to have ample access to resources, parent support of activities may not be as critical. In the case of families with
high levels of chaos, parental support may be crucial. For example, due to limited resources in their own low-income neighborhoods, a qualitative study found that African American parents displayed resiliency by locating resources for their children’s physical activities in neighboring communities (Jarrett, Bahar, McPherson, & Williams, 2013). In these situations, parents’ behaviors made the difference for whether their children engaged in physical activity. It could be that in families with more chaos, parental support are more predictive of adolescent motivation and participation. Additionally, research finds that participating in organized after-school activities is most beneficial to adolescents who are disadvantaged (Mahoney, 2000; Mahoney & Cairns, 1997). This has been found with adolescents from low-income backgrounds (Blomfield & Barber, 2011), Latino youth (Brown & Evans, 2002) and immigrant youth (Camacho & Fuligni, 2014). Given these patterns, it could be that adolescents in more chaotic homes benefit more from parental support for organized after-school activities than those from homes with less chaos.

**Current Study**

This study primarily seeks to understand the behaviors that Latino parents engage in to promote participation in organized after-school activities. We hypothesize that parental instrumental support, verbal encouragement and their activity involvement within the context of organized after-school activities will be associated with higher levels of adolescent participation and motivation. It is helpful to examine both motivational beliefs and participation as outcomes of parents’ behaviors. Scholars argue that multiple aspects of participation are important to youths’ outcomes (Bohnert, Fredricks, & Randall, 2010). Specifically, both duration (i.e., number of years) and intensity (i.e., time per week or month) are important indicators of participation. Higher intensity and duration afford adolescents more time to develop skills, form
bonds with their peers and leaders, and develop their identity. Parent support may be necessary to ensure consistent attendance during the week and retain their commitment over years. This is important to study among Latino families, given that a large proportion of Latino parents are immigrants—who may know less about organized after-school activities than their children (Carson & Reiboldt, 2011; Simpkins et al., 2012a). We hypothesize that all forms of behavior—instrumental support, verbal encouragement and activity involvement—will be associated with the motivation and participation outcomes of adolescent organized after-school activities.

A secondary goal of this study is to investigate the family context. Family chaos, specifically, has been linked with poor emotional and academic outcomes. Thus, this study will also examine the role of family chaos and how it may alter the associations between parent support and adolescent participation and motivation. We hypothesize that there will be a significant interaction between parental support for organized after-school activities and family chaos. However it is unclear whether the interaction between parent support of after-school activities and family chaos will yield better or null effects in terms of adolescent motivation and participation in organized after-school activities.

Methods

Procedure

The participants and data for this investigation (n= 154) were drawn from a larger study focused on why Latino adolescents do and do not attend organized activities. The larger study included 69% Latino and 31% non-Latino White students (N = 299) from four middle schools in the Southwest that varied in ethnic composition and socioeconomic status (see Table 1 for descriptives). Given the focus of the larger study, adolescents who exhibited three patterns of participation were recruited from each school: 1) adolescents who participated in a school-based
organized activity (63%), 2) adolescents who participated in a community-based organized activity (13%), and 3) adolescents who did not participate in an organized activity (24%). Adolescents who participated in an activity were recruited from a variety of activity types, including school clubs (29%; e.g., student council, book club), sports (39%; e.g., basketball), and arts (32%; e.g., drama).

Within each school, we included a range of activities that were offered in at least two of the four schools, including leadership (e.g., student council), sports (e.g., basketball), art (e.g., drama), and club activities (e.g., book club). Given the focus on Latinos, we only selected activities that included at least one Latino adolescent. We strived to select activities that included both Latino and Caucasian adolescents as to not confound ethnicity and activity. When adolescents who participated in activities were recruited, we also recruited other participants in their activity (1 – 14 participants per activity; \( M = 5 \)). Letters describing the study were sent home with adolescents and families who noted on the returned form that they were interested in learning about the study were contacted.

Questions in the current investigation focus on parent support of Latino adolescents who participate in a community- or school-based organized after-school activity. Our sample therefore includes 154 middle school Latino students who participated in an organized after-school activity and their parents (see Table 1 for demographic information). Latino students who participated in organized after-school activities had a higher GPA (\( \eta^2 = .03 \)) and family income (\( \eta^2 = .02 \)), compared to Latino students who did not participate. Parent education did not differ across the two groups (\( \eta^2 = .01 \)). With the exception of one adolescent who completed their survey online, parents and adolescents were interviewed over the phone. Surveys, which examined involvement in organized after-school activities extensively as well as family
characteristics, lasted 60-90 minutes. About half of the surveys (55.4%) were completed in Spanish by parents, but the majority of adolescents completed their surveys in English (97.5%).

**Measures**

Researchers asked more in-depth questions about one activity in which the adolescent participated. All parent reports regarding supportive behavior and adolescent reports of participation and motivation were about the same activity. For example, if an adolescent was selected to be interviewed about their participation in soccer, then the parent’s and adolescent’s activity-related data were about soccer.

**Parent support.** Parents reported how frequently they engaged in 17 behaviors that could support their adolescent in their activity (0 = never, 4 = always; Eccles, Harold, & Wigfield, 1993; Price & Simpkins, 2011; Simpkins, et al., 2012a). This measure was adapted from existing measures regarding parental support and qualitative research with Latino parents and organized after-school activities. Specifically, parents reported their (a) instrumental support (7 items; α = .69; e.g., “How often do you… buy supplies related to activity?” or “practice with them or help them?”), (b) verbal encouragement (8 items; α = .80; e.g., “How often do you… tell them that they are good at this activity?” or “praise them for working hard in this activity?”), and (c) activity involvement (2 items; r = .62, p < .001, α = .68; e.g., “How often do you… talk with their activity leader?” and “volunteer at their activity?”). Parent support items within each subscale were averaged for a score of instrumental support, verbal encouragement, and activity involvement, respectively.

**Adolescent motivation.** Two motivation scales were assessed: value and self-concept. Adolescents rated the value of their activity (6 items; α = .76; e.g., “How useful is what you learn in this activity?” 0 = not useful, 6 = very useful; Simpkins et al., 2012b). These items were
averaged for a score of value. Students reported their perceptions of their abilities in their activity (4 items; $\alpha = .72$; e.g., “How good would you be learning something new at this activity?” 0 = not very good, 6 = very good; Simpkins et al., 2012b). These items were averaged for a score of ability self-concept.

**Adolescent participation.** Students reported the number of days per week (i.e., 1 = one day, 7 = seven days) they participated and the number of hours per day (i.e., 1 = less than 1 hour, 2 = two hours, 7 = seven hours). A product of these two values indicated intensity (range = 1.00-24.00). Students also reported their number of years (i.e., 1 = one year, 7 = seven years) in the activity for a measure of duration (range = 1.00-7.00).

**Family chaos.** Parents indicated how much chaos existed in their home by responding to 15 items (e.g., “There is often a fuss going on at our home” or “No matter what our family plans, it never seems to work” 1 = true, 0 = false; $\alpha = .71$; Matheny, Wachs, Ludwig, & Phillips, 1995). All items were summed and higher scores indicated more chaos.

**Covariates.** Parents reported their income level (i.e., 0 = less than $10,000, 11 = $60,000 or more) and their education level (i.e., 0 = less than high school, 5 = graduate degree). Parents also reported the gender and age of their adolescent (see Table 1). Adolescents reported their grade point average. Schools were dummy coded and also entered as covariates in the models.

**Analysis Plan**

We employed linear regressions to control for income, parental education, adolescent gender, adolescent age, adolescent GPA, and school. First, we tested the association between parent support (i.e., instrumental support, verbal encouragement and activity involvement) and adolescent motivation (i.e., value and ability self-concept) and participation (i.e., intensity and duration). Then, we tested the role of family chaos as a moderator of the link between parent
support and adolescent motivation and participation. To do this, we used multiple linear regressions and entered the interaction term at the second step: family chaos BY parent support. All variables were centered before being entered into regression equations (Aiken & West, 1991). Besides testing simple slopes, follow-up analyses also examined regions of significance for every interaction that was statistically significant (Dearing & Hamilton, 2006).

**Results**

Table 2 shows descriptive statistics for the key variables. Parents reported higher levels of instrumental support than verbal encouragement and the lowest values for activity involvement. All three types of parental support were positively correlated with each other. Adolescents’ ability self-concept and value for the activity were also highly correlated with each other. On average, adolescents reported participating about eight hours per week and having participated in their activity for about two years as well as fairly high levels of motivation for their activity. Family chaos was positively correlated with the number of hours adolescents participated in their activity. Table 3 shows motivation and participation outcomes regressed on family chaos. Chaos was only associated with the number of hours per week the student participated in the activity.

**Parental Support Predicting Adolescent Motivation and Participation**

Instrumental support was positively associated with value ($\beta = .23, p = .005$), and ability self-concept ($\beta = .21, p = .012$) as well as intensity ($\beta = .19, p = .040$). Parent instrumental support interacted with family chaos to predict value ($B = .14, p = .047$) and ability self-concept ($B = .19, p = .010$). Follow-up analyses revealed that parental instrumental support was especially important in highly chaotic families. For example, at high and mean levels of chaos, instrumental support predicted adolescent value of the organized after-school activity ($\beta_{\text{high}} = .55, p = .006$, $\beta_{\text{mean}} = .23, p = .040$, $\beta_{\text{low}} = .07, p = .500$).
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$\beta_{\text{mean}} = .17, p = .011$; Figure 1) and ability self-concept ($\beta_{\text{high}} = .75, p \leq .001, \beta_{\text{mean}} = .16, p = .024$; Figure 2). At low levels of chaos, instrumental support was not statistically significantly linked with adolescents’ value nor ability self-concept. An analysis on regions of significance revealed that the effect of chaos on self-concept differed at the lowest level of instrumental support ($p = .050$). Differences on the effects of chaos on activity value were significant after instrumental support was 3.10 ($p = .050$).

Verbal encouragement positively predicted adolescents’ value ($\beta = .20, p = .015$), ability self-concept ($\beta = .19, p = .023$) and intensity ($\beta = .23, p = .011$). The positive relation between parent verbal encouragement and adolescent outcomes, however, did not vary by the level of family chaos.

When parents volunteered or communicated with the activity leader, this was positively linked with adolescent reports of their value ($\beta = .17, p = .045$) and ability self-concept ($\beta = .17, p = .053$) as well as intensity ($\beta = .18, p = .054$). Family chaos altered the relation between parent activity involvement and adolescent ability self-concept ($\beta = .34, p = .002$). This followed a similar pattern as instrumental support. That is, as shown in Figure 3, parent activity involvement was predictive of self-concept in high ($\beta = .61, p = .008$) and mean-family chaos contexts ($\beta = .16, p = .030$), but not low-family chaos contexts ($\beta = -.29, p = .191$). An analysis on regions of significance revealed that the effect of chaos on self-concept differed when activity involvement was equal to 3.30 ($p = .050$).

Overall, parental support seemed to predict motivation and participation in organized after-school activities. This was the case for all three behaviors measured: instrumental support, verbal encouragement and activity involvement. Furthermore, chaos moderated the association
between some of these behaviors and adolescent motivation, such that the positive link was present at high and mean levels of family chaos, but not low levels of family chaos.

Discussion

Our study found that Latino parents engaged in a variety of behaviors to promote motivation and participation in organized activities for their middle school adolescents. Specifically, when parents provided instrumental support, verbal encouragement, or activity involvement in the organized after-school activity (e.g., talking to the activity leader), this was associated with adolescents’ own reports of motivation and participation. That is, when parents engaged in these behaviors, adolescents reported higher levels of motivation—as defined by self-concept and value of the activity—as well as participating more hours per week. There was also a significant interaction between parental support and family chaos predicting adolescent motivation. Follow-up analyses revealed that parental support seemed to be most protective in families with more chaos.

These findings build on research with Latino parent involvement in education, by expanding the types of behaviors parents can engage in to support their adolescent in organized after-school activities. Research examining parent academic involvement behaviors such as providing educational materials in the home (Rogers, et al., 2009), or communicating with adolescents about grades (Mireles-Rios & Romo, 2010), have been found to be associated with higher academic self-concept and grades. Similarly, our study found that parent involvement—in the form of instrumental support, verbal encouragement and activity involvement—were associated with adolescent motivation and participation within the context of organized after-school activities. To our knowledge, this is the first quantitative study examining Latino parent involvement to predict adolescent outcomes in organized after-school activities. This study is
particularly relevant, given research showing that parental support within the context of after-school activities may be especially important for Latino youth (Berry & LaVelle, 2013; Fredricks & Hacket, 2010).

Our study thus complements other research examining the Eccles expectancy value theory, which postulates that parental support lead to adolescent behaviors (Simpkins, 2015; Simpkins, et al., 2005; Simpkins, et al., 2012b; Wigfield et al., 2015). This study expands upon extant research on after-school activities and parent involvement literature to include parent activity involvement in organized after-school activities, which to our knowledge, has not yet been examined quantitatively. Activity involvement—or volunteering in the activity and talking to activity leaders—may be comparable to research with parents regarding their school involvement (Hill & Tyson, 2009). This type of involvement may be particularly important for Latino families, as research with parent involvement in schools shows that teachers tend to perceive Latino parents are under-involved (Chen & Gregory, 2010), even though parents tend to disagree with these perceptions (DePlany et al., 2007; Simpkins et al., 2012a). As the field expands to include minority and low-income populations in research—the addition of a measure regarding parent involvement in organized activities, such as activity involvement, may be of particular importance.

Theoretically, research tends to focus on the barriers to parental involvement in academics and organized after-school activities of minority youth. However, we found that there were a variety of behaviors that parents engaged in to promote motivation and participation in organized after-school activities—and that these seem to be effective. Qualitative research by Jarrett and colleagues (2013) found that low-income African-American parents engaged in a variety of behaviors to promote their children’s physical activity, despite the limited availability
of quality recreational setting in their own communities. Similarly, a qualitative study with Mexican-American seventh grade students and their parents, found that parents engaged in supportive behaviors such as encouragement and activity involvement—despite limited resources (Simpkins, et al., 2011). For example, a mother reported that even though time-conflicts could arise, and she could rarely afford the gas required to attend her child’s distant soccer games—his parents made sure someone in the family was present at each of the local games. Our study builds on extant literature by quantitatively examining the behaviors that parents engage in to promote motivation and participation in organized after-school activities.

Based on previous studies, we hypothesized that parent support would be associated with the number of years an adolescent would have been involved in their activity (Simpkins, 2015; Simpkins et al., 2010). However, these types of longitudinal studies have been conducted with affluent and homogenous families, and not with populations that vary by socioeconomic and immigration status (Vandell, et al., 2014). Given our sample of Latino families, these effects may be better studied bi-directionally and longitudinally. This would allow us to examine the effects of Latino children on their parents and the developmental period of adolescence, where students may become more aware of opportunities for their parents’ involvement. Although longitudinal research with White American families tends to show that children’s interests do not influence the behaviors of their parents with regards to after-school activities (Simpkins, 2015), this may not be the case with Latino families. Qualitative research finds that Latino parents may show limited knowledge of organized after-school activities (Simpkins et al., 2012a; Simpkins, et al., 2011). Therefore, unlike populations with more social capital, some Latino families may not learn about organized activities until their child becomes an adolescent, when activities become more salient in the school context. Latino parents could, in fact, rely on the information
their adolescent provides to navigate American school systems (Fuligni & Fuligni 2007; Kirk, Lewis Moss, Nilsen, & Colvin, 2011), and specifically to learn about opportunities regarding organized after-school activities (Simpkins, et al., 2011).

The Moderating Role of Family Chaos

Additionally, we found that chaos moderated the link between parental support and adolescent motivation, such that parental support seemed to matter most in families that reported higher levels of chaos in the home. Specifically, when parents reported low family chaos, the link between parent instrumental support and activity involvement were not associated with adolescent motivation factors. However, when families reported high or moderate levels of chaos, parental support were associated with adolescent reports of motivation in the activity. Our study provides further insight to Eccles’ expectancy value theory by situating parental support within the context of the family. Although parental support was linked with adolescent motivation—as the theory would posit—we found that this may be even more salient in families with more hardship (Simpkins, 2015; Simpkins, et al., 2005; Simpkins, et al., 2012b; Wigfield et al., 2015).

This pattern is similar to other studies suggesting that disadvantaged students benefit more from their participation (Mahoney, 2000; Mahoney & Cairns 1997). For example, low-income students who participate report higher perceptions of academic self-concept (Blomfield & Barber, 2011; Marsh, 1992; Marsh & Kleitman, 2002); foreign-born students benefit more in terms of GPA (Camacho & Fuligni, 2014); and Latino middle school students show stronger benefits in terms of school belonging relative other ethnic groups (Brown & Evans, 2002). Social Control Theory (Hirshi, 1969; Sampson & Laub, 1990) posits that adolescent development is affected by the strength of ties between the adolescent and social institutions, and that
underprivileged contexts may limit resources for positive ties. It is unlikely that stress would be protective for adolescents. Rather, our findings suggest that parents play a role in strengthening ties between the adolescent and the social institutions that are after-school activities. In this case, parental support seemed to matter more for motivation in cases where families reported more chaos. Overall, this is a hopeful finding showing us that parental involvement truly is valuable, and this seems to be more the case when the family is unable to follow a routine—when they may not know what is going to happen the next day, or they may not have the ability to follow-through with plans (Weisner, 2002). If parents are able to be involved in this type of commotion, then these teenagers seem to be benefitting most from their support. Although chaos has been linked with poverty (Johnson et al., 2008)—this is not a measure of finances, or traumatic life events like those in the previous study. This study focuses even more on family dynamics. That is, when parents report this type of commotion in their home—they may face challenges to creating routines. However, this setting seems to be when it matters most that parents are able to be involved. Showing us, again, that among these families, it is very difficult to understand parental academic involvement without understanding family processes.

Given that our study was cross-sectional, interpretations of our results can vary. These effects could be driven by parents socializing their adolescents towards resiliency, or by adolescents responding to their familial context. Parental support regarding organized after-school activities may be an implicit way that parents communicate to adolescents the importance of activities in a chaotic family context. Adolescents, in turn, may be responding to these implicit messages. That is, if adolescents observe their parent providing instrumental support and activity involvement, when family circumstances are chaotic, adolescents may interpret this as their parents’ belief in them—which could inform their own ability self-concept. Our findings could
also be interpreted from a resilience and coping perspective. It could be that with a lot of chaos in the home, if a parent shows approval for the activity in the form of instrumental support, then adolescents choose to spend more time at the activity in order to be away from their chaotic home environment. Thus, an adolescent who is showing resilience by participating in their activity may have a stronger incentive to make meaning of their activity. Alternatively, it could also be that in low-chaos settings, with fewer distractions, parental support may be interpreted as overbearing.

Finally, we also found that chaos was not related to any motivation outcomes and was not linked with duration, only intensity. It could be that some youth who are over-involved are from families that are busy and have a high number of activities occurring in their home. However, in a social policy report, Mahoney, Harris and Eccles (2006) found that the prevalence of over-scheduled adolescents was actually relatively low. Given the, overall, lower levels of involvement among Latino adolescents, it is unlikely that there are high prevalence rates of over-involved adolescents. That said, Latino family lives are often more stressful and chaotic than middle-class White families’ lives. In this case, adding more hours of participation to an activity may explain the association between chaos and intensity found in our study. Finally, future studies could examine predictors of family chaos. Chaos due to over-involvement in activities may yield different outcomes than chaos due to family conflict, for example.

**Limitations and Future Directions**

Future studies should replicate this process with other stressors. The chaos measure used in this study, although developed with a socioeconomically diverse sample (Wachs, 1989), was originally developed with families of infants. Besides adapting the measure for adolescents, it would be important to consider the important role of family in Latino populations (Stein et al.,
PARENT SUPPORT, CHAOS, AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

2014). The Chaos Scale measures “environmental noise, crowding, and home traffic” (Matheny et al., 1995, p. 435). However, Latino families are currently larger in average size than other ethnic groups (Chapa & De La Rosa, 2004), and are characterized by connections with extended family and kin (Stein et al., 2004). These strong familial connections have been shown to be protective for Latino adolescents, and due to this, the number of these relationships may be confounded with “environmental noise, crowding, and home traffic.” That is, although in previous research chaos has been found to limit childrens’ development—among Latino families—and especially by adolescence—“family chaos,” may simply be a normative part of development. This position is speculative and future research could address this by adapting a measure of chaos that is valid among families with Latino adolescents, and by replicating this process with other measures of stress (e.g., parental psychological presence, disadvantage, unpredictability in the home).

Additionally, our study did not take into account the potential impact of activity leaders. This is important, because Latino parents tend to be perceived by teachers as under-involved in the academics of their children. Furthermore, several studies find that teacher perceptions of parent involvement are associated with more care from teachers (Chen & Gregory, 2009). For example, Kuperminc and colleagues (2008) found that the link between parent involvement and adolescent GPA was mediated by teacher perceptions of the adolescent. Within the context of organized after-school activities, activity involvement might encourage the activity leader to provide more care to this student. With positive perceptions from the leader, the adolescent may, in turn, report higher levels of motivation and participation. Thus, perceptions of parent involvement or investment may be key mediators in the link between parental support regarding organized after-school activities and adolescent motivation and participation.
Additionally, when examining perceptions of parent support among activity leaders, it would be important to examine the role of cultural variables, such as language use and acculturation factors. For example, qualitative research within the context of organized after-school activities found that activity leaders reported language barriers as an impediment to communication with parents (Simpkins et al., 2012a). However, parents did not view language as a barrier to communicating with activity leaders, since their adolescents had the ability to act as language brokers (Simpkins et al., 2012a). Overall, Latino parents tend to disagree with teachers’ perceptions of their under-involvement (DePlanty et al., 2007). Perhaps these differences in perceptions could be due to the fact that much of parents’ engagement in behaviors that promote their adolescents’ motivation and participation occurs in the home. Activity leaders who understand Latino cultural values and strive to foster a relationship with parents may have a better understanding of parental support (Durand, 2012). Understanding how cultural variables interact with activity leaders’ perceptions would help expand theoretical frameworks to include relevant cultural moderators that may promote or hinder parental support as well as adolescent motivation and participation.

By focusing on these behaviors, we adopt a strength-based perspective that allows us to contextualize extant research that tends focuses on socioeconomic and demographic barriers to parent involvement. However, to be able to study resilience, it important that future studies examine these constructs together. That is, how and why do parents overcome challenges and engage in these types of supportive behaviors? The Eccles’ expectancy value model posits that parents’ previous experiences inform their current values, which is then linked to their own behavior (Wigfield, Eccles, Schiefele, Roeser, & Davis-Kean, 2006). Simpkins and colleagues’ (2012a) qualitative study with Mexican-American families found that parents indeed reported
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their motivations (e.g., their adolescent’s social development) as reasons for supporting—or not supporting (e.g., concerns about neighborhood safety)—their adolescent’s participation in organized after-school activities. It is important, then, to allow the family and socio-demographic context to inform our understanding of barriers as well as resilience when examining Latino parental support.

Conclusion

This study builds on the limited research regarding parental support for organized activities by employing a strength-based perspective with a minority sample that varies by socioeconomic and immigrant status (Vandell et al., 2014). Working with a Latino population allowed us to take the family context into account while focusing on what a minority population is doing to support their adolescents. Overall we found that parental support were linked with motivation and participation in organized after-school activities. Specifically, parent reports of instrumental support, verbal encouragement and activity involvement were all associated with adolescent value of the activity, their ability self-concept and intensity—or the number of hours per week they participated. This study builds upon research regarding Latino parent involvement by examining behaviors within the context of organized after-school activities.

We also sought to examine familial circumstances where this type of involvement matters most. We found an interaction between family chaos and parental support, revealing that adolescents in families with high and average levels of chaos in the family benefitted more from parental support for organized after-school activities. These findings suggest that stressors in the home may not always be indicative of under-involved parents or unmotivated adolescents. Instead, parental support seemed to be most meaningful for adolescents in families who reported high and average levels of chaos in the home.
Our findings suggest that parents play a critical role in their adolescents’ motivation and participation in organized after-school activities. However, the positive role of parents has been neglected in extant literature, especially among minority adolescents—as research tends to focus on the role of peers or activity leaders. Although these other factors are important, research shows that parental support may be more relevant for Latino youth when taking up an activity (Berry & LaVelle, 2013; Fredricks & Hacket, 2010). If we want to involve youth in organized after-school activities, families are assets that matter, and examining these together may be most informative. Even though Latino families may be faced with serious stressors such as poverty (Morales, Lara, Kington, Valdez, & Escarce, 2002), our study shows that involving them is worthwhile. Our study shows that whether parental support is visible or not, it is likely that Latino parents are involved in ways that promote motivation and participation. Therefore, sending materials home, emailing parents, having a conversation with them, or organizing informal events may help guide parents’ efforts, as they are involved with their adolescents at home. Despite the difficulties that may be associated with promoting involvement in the activity for populations with higher levels of chaos, promoting parental support in the home may be a promising option.
References


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PARENT SUPPORT, CHAOS, AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES


PARENT SUPPORT, CHAOS, AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES


Table 2-1

**Neighborhood and school demographic information**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>School Characteristics</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade Levels (Number of Students)</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>7-9</td>
<td>7-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Family Income (^a)</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>$83,000</td>
<td>$46,000</td>
<td>$32,000</td>
<td>$67,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ethnic Composition (^b)</td>
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<td>16% Hispanic, 60% White</td>
<td>88% Hispanic, 6% White</td>
<td>91% Hispanic, 4% White</td>
<td>49% Hispanic, 38% White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students with free/reduced lunch (^b)</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Analytic Sample Characteristics** |         |            |            |            |            |
| Adolescent Age (% female) | 12.41   | 12.29      | 12.36      | 12.46      | 12.48      |
| Foreign-born Adolescents \(M_{age of migration}\) | 17%      | 11%        | 16%        | 33%        | 10%        |
| Foreign-born Parents \(M_{age of migration}\) | 64%      | 32%        | 77%        | 78%        | 52%        |
| Mean Parent Income | 4.41    | 8.14       | 3.61       | 2.87       | 4.74       |
| Mean Parent Education | 1.83    | 3.32       | 1.50       | 1.09       | 2.07       |

Note. \(^a\)Data are from the 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates for the 2010 US Census. \(^b\)Data are from 2010-2011 the Common Core Data at the National Center for Education Statistics.
### Table 2-2

*Key variable means, standard deviations and correlations*

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<th></th>
<th>M</th>
<th>(SD)</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
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<td>Encouragement</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Instrumental</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Support</td>
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<td>.61</td>
<td>.67***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Activity</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement</td>
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<td>1.14</td>
<td>.37***</td>
<td>.41***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Intensity</td>
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<td>4.56</td>
<td>.20*</td>
<td>.17*</td>
<td>.18*</td>
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<td>5. Duration</td>
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<td>1.35</td>
<td>.26***</td>
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<td>.17*</td>
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<td>6. Value</td>
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<td>.22**</td>
<td>.16†</td>
<td>.17*</td>
<td>.59***</td>
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<td>.22**</td>
<td>.15†</td>
<td>.17*</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Chaos</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.19*</td>
<td>.17*</td>
<td>.03</td>
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*Note.* †p < .10, *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001
Table 2-3

*Family chaos predicting adolescent participation and motivation, with all control variables*

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<th>Motivation</th>
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<td>Value</td>
<td>Duration</td>
<td>Intensity</td>
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<tr>
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<td>4.66***</td>
<td>1.82***</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* .18</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>.99</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
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<td>.11</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental Education</td>
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<td>-.06</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>-.32</td>
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<tr>
<td>Born</td>
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<td>.21</td>
<td>.63*</td>
<td>.91</td>
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<td>School B</td>
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<td>.19</td>
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<td>Adolescent GPA</td>
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<td>.33</td>
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<td>-.75</td>
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<td>.07</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family Chaos</td>
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<td>.00</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>1.08*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* †p < .10, *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001
Figure 2-1. Simple slopes explaining the interaction between parental instrumental support and family chaos predicting self-concept. †p < .10, *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001
Figure 2-2. Simple slopes explaining the interaction between parental instrumental support and family chaos predicting the adolescent’s value of the extracurricular activity. 

*p < .10, *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001
Figure 2-3. Simple slopes explaining the interaction between parent activity involvement and family chaos predicting adolescent self-concept in their organized after-school activity.

\[ p < .10, *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001 \]
Conclusion

Given the growth and educational attainment disparities found in the Latino population in the U.S. (Grieco et al., 2012), it is important to understand predictors of achievement. Previous research has found that parental involvement is an important factor for achievement (Gonzalez-Pienda et al., 2002; Hill & Tyson, 2009; Shumow & Miller, 2001). Therefore, this dissertation examined academic socialization practices of Latino parents within the context of stress and family functioning. These dissertation studies build upon extant literature by examining predictors of parent academic involvement beyond demographics such as ethnicity, immigrant factors and socioeconomic status. Research examining parental support as predictors of adolescent involvement in organized after-school activities is also limited (Sanderson & Richards, 2010), especially for Latino families (Simpkins, Vest & Price, 2011). Thus, the second study of this dissertation built upon extant research by expanding the parent involvement literature to a different domain: organized after-school activities. Overall, the goal of this dissertation was to examine the involvement of Latino parents in adolescent’s education and extracurricular involvement, while situating these practices within the context of family dynamics and acknowledging the challenges that these families may encounter.

The first study in this dissertation found that parental stress was associated with lower levels of involvement at home and at school. Interestingly, there was distinction between the type of stressor and the type of involvement it seemed to limit. Financial strain was associated with lower levels of involvement at school, and family stressors were associated with less academic involvement at home. That is, parental concern about having enough money to afford basic living standards was linked with their reports of school involvement, such as attending school functions and contacting school counselors. Latino parents report being unable to attend school
functions due to long work hours (Ramirez, 2003), and parents may work longer hours when they are under financial strain. On the other hand, stressors regarding family—such as taking care of a new family member or moving away from family and friends—were associated with less academic-related communication at home. Latino families also report high levels of interdependence (Stein et al., 2004), and educational involvement with older family members has been linked with academic readiness among Latino children (McWayne, Melzi, Schick, Kennedy & Mundt, 2013; McWayne & Melzi, 2014). Additionally, stressors in the family seem to be especially distressing for Latino families (Parke et al., 2004). Therefore, it could be that strain in the family may be more relevant for limiting academic involvement in the home than at school.

Furthermore, parental support of their adolescent— but not conflict with their teenager, or their own emotional distress— mediated both of these associations. That is, although stressful events were associated with parent depressive and somatic symptoms, these were not associated with involvement and, therefore, did not explain the association between parent stress and their involvement. Parent support for their adolescent, on the other hand, was associated with parent involvement and explained the link between parent stress and their involvement. That is, parents’ ability to foster a trusting relationship with their adolescent may be limited in the presence of stressful events in the home. This, in turn, seems to explain the association between stress and parent involvement. These results suggest that stress in Latino families may limit the positive involvement that parents provide, overall.

The second study in this dissertation examined parent involvement within the context of organized after-school activities. In this study, parent reports of their behaviors were associated with adolescent reports of their motivation and participation. When parents provided instrumental support, verbal encouragement and co-activity, these behaviors were associated
with adolescents’ self-concept in and value of the activity as well as participating more hours per week. This is important, as these motivation and participation factors in middle school have been linked with motivation and participation in longitudinal studies (Denault & Poulin, 2009; Simpkins, 2015; Simpkins, Davis-Kean & Eccles, 2005). Longitudinal participation, in turn, has been associated with a host of benefits, such as, academic motivation and performance (Roeser & Peck, 2003).

Most studies examining parental involvement in organized after-school activities have typically examined White middle-class families (Vandell, Larson, Mahoney, Watts, 2014). Given the important role of family in the Latino population (Stein et al., 2014), it was important to take into account the family context. Therefore, this study also examined the role of family chaos as a moderator in the link between parental support and adolescent motivation and participation. There were competing hypotheses for this model. On the one hand, family chaos is disruptive to routines and its presence could negate the positive effects of parent support (Johnson, Martin, Brooks-Gunn & Petrill, 2008; Weisner, 2002; Weisner, 2010). On the other hand, research shows that participating in activities is especially beneficial for disadvantaged youth (Blomfield & Barber, 2011; Brown & Evans, 2002; Camacho & Fuligni, 2014). In this case, parent involvement might function in the same way, and could be especially beneficial for families with more chaos in the home. We found support for the latter model, such that parental support seemed to be most beneficial for families who reported more chaos in the home. That is, when families reported high and mean levels of chaos, parents’ instrumental support was positively associated with adolescent reports of self-concept and value. However, instrumental support was not associated with adolescent outcomes, when families reported low levels of chaos. This was also the case for co-activity.
These studies together focus on what Latino families are doing and are helpful in promoting strength-based perspectives and solutions regarding the hardships these families may face. Parental academic involvement may yield even more benefits for adolescents whose families endure higher levels of stress. These dissertation studies may also help inform the deficit-based perspective studies tend to find, wherein teachers may regard Latino parents as “uninvolved” or apathetic (DePlanty, Coulter-Kern & Duchane, 2007; Ramírez, 2003). As other research has found, both of these studies find that Latino parents are involved at school, in the home and in several forms within the context of the after-school activities of their adolescents (Martinez, DeGarmo & Eddy, 2004; Kuperminc, Darnell & Alvarez-Jimenez, 2008; Simpkins, Delgado, Price, Quach & Starbuck, 2012). Additionally, these studies also found that academic socialization may occur more in the home—which could help explain why teachers view Latino parents as uninvolved.

Findings from these studies suggest that school and community settings working with underprivileged families should provide parents with resources so they are able to maintain support for their adolescents in times of stress. Although it may be difficult, it is important to continue examining creative ways to involve Latino parents in the education of their adolescents (Auerbach, 2009). Research shows that parents participate if they are invited to do so (Jasis, 2013; Monzo, 2013), but that it is better for teachers to contact parents regarding positive (e.g., school programs for the year, or their course selection), rather than negative matters (e.g., poor performance or behavior problems; Fan, 2010). Since parents tend to be mostly involved at home, informing parents about effective methods of involvement in at-home activities could be beneficial (Ingram, Wolfe & Lieberman, 2007). To improve involvement at school, Latino parents report that it is important to focus on building a quality relationship with them (Durand,
which is shown to be more pertinent than frequency of contact and demographic variables (Adams & Christenson, 2000). Although building a quality relationship with parents is more important than demographics—demographic differences in academic involvement may be used to tailor welcoming school environments for parents. For example, comfort with the English language is predictive of higher levels of school involvement (Turney and Kao, 2009). However, researchers have also found that when immigrant parents have children who are immigrants as well, they are less involved (Seyfried & Chung, 2002), even when controlling for English-language ability (Garcia Coll et al., 2002). Therefore, schools can consider language differences (Durand, 2012; Lopez & Donovan, 2009), but also characteristics of the child when developing strategies to involve families in the education process. Overall, it seems that when school personnel views parents as partners in the education process, and thus taking their concerns seriously, parents are more likely to become involved in traditional ways that may benefit their adolescents’ academics (Lopez & Donovan, 2009; McKenna & Millen, 2013; Shah, 2009).

Additionally, this study found that that the link between stress and participation may be a function of parents’ ability to foster a trusting relationship with their adolescent, suggesting that family dynamics are important in parental involvement—and that involvement may be most vital in families with chaotic and stressful environments. Future studies can examine the bi-directionality of parent-adolescent involvement. For example, longitudinal research with White American families tends to show that children’s interests do not influence the behaviors of their parents (Simpkins, 2015). However, research with Latino families shows that Latino parents tend to rely on the information their adolescent provides to navigate American school systems (Fuligni & Fuligni, 2007; Kirk et al. 2011; Simpkins, Vest & Price, 2011). Findings from this dissertation suggest that a low-supportive relationship between parents and adolescents may limit
the information that adolescents share with parents about involvement. It would be interesting to examine the implicit or explicit ways parents encourage adolescents to share information with them, as well as how adolescent behaviors may guide, or catalyze these parent socialization practices.

Future research could also examine within-group differences in the benefits of participation. For example, examining migration origins may be important, as parents may leave their home country with different resources (Manaster, Chan, Safady, 1992). Research suggests that parents differ in their resources based on migration characteristics (Marvan & Trujillo, 2009; Seyfried & Chung, 2002; Turney and Kao, 2009), and that, typically, parents are more involved the more time they spend in the U.S (Angel & Angel, 1992). It could be that as time progresses, parents develop strategies for academic socialization based on the capital they entered the country with, which may inform the community networks they build once they arrive into their host country. Some studies, for example, show that Latino parents may feel like they are overstepping their boundaries if they participate at school (Ramirez, 2003). However, these efficacy beliefs may differ depending on resources prior to migration, as well as the community networks parents build once they enter the host country (Sheldon, 2002). That is, the experiences of Latino families may differ based on the economic resources and ethnic diversity available at schools. Additionally, geographical settings such as urban, suburban, or rural contexts and whether these communities are new host locations (e.g., southeastern states) or traditional host locations (e.g., southwestern states) may provide different resources and cultural accommodations for families learning to navigate American school systems (Potochnick, Perreira, Fuligni, 2012). Examining the interaction of parents’ resources prior to migration with
the resources available in host communities may explain differences in beliefs about involvement and the types of academic behaviors in which parents engage.

These studies examined parent involvement for academics and organized after-school activities separately. Future studies may examine parent involvement in academics relative to organized after-school activities (Mji & Mbinda, 2005). For example, when parents have limited resources, how does a family decide which type of involvement received more attention than the other? Do the mechanisms that explain the link between parent involvement and achievement or involvement in organized after-school activities work differently for adolescents? Finally, these studies are limited in that they are both cross-sectional. Examining these factors longitudinally would allow us to differentiate between these types of parent involvement over time (Eccles & Harold, 1993) as well as between short-term and long-term stressors (Widom, Horan, & Brzustowicz, 2015). Would family processes change after many years of stressors (e.g., new disability in the family) — or many years of resources (e.g., a former single-parent home gains a caring step-parent)? Also, even though resources seem to be especially beneficial for disadvantaged families, longitudinal analyses would allow us to test the long-term cost of resilience (Brody et al., 2014; Danese & McEwen, 2012).

Finally, future studies should work to examine whether these processes replicate with similar measures that more adequately capture the constructs examined here. Parental involvement measures from the first study were adapted from a meta-analysis that did not focus on Latino families (Jeynes, 2007). Other studies have found academic involvement behaviors specific to Latino parents that may be useful for future studies to examine (McWayne, et al., 2013; McWayne & Melzi, 2014). However, these measures were developed with parents of preschool-aged children. Future research examining parental academic involvement among
Latino families of adolescents would benefit from adapting these measures by McWayne and Melzi (2014) for adolescents—given that communication with teachers and parents decreases in adolescence (Adams & Christenson, 2000) and courses become more difficult (Neild, 2009). Additionally, the chaos measure (Matheny, Wachs, Ludwig, & Phillips, 1995) utilized in the second study of the dissertation may have limited validity when it comes to Latino families. This measure seems to capture levels of activity in the home. However, given larger family sizes relative to other ethnic groups (Chapa & De La Rosa, 2004) and connections with extended family and kin that have been found to be protective, overall, for Latino families (Stein et al., 2004)—“chaos” may function differently among Latino families. Thus, it would be valuable to examine whether this measure of chaos is actually associated with other measures of stress among Latino families, and whether other stress measures follow a similar pattern as chaos in this study.

Together, these studies show that stress and family play a role as Latino parents engage in academic socialization practices for their adolescents. Although stress can be detrimental for parents, this dissertation shows that the role of stress in Latino families is a complex one. Study one, for example, shows, first, that not all stressors may function in the same way. Secondly, it seems as though stress does not create bad parenting, but, instead, may limit the good practices that parents would typically provide. The second study in this dissertation found that parental support in organized after-school activities were associated with adolescent motivation, but that this association was stronger in a chaotic family context. Thus, this study shows that it is critical to examine family dynamics when investigating parent academic involvement among Latino populations.
Overall, these studies show that Latino parents are involved in the academics of their adolescents. These behaviors take place in different settings such as school, in the home, and in organized after-school activities. Their involvement and its effect on adolescents is a complex one that seems to be impacted by financial and familial factors. Latino parents and their adolescents seem to adapt to these circumstances and in some cases these behaviors in more stressful contexts seem to yield the most benefits. It is my hope that this dissertation illustrates the importance of contextualizing the academic socialization practices of marginalized parents in their efforts to realize the academic aspirations they have for their adolescents.
References


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