Voices Of Mexican Immigrant Parents Fostering

The Academic Success Of Their Children

by

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ABSTRACT

Students who drop out of high school experience lower incomes and greater

unemployment and are at higher risk of becoming part of the adult corrections system and

of needing public assistance. Historically, Latino/a youth, particularly Mexican

American youth, have been at particularly high risk for underachievement and dropping

out of high school. Because Latino/as are the fastest growing ethnic group in the United

States, their struggle in education means a larger, undereducated work force. In spite of

demographic factors such as poverty, language barriers, and discrimination that

potentially can adversely impact the success of the children of Mexican immigrant

parents, some of these parents are taking steps to help their children succeed in high

school and to enter college. While parental involvement has been generally linked to

improving students' outcomes and attitudes toward school, few studies have focused on

minority parents, particularly Latino/as. Even fewer have conducted qualitative studies

to develop a deeper understanding of parents' beliefs, values, and actions taken to help

their children. Through semi-structured interviews and grounded theory analysis, this

qualitative study investigated how and why Mexican immigrant parents help their

children succeed in school. Six themes emerged from the data: 1) parents' motivations

stem from childhood adversity, the belief that there are opportunities in the U.S. for

people who succeed academically, and unrealized dreams to pursue their own education;

2) parents' actions primarily included behaviors at home; 3) the influence of "*La Familia*"

(the protective force of the family); 4) the influence of discipline; 5) the influence of

teachers and principals who recognized and supported their children's academic success;

and 6) the influence of the children themselves. Despite variations in educational attainment and income levels, the parents' values, beliefs, and actions were similar to each other and reflect their Mexican cultural upbringing. By developing a deeper understanding of the parents' beliefs, values, and actions, more culturally informed and strength-based, parent-involvement approaches can be developed for similar Mexican immigrant parents. Implications, limitations, and suggestions for future research are explored.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM IN PERSPECTIVE

Students who drop out of high school tend to have lower incomes, experience

greater unemployment, and are at higher risk of becoming part of the adult corrections

system and of needing of public assistance (Martinez, DeGarmo, & Eddy, 2004).

Historically, Latino youth have been at high risk for underachievement and have high

drop out rates (Plunkett & Bámaca-Gómez, 2003). The 2010 U.S. Census Bureau

defined Hispanic or Latino ("Hispanic/Latino") as a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto

Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race.

While many researchers use the term Latino and Hispanic interchangeably, in this thesis,

which examines the parents of academically successful students who are unlikely to drop

out, the term Latino and Mexican immigrant will be used as appropriate.

Since 1972, compared to other students from other ethnic backgrounds, Latinos

have had the highest high school dropout rate (U.S. Department of Education, National

Center for Educational Statistics (NCES), 2010). Between 1972 and 2008, while the drop

out rates for White and Blacks declined (Whites: from 12.3% to 4.8%; Blacks: from

21.3% to 9.9%), the dropout rate for Latinos remained generally the same from 1972 to

1990 at 32.4% and then dropped to 18.3% by 2008 (U.S. Department of Education,

NCES, 2010). While high poverty, language barriers, and recent immigration status have

been shown to relate to higher dropout rates for Latinos (Martinez et al., 2004), even with

these variables controlled, Latinos drop out at higher rates than their non-Latino peers

(Secada et al., 1998). Although Latinos include many ethnic subgroups and limited

1

research has been conducted regarding the ethnic variation of the subgroups, due in part to limited sample sizes, Nuñez and Crisp (2012) reported that Mexican American and Puerto Ricans constitute the majority of Latinos and they tend to have the lowest educational achievement rates among Latino K-12 students. Plunkett and Bámaca-Gómez (2003) also reported that Mexican-origin youth have been found to be particularly at risk of academic underachievement and have high dropout rates.

The "Great Recession," which began in 2007, began to reverse the trend because the lack of jobs for young, unskilled, and uneducated workers caused Latinos to stay in high school and attend college (Fry, 2011, Fry & Taylor, 2013). In the last few years, Latinos also enrolled in college in record numbers (Fry, 2011, Fry & Taylor, 2013). While this rapid recent growth in college enrollment for Latinos is encouraging, it is not known, however, whether this trend will continue as the economy improves and jobs become more plentiful. Additionally, despite the recent trend, the educational attainment gap continues between Latinos and Whites. For example, Latinos are less likely than Whites to attend a four-year college, to attend college on a full time basis, to attend a selective university, and to attain a bachelor's degree (Fry & Taylor, 2013). In 2010, while Latinos made up 21.7% of the 18 to 24 year olds at community colleges, they were awarded only 13.2% of the degrees, and while they made up 11.7% of the university student population, they were awarded only 8.5% of the bachelor's degrees (Fry & Lopez, 2012).

The undereducated Latino population is also of concern because they are young and are entering the workforce in greater numbers than are Whites. One in four

Americans under the age of 18 is Latino (Morrison Institute, 2012). While illegal immigration is one source of the Latino population growth, most young Latinos are U.S. citizens (Morrison Institute, 2012). Indeed, 88% of the Latino population under the age of 20 are naturalized or born in the U.S., and 97% of Latino children under the age of 5 are U.S. citizens (Morrison Institute, 2012). As a result, while Whites are moving toward retirement, the Latino population is entering the workforce in greater numbers without the education to be competitive and successful. This is particularly true in Arizona.

Latino Students in Arizona

Between 2001 and 2010, the population of Latinos in Arizona grew by 46%, compared to the non-Latino population, which grew by 17.3% (Morrison Institute, 2012). One third of the Arizona population is Latino; 47% of Arizona's children are Latino. Since the Latino population is, on average, younger than the White population in Arizona, they represent a greater percentage of Arizona's future workforce. In 2001, Arizona State University's Morrison Institute for Public Policy (Morrison Institute) studied Latino educational attainment and found that Latinos' employment opportunities were undermined by their lack of educational attainment, training, and mentoring to succeed in a skills-based economy. At that time, barely 50% of Arizona Latinos had a high school education, they lagged behind Whites in college graduation rates, and in comparison to Whites, Latinos remained stuck in low paying, low skilled jobs (Morrison Institute, 2001).

In 2013, more Arizona Latinos graduate from high school, but the Latino dropout rate is twice that of White students (Morrison Institute, 2012). In 2011, Latinos lagged

3

behind Whites on the Arizona's Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS) (the passing rate for Hispanics in math was 39% and reading was 63%, compared to Whites, who passed math at 50% and reading at 76%) (Morrison Institute, 2012). While more Arizona Latinos are taking advanced placement exams in high school so that they can obtain college credit, they are scoring lower on the exams than they did a decade ago. After looking at several metrics, some of which are identified above, the Morrison Institute reported in 2012 that while more Latino students remain in high school, their "academic achievement remains substantially below that of Whites." (p. 25).

Arizona Latino college completion rate also continues to lag behind that of Whites. While Latinos represent 33% of Arizona students who are eligible for education at a public college or university, only 20% attend (Morrison Institute, 2012). Of those who attend, they lag behind White college students who graduated with a baccalaureate in six years (Morrison Institute, 2012). In 2010, nearly 90% of Latinos age 25 and older had not completed college, compared with 69% of Whites (Morrison Institute, 2012). The Morrison Institute (2012) reported that unless there is a change, by 2030, only one in ten Hispanics will have an undergraduate degree, compared to one in three Whites.

Economic Impact of an Undereducated Latino Population

The education attainment issues described above and the growing Latino population puts the U.S. and the Arizona economies at risk, because the growing Latino workforce is not prepared for jobs in the post-technology economy. Carnevale, Smith, and Strohl (2010) noted that the days when people left high school to go to work in a local industry and work their way up from the mailroom to the boardroom are over.

Higher education is much more important now in the technology and knowledge economy than in the past. Between 1973 and 2008, the share of jobs in the U.S. that required post-secondary education grew from 28% to 59% (Carnevale et al., 2010), which is projected to grow to 63% by 2020. The jobs for high school graduates and drop outs are expected to shrink, and the opportunities and income for this undereducated workforce will be limited (Carnevale et al., 2010). Without an educated workforce, the U.S. will struggle to compete in the global economy. In Arizona, 61% of all jobs will require some training beyond high school (Carnevale et al., 2010). Arizona will have a difficult time attracting new business without skilled and educated workers. The Morrison Institute (2012) noted that below average educational attainment in a rapidly growing population can lead to multiple problems including: fewer qualified workers to work in increasingly complex jobs; lower average incomes; reduced consumer purchasing power, more families living in poverty; greater demands on public assistance; and a reduced ability to attract new business to the state (Morrison Institute, 2012).

The literature reports that parent involvement is an important factor that influences the academic success of children. Using a deficit approach, much of the literature has explored why Latino parents are not as involved at their children's schools as others and why Latino children dropout of school. In contrast, this qualitative study used a strengths-based approach and explored the perceptions and actions of Mexican immigrant parents who are helping their children succeed in college preparatory high schools. By identifying themes from these parents who have academically successful children, more culturally informed parent involvement approaches could be developed.

Parental Involvement

Parental involvement has been generally linked to improving students' outcomes and attitudes toward school (LeFevre & Shaw, 2012; Walker, Ice, Hoover-Demsey, & Sandler, 2011). LeFevre and Shaw (2012) reported that research (Alfaro, et al., 2006; Barnard, 2004; DeGarmo & Martinez, 2006; Jeynes, 2003, 2007; Martinez, DeGarmo, & Eddy, 2004; McWayne, Hampton, Fantuzzo, Cohen, & Sekino, 2004) showed that parental involvement is a positive factor in academic achievement for children from kindergarten through college.

Studies generally refer to two types of parental involvement: 1) parent behaviors at school such as attending school programs, volunteering, and attending conferences; and 2) parental behaviors at home such as helping with homework, monitoring performance, and motivational support (Altschul, 2011). Fan and Chen's (2001) meta-analysis of 41 parent involvement studies found that parent involvement has been defined in the research literature by many types of behaviors and practices such as: parental aspirations for their children's academic success; conveyance of their aspirations to their children; parents' communication with the school; parents' participation in school activities; parents' communication with teachers about their children; and parental rules imposed at home that are education related. While research suggests that parental involvement in school-based activities enhances a child's academic performance and attitude toward school, studies of low income and ethnic minority parents have found that African American and Latino parents are less involved than other parents in school-based

activities (Martiñez-Lora & Quintana, 2009). Language and cultural barriers, poverty, limited parental education, discrimination, and residential instability are often identified as the reasons why Latino parents are not as involved as much at school (Altschul, 2011; Walker et al., 2011). Additionally, many Latino parents lack "educational capital" or the educational level and ability to promote values and behaviors, which translate into academic success (Morrison Institute, 2012). However, studies also show that most Latino parents value education, hold high educational aspirations for their children, and believe that supporting their children's education is very important (Gillanders & Jimenez, 2004; Reese, 2002). Latino parents involve themselves in their children's education in ways that are less expected or observed by schools and teachers, so it is often assumed that they are not involved at all (Walker et al., 2011).

Few studies have evaluated how parental involvement influences academic success, which forms of parental involvement influence academic outcomes, or why parents become involved (Jeynes, 2003; Mariñez-Lora & Quintana, 2009). Less is known about what types of parent involvement positively affect minority students (Jeynes, 2003). In fact, Jeynes (2003) reported that "no meta-analysis exists that examines the effects of parental involvement on minority student educational outcomes has ever been published in an academic journal" (p. 202). Zarate (2007) noted that little research has investigated what constitutes parental involvement for Latino middle and high school students. Just two years ago, Walker et al. (2011) also reported that there is little understanding of the cultural differences that result in types of parental involvement at home that is not typically observed by schools and teachers.

7

Latino Parents' Involvement

Given the rapid growth of the Latino population and their lag behind others in academic achievement in recent years, there has been an increased focus on Latino parental involvement. While Latinos continue to lag behind their counterparts in academic achievement, some Latino students succeed in school (Gillanders & Jiménez, 2004). However, as Esparza and Sánchez (2008) noted, most of the literature on Latinos and education has tended to take a deficit approach by focusing on factors that put youth at risk for school drop out.

While the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (P.L. 107-110) requires schools to involve parents in their children's education, the statistics above demonstrate that the efforts are not improving Latino outcomes. Although the Morrison Institute (2012) reported that in the ten years that passed from the initial report in 2002, the "achievement gap between Hispanics and Whites has not changed significantly" (p. 8).

It is evident that there are gaps in the literature regarding the types of parent involvement and which forms of involvement positively influence children's academic success. This gap is particularly true for minority groups, including Latinos. However, the following is what is known about parent involvement, models of parent involvement, and studies that have focused on Latino parent involvement.

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Literature Review

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Studies of Parental Involvement

Parent involvement has been generally defined as "parents' interactions with

children and schools that are intended to promote academic achievement" (Park & Holloway, 2012, p. 106). Parent involvement includes participation in education at home and/or at school. As identified above, within these two spheres of activity, many types of parent involvement have been studied. As a result of the different measures of parent involvement, different measures of academic achievement, and inconsistent focus on age groups of the children under study, research results are mixed about whether parent involvement is important to a child's academic success and what types of parent involvement have positive impacts on student achievement (Fan & Chen, 2001; Jeynes, 2005; Ingram, Wolfe, & Lieberman, 2007). Some studies find parent involvement has a positive influence on the educational outcomes of children from elementary, middle, high school, and even into the college years (Alfaro, Umaña-Taylor, & Bámaca, 2006; Barnard, 2004, DeGarmo & Martinez, 2006; Fan & Chen, 2001; Jeynes, 2003, 2007; Martinez et al., 2004; McWayne et al., 2004). Other research has shown that some types of parent involvement and its impact on student achievement change and decline as the student gets older (Hill & Tyson, 2009). Conclusions about what types of parent involvement have the greatest impact are complicated, because studies do not consistently investigate the same types of parent involvement and the same developmental stages of a child.

Fan and Chen (2001) conducted a meta-analysis of 25 parent involvement studies of children from pre-kindergarten through high school and found that parental supervision such as home rules for doing homework and watching television were not significantly associated with academic achievement, but parents' aspirations and

expectations for a student's educational achievement had the strongest relationship to academic achievement. In their discussion, Fan and Chen (2001) noted that research does not consistently measure student achievement, with some research using post secondary attainment and school GPA, others using standardized test scores in certain subjects, and others measuring student academic aspiration and student's academic self-concept. Their research conclusions, however, have been criticized (Jeynes, 2005) in that Fan and Chen's analysis did not distinguish between school-initiated parent involvement programs and parent involvement that occurs without the use of a program.

Jeynes (2007) conducted a meta-analysis of 52 studies that evaluated parent involvement on academic achievement as measured by grades, standardized tests, and teacher indices at urban middle and high schools. Jeynes found that parent involvement had a positive impact on children's academic achievement, including that of minority students. Jeynes also found that parental style and expectations had a greater impact on academic outcomes of students than did parental actions such as household rules and parental attendance at school functions. The analysis, however, was limited to studies of only urban students.

Barnard (2004) studied a parental involvement program in elementary school to evaluate whether parental involvement in elementary school had lasting positive effects at ages 14 and 20. Barnard found that even when controlling for background characteristics and risk factors, parental involvement in elementary school was significantly associated with lower rates of high school drop out, increased on-time high school graduation, and highest grade completed. Barnard noted that other studies have

not found similar results, and Barnard suggested that her results may have been unique because she had extensive data available to study parent involvement in elementary school and school success indicators at age 20. Additionally, she explained that the data came from a community program that made many resources available to support and encourage parent involvement; resources that are not always available in other programs.

In their meta-analysis of 50 studies of parent involvement for middle school children, Hill and Tyson (2009) specifically analyzed academic socialization, which continues at home as children grow more independent and parents feel less able to assist with homework. Academic socialization was defined as parent communications of expectations regarding grades, fostering educational and vocation aspirations, helping to formulate goals for the future, and discussing learning strategies. Hill and Tyson found that parental expectations for achievement and the value of education had the strongest positive relation to achievement in middle school. Parental help with homework did not have an association with achievement for middle school students.

In an earlier meta-analysis of 41 parent involvement programs, Mattingly, Prislin, McKenzie, Rodriguez, and Kayzar et al. (2002) found little empirical support for the claim that parent involvement programs are an effective means of improving student achievement or changing parent, teacher, or student behavior. Mattingly et al. (2002) did not claim that parent involvement programs were ineffective. Instead, they found that the research design and data collection techniques were not sufficient to provide valid evidence of program effectiveness.

Research also is complicated by the fact that there are different reporters of parent involvement (Barnard, 2004). Researchers have used teacher, parent, and student reports of parent involvement to reach conclusions about what parents are doing and what is effective. Parents and teachers, however, rate their perceptions of the amount of parent involvement differently, which reflects their personal perceptions and may also reflect different definitions of parent involvement (Barnard, 2004). Latino parent involvement studies have focused on informal types of parent involvement that occur at home in an rather than at school.

Latino Parent Involvement Studies

When educators discuss parent involvement, they are usually referring to formal participation at school (LeFevre & Shaw, 2012). Latino parents, however, do not involve themselves as much as do other parents in schools (Zarate, 2007). Latino parents may avoid formal school participation, because they view involvement at school as a form of disrespect toward teachers (Drummond & Stipek, 2004; LeFevre & Shaw, 2013). Additional reasons for avoiding involvement at school include linguistic issues that make communicating with school personnel difficult, lack of familiarity with the school system, perceived discrimination by the school system, or real life concerns about work schedules, child care, and lack of transportation (LeFevre & Shaw, 2012). Finally, it has also been postulated that Latinos do not involve themselves at school as much because they value involvement at home over visible involvement at school (LeFevre & Shaw, 2012; Zarate, 2007).

In contrast to the beliefs of many educators who do not observe Latino parents at

school events and assume they do not care, research demonstrates that Latino parents place great emphasis on their children's education and care deeply about their success in school (De Gaetano, 2007; LeFevre & Shaw, 2012). Latino parents are involved in informal academic support by encouraging academic success, helping with homework, discussing future plans, and providing a quiet place at home for doing homework (Auerbach, 2007; LeFevre & Shaw, 2012; Zarate, 2007). Additionally, "*educación*" in Latino families is broader than academic education in that it includes social and ethical education or good manners and morals (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001, Zarate, 2007). Parents provide *educación* in the home (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001).

In Zarate's (2007) study of Latino parents' perceptions of involvement in education, she found that Latino parent involvement could be grouped into two distinct categories: academic involvement and life involvement. Academic involvement included activities associated with school such as attending parent-teacher conferences, monitoring homework, listening to the child read, having high standards for academic achievement, and going to the library. Life involvement included being aware of the child's life, teaching good morals and respect of others, encouraging a child's abilities and aspirations, providing general encouragement, providing life advice, discussing future plans, establishing trust with the child, and warning of dangers outside the home such as illegal drugs. When asked to define parental involvement, these Latino parents mentioned life participation more frequently than academic involvement. When students who were all college bound were asked about what types of parent involvement were important to them, they reported that the parents' emotional support and motivation were

13

more important than having parents volunteer at school and that parental presence at school was "an intrusion on their space" (Zarate, 2007, p. 14).

Additionally, research has found that Latino parents' academic encouragement and the protective force of family ("*La Familia*") are important predictors of success for children (Martinez et al., 2004). De Gaetano (2007) argued that educators should be proactive in culturally sensitive ways about engaging minority parents in their children's education and should recognize that much of the involvement occurs in the home. Educational researchers have also found that the Latino culture, which places a strong emphasis on collectivism and loyalty to the family, often causes a student who may otherwise qualify for an elite four-year university to choose less selective two or four-year colleges closer to home (Nuñez & Crisp, 2012). This emphasis on the family influences a Latino student toward "caretaking, earning money, or providing other support for the family while they are in college" (Nuñez & Crisp, 2012, p. 81). Vasquez (2002) also noted that the family connections and loyalties toward family specifically influence Latinas' tendency to stay close to home during college and may cause them to prioritize care taking of siblings and extended family by working during college rather than gaining more education. In short, the strong family culture is a double-edged sword: it has protective effects while a child is growing up, but it may negatively influence a student's preparation and persistence in college. These cultural factors have not been researched in depth and were often overlooked in the studies discussed above.

While most studies do not limit their sample to Latinos, some of the research reported recently relied on quantitative data, some of which is more than 25 years old, to

14

reach conclusions about Latino parent involvement. For example, LeFevre and Shaw (2012) relied on data from the 1988 National Education Longitudinal Study to conduct a quantitative study of Latino formal parent involvement at school and informal parent involvement at home to evaluate whether such involvement positively impacted secondary student achievement. LeFevre and Shaw found that the impact on student achievement of Latino parents' support at home was nearly as great as that of formal parent involvement at school. Using the same data set, Altschul (2011) found that Latino parent involvement in academics that occurs at home had a positive impact on academic achievement, whereas parent participation in school organizations did not have a significant impact on student achievement. Both studies relied on data gathered in 1988 from eighth graders and their parents. While it is unclear whether changes in the population, acculturation, economy, and/or educational policies may lead to different results today, the statistics identified above demonstrate that Latino parental involvement either at school or at home in the 1980s did not improve their children's academic outcomes. It is evident that more research is needed on this issue. Although there are inconsistencies in the focus of prior research and limitations in the studies, there have been two theoretical frameworks that are widely used to evaluate how parents of all races and cultures get involved and why.

Models of Parent Involvement

The frameworks or models for parent involvement were developed from primarily quantitative data. These two frameworks include the Epstein (1987, 1992, 1996) model and the Hoover Dempsey and Sandler (1995, 1997) model.

Epstein's model. Epstein (1987, 1992, 1996) developed a widely recognized typology that described different levels of *how* parents involvement themselves in their children's education (Auerbach, 2007). Epstein (1992, 1996) identified six types of parent involvement in schools: 1) parenting, which includes basic obligations of parents to provide food and shelter; 2) school-parent communication; 3) volunteer opportunities at school; 4) facilitating learning at home; 5) involving parents in school decision-making; and 6) collaborating within the community to improve the education system. Epstein's model describes involvement from the school's perspective and is based on the theory of overlapping spheres of home, school, and community influences that shape a child's learning and development (Auerbach, 2007).

Epstein's model has been criticized for use with minority populations, such as Latinos, because it emphasizes school-based involvement, educators' priorities, and assumptions about shared goals between parents and educators (Auerbach, 2007). Auerbach (2007) argued that "mainstream parent involvement research has stressed school-centered conceptions of parent roles with insufficient attention to 'culturally appropriate definitions and family centered practices' among diverse populations (Jordan et al., 2001, p. viii), which call for more qualitative, naturalistic approaches" (p. 253).

Even if the Epstein model has merit when studying parent involvement, a parental involvement study with a large minority population of low income parents of at-risk students, which included 31% Latinos found that these parents only used two of the six Epstein typologies: parenting and learning at home (Ingram, Wolfe, & Lieberman, 2007). As a result, Ingram et al. (2007) recommended that educators focus their efforts on

16

improving parenting practices and helping parents provide learning opportunities at home.

<u>Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model</u>. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995, 1997) have developed the "most comprehensive theoretical model of the psychological processes that predict parent involvement" (Park & Holloway, 2012, p. 107). Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler have focused their work on the development of models that reflect *why* parents are involved, based on quantitative and qualitative research of parents *who* are involved (Park & Holloway, 2012). Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's (1995, 1997) five-level model focused on why parents get involved, what forms their involvement takes, and how their involvement influences students.

In 2005, Walker et al. updated the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995, 1997) theoretical framework to reflect parent involvement by combining levels into overarching themes. Rather than two levels that identify parental role construction and self-efficacy separately, Walker et al. (2005) combined them into one overarching theme labeled "parents' motivational beliefs." Walker et al. (2005) also combined parents' perceptions of general invitations for involvement from the school and specific invitations from the child and the child's teacher into one overarching theme that they labeled "parents' perceptions of invitations for involvement from others." Finally, Walker et al. (2005) combined parents' perceptions of their available time and energy and specific skills and knowledge for involvement into one over arching theme labeled "parents' perceived life context." Each of these categories contributes to forms of parent involvement at school

or at home. Parents' beliefs and behaviors fall along a spectrum from beliefs and behaviors that suggest that they are primarily responsible for student outcomes (parent-focused role construction), to behaviors that suggest that parents share the responsibility with schools for student outcomes (partnership-focused role construction), and then to beliefs that schools are primarily responsible for student outcomes (school-focused role construction) (Walker et al., 2011).

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's model (1995, 1997) includes self-efficacy as a factor along with parent role construction as part of the parent motivational beliefs. Self-efficacy is a construct grounded in Bandura's (1997) social cognitive theory, which includes parents' beliefs that their involvement will improve their child's learning at school (Walker et al., 2011). The greater the parents' self-efficacy for involvement, the more they will do to help their child (Walker et al., 2005).

The second category in Walker et al.'s (2005) model is parents' perceptions of invitations from teachers and their children to become involved in school. School-based invitations reflect a school's attitude that parent involvement is welcome and useful and may include requests from teachers to visit school or to attend an event or suggestions for parents to provide home-based support of a child's learning. Invitations from the child may include requests for help with homework and a positive emotional response from the child when the parent is involved. When a child requests a parent to help him or her, the parent perceives the need for and willingness to accept the parental help (Walker et al., 2005).

Finally, Walker et al.'s (2005) model includes parents' perceived life context,

18

which is the parents' perceptions of the skill and knowledge, as well as the time and energy, they believe they can give. This perception influences a parent's level of involvement. While parents may find they have the skill and knowledge to involve themselves in the elementary years, they may feel less adequate in their skills and knowledge in middle and secondary school, which is one reason parents' involvement tends to decline as children advance through school (Green et al., 2007). Nonetheless, even if parents lack resources, including less time and energy to devote to involvement in their child's education, if they perceive that their child and/or teacher wants them involved, they will find a way to get involved regardless of resources (Anderson & Minke, 2007; Walker et al., 2011).

Using scales they developed through qualitative work and pilot studies, Walker et al.'s (2005) study used questionnaires to survey parents about their parental role construction. The questionnaires asked parents to rate their views from strongly agree to strongly disagree about general questions such as "I believe it is my responsibility" to: "volunteer at school;" "help my child with homework;" and "stay on top of things at school." These questions allow for wide variation in interpretation by parents and do not allow one to analyze in-depth the details about culture, values, and beliefs.

Using data from the Parent and Family Involvement in Education Survey of the 2007 National Household Education Surveys Program, Park and Holloway (2012) evaluated three of the factors from the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997) and Hoover-Dempsey, Ice, &Whitaker (2009) (HDS) model: school outreach efforts; parenting self efficacy; and parental role construction. In general, Park and Holloway (2012) found

support for the HDS model for parents of high school level children. In addition, Park and Holloway (2012) found that involvement at home and school, parents' college expectations, and financial planning comprise a third, important dimension of parent involvement for high school students. They found that parents who were more involved in the home were less likely to hold high educational expectations and to engage in college planning. In their evaluation of the influence of race and ethnicity in predicting types of involvement, Park and Holloway found that Black and Latino parents were more involved at home than were White parents, even after controlling for the mother's education and income. Race/ethnicity was not a factor in predicting parents' educational expectations and planning, although there was some tendency for Black parents to hold higher expectations. School outreach efforts were a strong predictor of parent involvement at school, which is consistent with previous studies that focused more on parents of younger children. (Park & Holloway, 2012). Finally, parental role construction was a strong predictor only for educational expectations and college planning, and self-efficacy was moderately significant with respect to educational expectations and college planning.

In 2011, Walker et al. used the revised HDS model to evaluate whether it would predict Latino parents' involvement in their children's schooling. They noted that there is limited understanding of why Latino families become involved and their preferences for varied forms and levels of involvement, particularly along cultural lines. They conducted research with Latino parents of elementary and middle school children, most of whom were first generation Mexican American immigrants. Consistent with findings from

other studies (Delgado-Gaitan, 1992; Reese, 2002), they found that Latino parents were engaged in their children's learning, particularly at home. Specific invitations from teachers and children to get involved played a more important role in shaping parent involvement behaviors than did personal psychological motivators or perceived life context variables (Walker et al., 2011). Self-efficacy for involvement and general invitations from the school did not predict either home or school involvement (Walker et al., 2011); however, this study used the same survey measures as Walker et al. (2005) used. Walker and colleagues (2011) acknowledged that the use of self-report surveys and the absence of qualitative measures limit what can be inferred and known about participants' motivations for involvement.

Maríñez-Lora and Quintana (2009) also used the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995, 1997) model of parental involvement with African American and Latino parents to evaluate whether the constructs were the same across race/ethnicity. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler had posited that parents' perceptions of specific invitations to participate would be least influential, but Maríñez-Lora and Quintana found that it was the only consistent predictor of parental involvement and influenced behavior at school and at home. In fact, when teachers solicited parental involvement, barriers such as family income or race/ethnicity to involvement were reduced. Maríñez-Lora and Quintana's study also is significant because it found some differences between African American and Latino parents in parent involvement, which supports the idea that parental involvement varies by race/ethnicity. For example, a combination of a sense of efficacy and perception that a child's teacher wanted them to be involved appeared to be related to

21

parental involvement at home for Latino parents but not for African American parents.

Thus, using "a culturally sensitive approach was essential in this study" and findings

supported the idea that factors within the model carry different weights for different

groups (Maríñez-Lora & Quintana, 2009, p. 228). As a result of this study, Maríña-Lora

and Quintana recommended that teachers seeking to involve Latino parents make "active

efforts to reach out, develop effective relationships with parents and consistently

communicate and make explicit recommendations to parents about ways they can

contribute to their children's academic development" (p. 226). In addition to studies that

explored Latino parent involvement in the context of the two models discussed above,

minority parent involvement has also been studied using other approaches and models

that explain what minority parents do and why.

Additional Models Evaluating Minority Parent Involvement

      Minority parent typology. While the quantitative approaches discussed above

have been widely used to study parent involvement, quantitative research limits what can

be known about why parents involve themselves in education their children's education

(Walker, et al, 2011). In contrast, Auerbach's (2007) qualitative study looked at three

years of ethnographic data to evaluate alternative typologies of parent roles in their

child's education. Auerbach evaluated questions such as: 1) What do parents of color

without college experience think and do when they want their high school-age students to

go to college?; and 2) What shapes their beliefs, goals, and support strategies? After

conducting a qualitative study of African American and Latino parents, Auerbach (2007)

developed three typologies to describe the parents' involvement behaviors. Auerbach's

study examined beliefs, goals, and practices of 16 working class parents from 11 families whose students were in a small, college-access program in Los Angeles. The students in the program had average grades and the parents did not go to college, but they wanted their children to attend college, and all but one child went on to attend a university.

Auerbach (2007) used a three-part interdisciplinary theoretical framework and the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995, 1997) model of parental role construction. Auerbach theorized that parent roles in education are fundamentally: a) socially structured by class and race; b) culturally mediated by particular cultural schemas and scripts; and c) psychosocially enacted according to individual psychosocial resources and relationships within families. Auerbach used open-ended questions to elicit information regarding parents' goals, beliefs, practices, and knowledge regarding their role in their children's education and pathway to college. While Auerbach found considerable internal variation in how parents construct their roles, she examined traits and characteristics that might unite groups of parents. She identified three typologies that characterized the extent of their involvement: moral supporters; ambivalent companions; and struggling advocates.

At one end of the spectrum, Auerbach (2007) identified parents who were "moral supporters" (p. 258) and least proactive in their children's education. The moral supporters were all married Latino immigrants with the least educational attainment, least English fluency, and had the least knowledge about the American educational system as compared to the other parents involved in the study. These parents emphasized indirect moral support for education at home, providing moral and emotional support by stressing

the value of education, study, and hard work, but they rarely went to the school and trusted the school system to prepare their children for college. These parents embraced the concept of "*educación*," which is home-based training by parents who are motivators and teach morals and respect as the foundation of academic and professional success. They often used their own stories to motivate their children to do better than they had done. As moral supporters, they took their cues from their perceptions of their children's desire and motivation to succeed. When these parents perceived that their children were motivated, smart, and diligent in school from an early age, the parents were prompted to encourage their studies. However, the parents pointed to their limited knowledge base and educational experience to explain why they were not more involved in their children's college pathway.

At the other end of the spectrum were five "struggling advocates" (Auerbach, 2007, p. 266). In addition to providing moral and emotional support for education like moral supporters did, advocates also provided more direct, tangible support and monitoring at home along with advocacy at school. Three of the parents spoke to school counselors about college planning, two parents helped choose classes, and one lobbied for an alternative Spanish class placement. These parents did not assume their students would be successful without them; they monitored homework and provided students the extra push they felt was needed for their child to get ahead, despite their limited knowledge, frustration with the school, and resistance of the students. They also used their social contacts to learn how to deal with gatekeepers and find agents at school to help their children advance, but they did so with less competence, confidence, and

effectiveness than did higher SES parents. They did not have economic capital, but they used social networks to access "college-going cultural capital," also known as "navigational capital" (p. 269), even though their basic understanding of how to navigate the institutions was evolving while their children were in high school. Despite their efforts, the children of Advocates did not do as well in high school as did the children of Moral Supporters. As their students asserted their independence, they resisted their parents' push and active support, which then caused two of the Advocates to pullback from the hands-on role.

In the middle of the spectrum were four single mothers of daughters, called "ambivalent companions" (Auerbach, 2007, p. 269-70). They had more college knowledge than did the supporters, but their knowledge was "sketchy" (p. 270). They were a "complex blend of cheerleading, protectiveness, and ambivalence" (p. 270). The ambivalent companions supported their children's education through strong emotional support, close communication, and occasional help at home on school projects. While they wanted better opportunities for their daughters, they conveyed mixed messages because college was viewed as a threat to close family ties and obligations. They supported the schooling primarily with emotional and moral support and occasional help on school projects. To get a better education than they perceived their daughters could obtain at the local school, they also placed their daughters in a school outside their own school boundaries. Two of the four moms attended sporting events as symbolic of support of their daughters. However, they were ambivalent about college; it was a threat to the family relationship and routines but was also viewed as an opportunity.

25

Auerbach's (2007) research led to the development of a typology of parent role orientations, which she emphasized as not comprehensive. The goal was to expand discourse on parent involvement by focusing in-depth on marginalized parents' role construction by examining what they think and do while examining the cultural logic behind their actions. She noted that while higher SES parents use economic, social, and cultural capital, the parents she studied used moral, navigational, and emotional capital to help their children get to college. Auerbach argued that it is important to "enumerate and unpack such family resources to counter the legacy of deficit thinking about families of culture and education" (p. 277). Auerbach also argued that researchers should expand the "value-laden, traditional, middle-class definition of parent involvement" to include a broader definition that includes support that occurs at home and is shaped by cultural and psychosocial factors in specific home, school, and community contexts. Ecological and academic resiliency approaches to investigating parent involvement reflect cultural and psychosocial factors.

Ecological and academic resiliency models of Latino parent involvement.

Two other approaches have also been used to study academic outcomes among Latinos: an ecological approach and an academic resiliency perspective (Alfaro, Umaña-Taylor, & Bímaca, 2006). Based on Bronfenbrenner's (1989) ecological model, researchers consider the person in his or her environment to understand developmental outcomes better. Bronfenbrenner's ecological model includes the influences of "significant others" in a child's microsystem on the child's development (Alfaro et al.,

2006). Alfaro et al. (2006) explained that the academic resiliency perspective expands

Bronfenbrenner's work by applying an ecological framework to understanding the

immediate and more distal factors that promote academic success of individuals who face

adversity. Significant others such as parents, teachers, and peers can help foster

academic success by providing academic advice, assistance in completing academic

work, and demonstrating an interest in academic outcomes (Alfaro et al., 2006). This

academic resiliency perspective is consistent with Latino cultural values that are

characterized by "strong emotional ties, respect for, and obedience to the family" (Alfaro

et al., 2006, p. 280). Alfaro et al. evaluated the influence of academic support from

mothers, fathers, teachers, and peers on Latino adolescents' academic motivation. Of

significance was the finding that fathers' academic support was positively related to

boys' academic motivation and girls' academic motivation was significantly and

positively influenced by mothers' academic support. Thus, parent involvement programs

for Latino parents must consider the gender of the student and of the parent (Alfaro et al.,

2006).

      Academic resiliency model. Academic resiliency has also been studied among a

Mexican American sample to evaluate the influence of four aspects of parental influence:

parental educational level; ability to help; monitoring; and support (Plunkett & Bámaca-

Gómez, 2003). Academic or educational resiliency is defined as "the potential of success

in the academic arena despite environmental challenges and adversities" (Plunkett &

Bámaca-Gómez, 2003, p. 223). Understanding the factors that help some Latino youth

succeed despite adversity can improve reforms and intervention programs (Plunkett &

Bámaca-Gómez, 2003). In Plunkett and Bámaca-Gómez's (2003) study, self-report data were gathered from 273 adolescents in 9th to 12th grades in three Los Angeles high schools. All of the participants' parents were born in Mexico. Plunkett and Bámaca-Gómez found that Latino high school students' perceptions of parental academic support such as ability to help and monitoring were associated with the youths' increased motivation. Plunkett and Bámaca-Gómez (2003) also found that the higher the parent's educational levels, the higher the adolescents' educational aspirations. The research above reflect models and approaches to analyze how parents of all backgrounds get involved in their child's education and their motivation for doing so and several models that focus on how and why Latino parents get involved.

Summary and Purpose of Current Study

As noted above, there are several approaches and models to study parent involvement, using primarily quantitative measures that limit what can be known about why and how parents involve themselves in their children's education. While many studies take a deficit approach, recent research with Latino students and their families has steered away from a deficit approach and evolved toward an approach that considers the strengths of the Latino culture for students. "Investigating resilience and 'funds of knowledge' of the Latino community rather than focusing solely on deficits can improve the educational outlooks of its children and youth" (Suárez-Orozco, Gaytán, & Kim, 2010, p. 219). As explained above, Latino parents care deeply about their children's education. Thus, using the parents' passion and interest in helping their children succeed as a starting point, and drawing on the caring nature of Latino families, educational

28

interventions that are truly 'additive' and incorporating the strengths of both Americans and Latino culture can help students achieve their educational success (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2010).

This qualitative study was designed to investigate the culture, values, and behaviors of Mexican immigrant parents who are contributing to the academic success of their children. In contrast to studies that take a deficit approach by looking at factors that lead to undereducated Latino youth and lack of parental involvement, this study focused on Latino parents who are helping their children succeed in school. Because the study participants were born in Mexico, this study adds to the understanding of the Mexican or Mexican American ethnic group, which constitutes three quarters of the increase in the Latino population in the United States between 2000 and 2010 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). Beyond describing the parents' passion for their children's academic success, the specific purpose of this study was to investigate the motivations and actions taken by Mexican immigrant parents to foster their children's academic success. By hearing the participants' perspectives, attitudes, and stories, insights can be developed about the strengths and resources they use to help their children succeed in school. Additionally, this qualitative study was designed to tease out the role of culture and better understand how their culture shapes their values and their actions.

This study was designed to answer the following research questions:

1. What factors influence these Mexican immigrant parents with low levels of education and income to involve themselves in their children's education and career paths?

2. What do these parents do to promote their child's success in school and prepare them for college and career?

3. How does Mexican culture influence these parents' thoughts, beliefs, and actions when helping their child with education and career?

CHAPTER 2

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative design, which allows one to understand a

situation in depth and to understand beliefs, situations, experiences, and actions from the

participants' perspective (Maxwell, 2013). "Sensemaking through the eyes and lived

experience of the people is at the heart of good qualitative research" (Given, 2006, p.

522). Additionally, qualitative research uses an inductive approach that allows for the

identification and understanding of unanticipated phenomena and influences so that new

theories may develop (Maxwell, 2013).

Specifically, a grounded theory approach was chosen to conduct the research and

to analyze the data. Developed by Glasser and Strauss (1967), grounded theory is "a set

of systematic inductive methods for conducting qualitative research aimed at theory

development" (Chamaz, 2007, p. 440). Glasser and Strauss (1967) believed "that

theories should be 'grounded' in data from the field, especially in the actions,

interactions, and social process of people" (Creswell, 2013, p. 56). Using inductive

reasoning, the grounded theory method specifies sequential guidelines for conducting the

qualitative research, provides specific strategies for the handling of analytic phases of

inquiry, integrates data collection and analysis, advances conceptual analysis of

qualitative data, and legitimizes qualitative research as scientific inquiry (Charmaz,

2008). In contrast to other methods, a researcher using the grounded theory method

begins to look at the data from the beginning of the data collection to build inductive

theories that are grounded in the data (Charmaz & Henwood, 2008). As additional data

collection occurs, comparisons and checks help shape the emerging theoretical

understanding of the data while continuing to keep the theory grounded in the data. As

the researcher returns to the field to gather more data, additional checks and refinements

of the theory are made in development of the most plausible theoretical explanation

(Charmaz & Henwood, 2008). The strategies and approach used in this method allow the

researcher to collect rich data to develop a theory that explains the studied phenomenon

(Charmaz, 2007). The development of rich data about the beliefs, values, and cultural

strategies of Mexican immigrant parents, most of whom do not have college experiences

and live at or below the poverty line, who are helping their children succeed in school

may fill gaps in the literature that quantitative approaches have missed.

Charmaz and Henwood (2008) identified five reasons for psychologists to use

grounded theory:

> 1) the grounded theory offers a rigorous approach to qualitative analysis; 2) it can
> be used in conjunction with numerous approaches such as ethnographic,
> biological, or discursive analyses; 3) it fosters viewing individual behavior as
> embedded in situations and social contexts; 4) it fits either constructionist
> (interpretative) or post-positivist (quantitative) epistemologies; and 5) it can
> bridge qualitative and quantitative traditions in psychology. (p. 241)

While traditional grounded theory strives to develop theory from the data,

Henwood and Pidgeon (2003) note that theory does not emerge simply from data;

interpretation and analysis are always conducted with some preexisting conceptual

framework brought to the analysis by the researcher. Henwood and Pidgeon advocated

for a constructivist approach to grounded theory, which allows the researcher to use

systematic rigor to analyze the data along with an interpretative process to generate

theory rather than simply discover it. Rather than having a theory emerge from the data,

a constructivist approach to grounded theory recognizes the iterative process by which

the researcher goes back and forth from between data and theory (Henwood & Pidgeon,

2003). A constructivist approach also allows the researcher to use the data to *guide*, but

not *limit*, theorizing (Henwood & Pidgeon, 2003). Additionally, while there has been

disagreement regarding the use of prior literature as a starting point for research questions

in the grounded theory approach to qualitative research, Henwood and Pidgeon argued

that using prior literature in specific ways can promote clarity in thinking and helps

enhance the process of theory development. Henwood and Pidgeon (2003) discourage

"theoretical ignorance" (p. 138) that has been advocated for the purpose of ensuring

sensitivity to the data. For these reasons, this researcher used prior literature as a starting

point to guide the interviews and for analysis of the data but remained open to developing

additional codes that emerged from the data.

Setting

Qualitative research generally uses "purposeful selection," also known as

"purposive sampling" (Maxwell, 2013, p. 97), which deliberately seeks participants,

settings, or activities to provide information that is relevant to the research goals and

questions (Maxwell, 2013). Selecting individuals who can provide the information

needed to answer the research questions and goals is the "most important consideration in

qualitative selection decisions" (Maxwell, 2013, p. 97). Maxwell (2013) also

acknowledged that selection decisions must take into account the feasibility of access and

data collection, the researcher's relationships with study participants, validity concerns, and ethics. Purposeful selection was used in the current study because the goal of the research was to answer questions about Mexican immigrant parents, with particular values, beliefs, and actions designed to help their children succeed and was not intended to generalize the findings to the entire Latino population.

The Mexican immigrant parents who participated in this study have children attending high school through a program called Sponsors for Scholars (SFS). As will described in greater detail below, the majority of these parents speak primarily or only Spanish, generally have a low level of education, are underemployed, and live at or below the poverty guidelines. Despite these challenges, they are involved in their children's high school education and preparation for college.

Developed by public school educators in 2008, SFS is a Phoenix, Arizona nonprofit organization that invites highly capable, highly motivated students from low-income backgrounds to participate and provides them with new opportunities in new settings (http://sponsorsforscholars.org). Their mission is to give these students "the greatest possible chance of changing their life situation" (http://sponsorsforscholars.org). Using a cohort model, SFS provides students educational opportunities and fosters strong resiliency and advocacy skills to help improve the lives of the students, their families, and their communities.

In general, teachers or principals at public middle or elementary schools located in low-income neighborhoods identify highly motivated and successful middle school students who are eligible for free and reduced lunch, and community members donate the

cost of tuition and the funds for extra-curricular activities at private college preparatory high schools in central Phoenix. Once a student is identified and the student decides to participate, the student must apply for and be accepted into the college preparatory school that he or she will attend. The students travel from around the greater Phoenix area to attend Xavier College Preparatory, Brophy College Preparatory, and St. Mary's Catholic High School, all private schools in central Phoenix. One student also is enrolled in the International Baccalaureate (IB) program at a public school in central Phoenix because of its rigorous academic program. The IB program promotes learning beyond traditional honors and AP courses, and the student can earn college credit while in high school (www.phoenixunion.org). In the interviews, the parents discussed the aspirations and plans of their children. Many of the children have expressed interest and have begun to explore attending highly selective colleges or universities such as Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Stanford, and Harvard.

Students in the program meet as a group once a month with the SFS's Board of Directors, which checks on the scholars' progress, including academics, social activities, and extracurricular activities. The Board of Directors also addresses specific concerns, teaches the students self-advocacy skills, and assists with college admissions. Students also meet regularly in a small group at each high school site with an adult from their school and engage in problem solving and offer support to each other. In 2013, SFS had their first class of graduates. Three of the six graduating students are attending out-of-state private schools through scholarships. The other three students attend Arizona State University.

Recruitment

After Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, the researcher attended the first

parent meeting of SFS for the 2013-2014 school year. The SFS program founder agreed

to provide potential participants information that described the study and requirements

for participation and explained that involvement was voluntary and would have no impact

on their children's participation in SFS (See Appendix A for the IRB approvals of the

study and the Spanish versions of Appendices B, C. and D, and Appendix B for the letter

and consent form). This researcher was present to answer questions and to hand out the

information packet to the parents. To avoid any feelings of pressure to participate, all of

the parents in attendance received a letter and returned the consent to be contacted form

in sealed envelopes, regardless of whether they were willing to participate. Only the

researcher knows who signed the consent form, which contained their contact

information.

Since most of the parents were primarily Spanish speaking, the consent letter and

demographic sheet (Appendix C) were translated into Spanish and then back translated to

English to check for accuracy. Additionally, the consent letter, demographic sheet, and

initial list of questions, all of which were translated, were provided to the IRB and

approval was obtained to use the translated documents and conduct the interviews in

Spanish as necessary. A Spanish interpreter was used for 10 of the 11 interviews because

the participants preferred to be interviewed in Spanish.

Ten potential participants signed up at the initial meeting of SFS, two were unable

to participate by the time the interviews were scheduled. Additional participants were

recruited through referrals from the existing participants. Recruiting through referrals

from other participants, known as the snowball method, allows researchers to access

populations that may be difficult to access, such as the deprived or socially stigmatized

(Atkinson & Flint, 2007).

Participants

Currently, there are approximately 20 students in the SFS program; however, not

all of the students are Latino. The goal of the current study was to recruit at least 10 to

15 of the parents of the Latino students. Eleven parents agreed to participate. The

participants filled out a demographic sheet to provide background information on

themselves, their family, and the SFS student. (See Appendix C). The participants were

given $20.00 gift cards for participating.

There were three couples among the 11 participants who are the parents of three

SFS students. The participants ranged in age from 36 to 52 years old, with the mean age

of 41.73, ($SD = 5.73$). All of the participants were born in Mexico; six came to the

United States as teenagers, four came to the United States when they were in their 20s,

and one arrived at the age of 42. Nine of the participants are living in a household with a

spouse, who is either the father or stepfather of the child in SFS. One mother is currently

separated from her husband, and another is divorced and lives with only her SFS student

and her oldest son is grown and lives out of state. The participants were asked to provide

the annual income for the family in the following ranges: 0 to $9,999; $10,000 to

$19,999; $20,000 to $29,999; $30,000 to $49,999; $50,000 to $74,999; and more than

37

$75,000. Table one reflects the educational and employment status, family income, and number of people in household for each of the parents.

Table 1

Education level attained, employment, family income, number in household

Parent	Highest education attained	Current employment	Family Income	Number of people living in household
Mother	3rd grade	Homemaker	$10,000-29,999	6
Father	6th grade	Grocery store worker	$10,000-29,999	6
Mother	8th grade	Homemaker	$10,000-29,999	7
Mother	9th grade	Tupperware sales	$10,000-29,999	6
Mother	2 year technical school after 8th grade	Home health worker	$10,000-29,999	6
Father	11th grade	Maintenance worker on ranch	$10,000-29-999	6
Mother	High school graduate	Homemaker	$10,000-29,999	6
Mother	Equivalent of associates degree	School cafeteria cashier	$10,000-29,999	6
Mother	Bachelor's degree in accounting	Administrative assistant	$10,000-29,999	4
Father	Bachelor's degree in accounting	Unemployed	$10,000-29,999	4
Mother	Master's degree	Social worker	$30,000-49,999	2

As reflected in the table above, with one exception, the income of the parents was not high. According to the 2014 poverty guidelines issued by the U.S. Department of

Health and Human Services, poverty is defined for a family of four as annual earnings of $23,850, for a family of six, annual earnings of $31,970, and for a family of seven, annual earnings of $36,030 (www.aspe.hhs.gov). All but one participant reported annual household income at or below the poverty guideline that is used for administrative purposes such as determining financial eligibility for certain federal programs.

Three participants have children in the SFS program who were born in Mexico and came to the United States at age 6 months, 3 years, and 8 years. Five of the parents' boys attend Brophy College Preparatory, two of the girls attend Xavier College Preparatory, and one girl attends North High School IB program. With one exception, the travel time to and from the high schools ranges from 30 minutes to two hours each way. One participant who now lives an apartment within walking distance of Brophy College Preparatory reported living far from the school during her son's first two years of high school, but they moved to avoid the 45-minute drive each way to school. One parent drives the child to school and home, which takes 30 minutes each way. Two of the parents drive their children to school, but the children take the public bus and light rail home. One parent, who drives his daughter to school, reported that he gets home from work at midnight and must be up by 5:30 a.m. to get his daughter to school. The remaining children take the public bus and light rail both to and from school. The travel time by public transportation ranges from 45 minutes to two hours each way.

Researcher and Interviewer

The lead researcher, who is a student in the Master of Counseling program at Arizona State University, conducted the interviews. The interviewer is Caucasian and

does not speak Spanish, but this researcher also has volunteered for several years in an inner city local high school with a large population of Latino students from low income families and has mentored several Mexican American high school students. Additionally, the researcher was recently involved in her high school daughter's college preparation. Together these experiences would help the researcher build rapport with the participants. In the interviews, many parents expressed gratitude that the researcher had an interest in learning about them and had an interest in helping the Latino community and that was why they agreed to participate. Indeed, many tried to decline the gift card, because they wanted to help the researcher and wanted to express appreciation for the researcher's goals with the study.

Interview

Data was collected from semi-structured interviews. A semi-structured approach has many advantages. First, a semi-structured approach allows the researcher to use a prescribed set of questions for all participants, while allowing other questions to emerge during the interview so that a deeper understanding may be reached. Second, a semi-structured interview allows the researcher to discover patterns of similarity and variations (Given, 2008). Third, the flexible and fluid structure of this type of interview fits well with a grounded theory approach in that it allows the researcher to gain insight from earlier interviews and to use this insight to develop additional questions when sampling new data and cases (Henwood & Pidgeon, 2003). Fourth, a semi-structured interview is intended to generate the interviewees' perspectives, experiences, and understandings without imposing the researcher's framework, which can happen with a more structured

approach (Mason, 2007). Fifth, interviews also are beneficial, because they have a greater response rate than surveys (Marin, 1995). Sixth, Marin (1995) also noted that interviews are extremely effective with low-income minority groups who might not have a telephone and are not likely to respond to surveys. Finally, interviews also ensure that the questions are answered more accurately and in greater depth than does a survey approach, particularly after rapport is built between the researcher and the interviewee (Marin, 1995).

In addition to choosing whether to be interviewed in English or Spanish, the participants were given a choice about where to do the interviews. One participant asked to be interviewed at home, and another wanted to be interviewed at her place of work. The rest of the parents preferred to be interviewed at the language school, Interlingua, which is located in Phoenix, AZ, which was near the high schools their children attended.

Study Questions

The interviews were conducted by using open-ended questions that allowed the participants to provide in-depth and detailed answers regarding their beliefs, practices, and cultural influences that impact their involvement with their children's education (See Appendix D for the interview questions). The initial interview questions were developed from the researcher's review of the relevant literature. Three categories of questions were developed before the first interview. The first category sought information regarding the participants' thoughts, beliefs, actions, and cultural capital used to promote their child's success in high school and to prepare them for college and a career. This category included questions such as:

41

1. Who, if anyone, was a role model to you and taught you how to help your child succeed in school?

2. Can you give me some examples of what you do to encourage and help your child succeed in school?

3. Is there anything from your Mexican culture or family culture that influenced how you helped your child succeed in school?

The second category sought information about their beliefs about the benefits of attending the schools, who helped them, and how they learned about the opportunity for their children to attend these schools. These questions included:

1. Did anyone from middle school such as a teacher encourage you to enroll your child?

2. Who was involved in the decision to involve your child in SFS and attend these schools?

3. Tell me about the conversations with your child about the opportunity to attend these schools?

The final category sought their recommendations about how the researcher could influence other Latino parents to get involved with their child's education.

Additional questions were added to the interviews during the course of the research. For example, many of the parents spoke about the fact that their extended families and friends did not share their views regarding the importance of education; therefore, they were asked about why they thought they were different from their peers and family. Additionally, in the initial interviews, the participants explained that their motivation to help their children succeed in school came from their experiences with their family life in Mexico, the educational backgrounds of their parents, siblings, and themselves, and when they came to the United States. As a result, for the rest of the

participants additional background questions about the educational and work

backgrounds of their parents and their siblings, the work and educational experiences of

their extended families, whether or not their siblings' children were going or had gone to

college, and when they and their spouse, if they have one, came to the United States were

asked in a more comprehensive and uniform way. Finally, in the initial interviews, the

researcher noticed that the participants had trouble identifying specific aspects of the

Mexican or family culture that influenced their beliefs and behaviors, but they described

a close family and how the family unit works together. The researcher believed that the

participants were describing the protective force of family, known in the Latino culture as

"*La Familia*" (Martinez et al., 2004); therefore, additional questions were developed to

gain a better understanding of *La Familia* and the participants' understanding and use of

the family to support the educational goals for the students.

One area was not explored. Based on the information that was provided, the

researcher believes that many of the parents are not U.S. citizens. However, questions

about their legal status were not asked, because it is this researchers' experience that

many undocumented Latinos are fearful about providing this information to anyone.

Such questions would have been counterproductive to developing rapport. Additionally,

it was not relevant for the study.

The interviews lasted approximately 60 to 90 minutes each. Separate parent

interviews were conducted when there were two parents of the same child. All of the

interviews were recorded with a portable audio recorder and then transcribed verbatim.

As an additional check for accuracy of the translations, another translator listened to the

audiotapes and edited the translations as necessary. After the second translator reviewed

the audiotapes, the audiotapes were erased.

Confidentiality of the participants is being maintained in multiple ways. First, the

personal identifying information was removed from the transcriptions. The transcriptions

contained only the first and last initials of the participants. Additionally, only the

participants' initials are used in this thesis. Second, the personal identifying information

in the contact sheets and background information are stored separate from the

transcriptions. Third, transcriptions, the contact information, and the background

information sheets are secured in a locked cabinet in a faculty office at ASU and will be

shredded or destroyed in two years.

Data Analysis

While qualitative researchers may describe data analysis somewhat differently

depending on their approach to inquiry and individual beliefs, in general, "[d]ata analysis

in qualitative research consists of preparing and organizing data (i.e. text data as in

transcripts, or image data as in photographs) for analysis, then reducing the data into

themes through a process of coding and condensing the codes, and finally representing

the data in figures, tables, or discussion" (Creswell, 2013, p. 180). Creswell (2013) also

explained that data analysis is not a rigid formulaic process; rather, it is custom built and

not performed in distinct steps. The steps in the process overlap and often go on

simultaneously in the course of research.

Grounded theory uses specific guidelines to gather, analyze, and evaluate data,

including: 1) memo-writing to develop emerging theory and potential categories and

determine gaps in the data; 2) initial coding while collecting data; 3) focused codes from which tentative categories are developed; 4) theoretical sampling to develop the properties of categories or theory; 5) saturating theoretical concepts to ensure that no more data are needed to develop more insights about the emerging theory; and 6) theoretical sorting and integrating to show how the theory fits together, to make relationships between categories or between properties of one of the categories, to specify conditions under which a category arises, and to state the consequences of the theorized relationships (Charmaz & Henwood, 2008, p. 242). While presented as discrete stages, as discussed above, this method uses iterative processes to go back and forth between the data and the development of a theory (Henwood & Pidgeon, 2003).

Creswell (2013) discussed different grounded theory approaches used by researchers. Creswell explained that Strauss and Corbin (1998) described a more formalistic approach than did Charmaz (2006) with detailed procedures for open, axial, and selective coding that ends with a discursive set of theoretical propositions. In contrast, Creswell described an approach advanced by Charmaz (2006) who disagreed with Strauss and Corbin and avoids imposing a forced framework. Creswell further explained that in the approach used by Charmaz (2006) theory emerges from an understanding rather than an explanation and pulls together experiences and shows the range of meanings.

Charmaz (2007) described a process in which initial or open coding is developed based on what emerges from the data in the first interview. Each line of text is coded to ensure the researcher remains open to new interpretations of the data, allows for

comparisons of data from one individual and across individuals, and helps ensure that the data are not forced into preconceived categories (Charmaz, 2007). As additional interviews are conducted, the data are reviewed and re-reviewed to develop revised codes as major themes emerge. The coding addresses the following questions: 1) What is happening? 2) Of what process are these actions a part? 3) What theoretical category does a specific datum take? (Charmaz, 2007).

In this study, consistent with the approach advanced by Charmaz (2006, 2007) initial or open codes were developed after the initial interview and refined as additional interviews and data analysis occurred (Charmaz & Henwood, 2008). Focused codes were developed from data that were extensively discussed by participants and appeared central to the themes that developed from the data. These codes helped synthesize and provide an understanding of the themes that emerged from the data. The codebook, attached as Appendix E, provides an e*n vivo* examples of the codes from which themes were developed. Because the data set was relatively small and gathered over a relatively short period of time, formal memoranda were not prepared. Rather different types of informal notes and summaries were prepared to help analyze the data and develop formal codes. From the focused codes, themes were identified that captured the participants' beliefs, values, and actions taken to help their children succeed in school.

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS

Several consistent themes emerged from the interviews that reflect how

participants construct their roles in the education of their children. These themes include:

1. Parents' motivations stemmed from: a) the adversities in their childhood; b) the

    belief that there are opportunities in the U.S. for people who succeed

    academically; and c) unrealized dreams to pursue their own education;

2. Parents' actions primarily included behaviors at home, such as: a) providing the

    basics, such as food, clothing, a place to sleep, and school supplies;   b) setting

    routines for school work; c) telling their own stories and using themselves as an

    example to motivate their children;

3. The influence of "*La Familia*";

4. The influence of discipline in the family;

5. The influence of teachers and principals who recognized and supported their

    children's academic success; and

6. The influence of the children.

Additionally, when asked about what could be done to motivate other similarly

situated parents, the parents suggested educating other parents through outreach such

as personal visits and telephone calls about the opportunities for successful students

and the importance of prioritizing their children and children's education.

Parents' Motivations

The participants' experiences growing up in Mexico, the lack of their own opportunities to go farther in school, and their beliefs that there are opportunities in the United States for people who succeed academically shaped their beliefs and values and motivated them to take steps to help their children with school. For example, in response to a question about why he wants his son to go to college, H.L., a father with an 11th grade education and who works doing maintenance on a ranch, said:

Because I am not very old. I'm just forty-one but sometimes I feel like my body, my back don't respond to me, and it's been because of the hard work and the physical work that I've done. So I feel that if he can continue with school, he'll have a different life so he won't have to work hard with his body but. . .

When asked if there was any other reasons, he began to cry and said:

I'm proud of him. [crying] It's hard. [crying] I'm sorry. I feel proud with him because it's hard, and I'm happy. That's why I don't talk. I don't -- I do things with actions because I come from a very humble and poor family where to eat one needed to go out to the countryside to work for 15 days to a month. And here, thanks to God, you don't have to suffer for a roof or food, and if there is an opportunity for my child to not suffer like we did, like his parents economically, for me that's a great satisfaction. I cry from happiness not because I'm sad, just because of the economic opportunities he has and if he has a different life, then to me that's beautiful.

48

Another father, J.R. explained why he is committed to helping his children:

> So what has happened to me in the course of life and experience. . . .
>
> When I was young, I didn't like school because I had to walk. I walked like an hour and a half to go to a small school. Six years I did that to go to town far away. And I worked a lot from when I was 12 til now with my dad. And at 16 I crossed the border. No documents, nothing, just let's go. Then I worked in restaurant like 5 years, then 14 years in landscaping then I moved to Arizona. And I have worked at Bashas [grocery store], manufacturing mobile homes. I have opened two businesses for me like to sell ice cream and accessories for cars, but we can't blame the crisis for the business hitting the ground and having to close. We can't blame the crisis completely. We can't blame just the financial crisis for what happened. There was a recession so the decision was to close and keep what we had and not let it all get lost and continue like this. And then I went back to work because before to the grocery store, I was a salesman for them and now I am a worker for them. And there is always a need to look for something to do. And why it's harder is because I didn't go to school.

E.L. explained that she went to school until only the third grade, because she became an orphan and had to take care of her brothers. She stated that she motivates her children to succeed in school because:

> I don't want them to go through what I have gone through so I tell them that it's important to study to, to study and to go ahead, and fortunately I have four kids that have great grades at school.

In response to a question about what she tells her son about the importance of education, E.Z., who earned the equivalent of an associate's degree in Mexico and now works as a cashier at a school cafeteria, explained:

> I tell him he's more prepared, he will -- the chances to have a better life are better, are higher. So he'll have to work less and have benefits, and so he can have an office inside and not to work outside in the weather and work outside like his dad, and he'll be earning more money. . . . So, so it's just what I believe in and I don't want my kids to have the same lifestyle that we have had and to have the extreme like work conditions that their dad have or even my own by not having learned the language.

N.E tells her children that their final goal is to go to the university and that they have to work hard to get there. When asked why this is an important goal, she explained, "Because I see that labor pays very little and it's a hard job too and I would not like to see my daughters like that." When G.R.'s son is discouraged with all of the hard work at Brophy, she motivates him to continue and not to quit school and get a job by telling him, ". . . that he doesn't want to be like me with two or three jobs, working with his hands and I can't save money, all that stuff."

In one case, the hardships of growing up with a single mom, who had no education motivated V.S. to get an education herself without any family support and to encourage her sons to do the same. V.S. has a bachelor's and master's degree, which she earned in the United States. When asked what motivated herself to get an education and

50

to encourage her children even though no one in her immediate family did so, she explained:

> To see the struggles, to see how my mom was unable to pay the water bill and the company truck show up on Saturday morning and leave us without water for two weeks until she get paid again. Or one time was very funny, and now that I think is funny; prior, before, I cry a lot, was the gas truck, the electrician truck, and the water truck Friday afternoon park outside my house, cutting the services. And I remember my mom fighting with them and asking them to please wait 'til Monday, and none of them did.

Several of the parents expressly shared H.L.'s belief about the opportunities to have a better life, which motivated them to help their children succeed in school. M.R. explained that she motivates her daughter to do well in school "Because if you have an education then you are always going to have jobs than if you don't have it. And you are going to do something bigger."

E.L. contrasted the opportunities in the U.S. with those that are lacking in Mexico, "But in Mexico there's not many opportunities so people just rely on working with their hands and working outside, and that's what they know to do because they never received education to do something differently." E.L. also stated:

> Because here, here's -- this is a country where you can actually take opportunities. There are opportunities. There's help and there are opportunities. It's just a matter of wanting to do it. So why it's really important for parents to encourage their

kids and motivate them because if they want to, they can succeed because there is

opportunity out there and there's help.

The participants' educational levels ranged from third grade to master's degree, yet all of them used the same method to encourage their children; they used their own stories of suffering and communicated their belief that their children will have a better life than they did, if they succeed in school.

The parents' own unrealized dreams about school and their interest in school also influenced their beliefs and actions to help their children. For example, E.Z., recounted the following story regarding what she told her son about why she and his father did not go farther with their education:

He always tells me his dreams and he always tells my husband and myself why

didn't we continue with our studies, and dad always responds that he didn't have

the support from his family, and I always tell him that I didn't have the financial

means to continue but I will do everything here for him to be successful. And I

even see, I have seen the people who have homeless cartons out there, and if that's

what it takes me for him to be successful, I will do anything it takes.

In response to a question about whether she would have liked to continue her studies beyond middle school, J.V. said:

That has been my dream. . . . Because I had my daughter and I got married

and I decided to dedicate my life to my children and family and help them grow

up and get everything they needed to be free. And for them to succeed and to

have a future in this country. I would have liked to have continued my studies to

become a counselor to adolescents to help them not ruin their lives and help them become successful.

G.R. attended school through the 9th grade and now sells Tupperware. When asked where she learned that education is important she stated simply, "Because I wanted to study and I didn't have the opportunity to do it." G.R. wanted to be a criminal defense lawyer. M.R. wanted to study to become a public accountant. N.E, who finished high school, wanted to go to college and dreamed of becoming a nurse so that she could be independent and do what she would like to do. She wants her children to go to college "[b]ecause of my experience of my not being able to go to university. I suffered a lot doing the kinds of jobs that I didn't like doing." J.R. did not recognize the value and need for education growing up, but he recognizes it now and wished that he had found a way to get to the next town to continue with school as a child. Even the mother, M.M. and father, O.M., who earned their bachelor's degrees in Mexico, also wanted to go farther in their studies and get a Master's degree in Business Administration. Only one participant, E.L. stated that she did not like school but still encourages her children to study hard. E.L. did not attend school beyond the third grade.

The responses of these parents indicate that their motivation for encouraging and supporting their children academically includes: 1) their own childhood struggles with poverty; 2) their own unrealized dreams to further their education; and 3) their belief that there are opportunities in the United States for their children if they do well in school. Based on these motivations, these parents have taken actions to help their children.

Actions Taken By Parents

As described in the literature, the Mexican immigrant parents are more likely to identify actions taken at home than at school to help their children (Auerbach, 2007; LeFevre & Shaw, 2012; Zarate, 2007). For example, several parents described providing the basics such as food, shelter, transportation, and supplies as examples of how they help their children succeed. J.R. explained:

> Supporting them for what they need. . . . What they need in terms of supplies or transportation, going to the events at school. Whatever they need. With their homework, because I am not bilingual then I can't. In terms of education, I will support them. For me it is not a sacrifice, but a commitment that I have. I want them to succeed.

H.L. also helps his children succeed by providing their basic needs:

> So the first thing was more important that I provide for them the basic needs: They don't have to worry about a place to sleep, they have a home. And if I can help any of them, monetarily, I do. I give them money whenever I can. I cannot take him to school and back like many people do because I have to go to work.

J.R. who was unable to go to school past the 6th grade due to transportation barriers, ensures that his daughter does not have the same barrier; he gets less than six hours of sleep to make sure she can get to Xavier:

> So, I get home by midnight. And by 5:30 a.m. I have to wake up and Jocelyn puts on the alarm clock and "lets go." I don't sleep much. There was a time that I

worked nights, from 10 p.m. to 5 a.m. and then I will bring her to school and

then go back and sleep a little.

EZ also makes sure that their children have basics. She explained that at home she makes

sure that her children eat and sleep well and monitors their homework.

In addition to providing the basics, the parents reported that they wanted their

children to study and not work to help the family finances. Despite the low levels of

income for all but one participant, these parents tell their children that it is their

responsibility to focus on their studies. N.E. explained, "I think our responsibility as

parents is to give them everything they need to provide for them, as much as we can.

And their responsibility as children is to study, is to focus on study." O.M., who is not

currently employed, stated, "So yes, I tell him that this should always be, that you

dedicate yourself to study. He has everything else covered by everybody else in the

family. Like we provide him with a tranquil home and if you are having difficulty in

yours studies, we will help you." O.M. also stated, "I believe that if your son has the

potential to be a good student, it is not recommended to send him to work. It's better to

support him and organize yourself as a family and he continues to study." M.M., O.M.'s

wife, also explained the rationale for not letting their children work:

I think it's very important because kids get lost and especially in high school

and they quit school. Because they are many temptations, many things to do.

So we actually ask our kids not to work, to be able to focus on school.

Many of the mothers reported more traditional ideas about helping their children

such as monitoring homework and setting routines for homework and study. For

example, N.E. stated, "I have always taught them that as soon as they get home from school, they need to change out of the uniforms and start their homework. If they are hungry, they need to eat, but immediately after, start homework." M.R. also reported, "Homework. So when they come home, first eat, then homework." J.V. described their after-school routine:

> I dedicate one hour at least after school to do homework. So, after eating something, we dedicate one hour at least to do homework. . . . Then I go to the park with them for two hours because I support for them to do sports. After that we get home and always take 5 to 10 minutes to tell them to focus on the day, to learn something new, to help you become a better person. What the kids need to do in school, that will help them a lot.

E.L who had a third grade education, was the only mother who did not identify setting homework routines and monitoring homework. However, like the other parents, she used motivational words and stories of her own situation to encourage her children to do well in school. When asked what actions she takes to help her children succeed, she explained:

> Basically the motivation. I didn't go to school. I don't speak English so all I can do is to motivate them. . . . Basically seeing me and knowing that I don't speak English, so they are the ones that need to help me and translate for me and interpret. So they don't want to be like I am. So they have like that very clear, that they have to continue and educate themselves to go further.

Like many of the parents, E.L. explained that she uses herself as an example to motivate her children:

Well, basically with the example and telling them that I struggle with my situation because I don't speak English, because I don't have education, and so that's really hard for me. So when they see that I need to go clean houses or do something like that, they, I mean we talk about it and, and they don't want to be like that. So they know that they need to continue study. And I tell them that they have to continue studying to go ahead and have something better, a better life.

Interestingly, two fathers took their children to see and experience things that they hoped would motivate and educate their children. H.L. explained:

I tell him. I tell him that school is important with words. So he helps me because like in the place where I work they sometimes have an event, and he sometimes works at those events, like helping parking cars to earn money. And he has learned many things that I have taught him like how to repair a roof or cut the yard, how to earn money working. So what I especially do, not tell him things that school is important, but I do it so that he sees he has to work to earn money and with an education you don't work as hard to earn money. If you don't have an education, then it's hard to make a good living. So that's my way to do it.

M.M described how her husband (O.M.) taught their daughter about tattoos and piercings:

The way my husband did it or explained it to her was like to take her to offices and say like look at these people, look how they're dressing. They don't have

piercings, they don't have anything on their faces, they don't have tattoos. If you

want in the future to have a good job and you have, you know, a position, then

you have to look like them.

Consistent with the literature, not all of the parents discussed involving

themselves at school as a means to help their children succeed, and some cited language

barriers as the reason not to do so. Some of the parents, even those who are primarily

Spanish speaking, cited talking to teachers, attending parent/teacher conferences, and

attending school events as actions they take to help their child succeed in school. For

example, O.M. explained that he talks to his son's teachers "[w] hen my son's grade

drops in any of the subjects or we see that he is not as motivated." He also added, "So we

ask about how is Omar's behavior in the classroom, if he is paying attention, if he is

getting distracted with other classmates." E.Z., also cited talking to teachers as an

important task she undertakes to help her children succeed. After making sure that they

eat and sleep well, E.Z. said:

> After this I try to make sure they do their homework, to be on top of it, and to be
>
> connected with the teachers even if I don't speak English very well. So I try to
>
> have that communication with them. I'm sure they go to school because I monitor
>
> what they do, but communication with the teachers is important to see how are
>
> they doing.

When asked how she communicates with the teachers and why, she explained:

> Face to face, and I just call and make an appointment and go see them. So I've
>
> never liked to wait until they give me a meeting, which is every quarter. So I try

58

doing it before then. . . . Because I want successful kids and I don't want like lack

of interest on my side or lack of action on my side to be what's keeping them

behind.

The parents attend events when they can, but work schedules and the cost of some of the

events are barriers for some of the parents. All of them stated that they try to attend the

SFS meetings where there are other parents with the children in the program so they can

get support from each other and help from the SFS leaders.

Based on the reports of these parents, actions taken include: 1) providing the

basics at home such as food, a home, transportation, and school supplies; 2) requiring that

their children not work so that they could focus on school; 3) monitoring homework and

setting after-school routines to ensure that homework is done; 4) motivating their children

by using their own childhood experiences or giving them experiences; 5) communicating

with the teachers; and 6) attending school functions.

Influence of "*La Familia*"

When asked how they use the Mexican culture to help their children succeed in

school and in their conversations about education, some parents responded that they teach

their children about Mexican holidays and history and have conversations with their

children about the importance of being bilingual and their annual trips to Mexico. They

did not connect these conversations and activities with helping their children succeed in

school. This lack of connection is not surprising since people do not always recognize

that what they are doing or thinking comes from their cultural background. As explained

by Pederson (2008), "[c]ulture controls our lives and defines reality for each of us, with

59

or without our permission and/or intentional awareness." (p. 5).

M.M. stated that she is unsure whether the Mexican culture helps her guide her children, but she tells her son "that education is the only legacy that parents can give them (children) and that will lead to a better life." When asked if that idea is part of the Mexican culture, she said, "Maybe a little bit." N.E. rejected the idea that the Mexican culture is helpful: "I think this is an individual thing. It's about the person how individually feels or thinks, not so much about cultures. I think it's just how mature each person is."

Some of the parents referred to the Mexican culture in a negative way and contrasted what they do with what other Mexican parents do with their children. For example, when asked about whether the things they do to support their children is typical of the Mexican culture, M.M. explained:

No, I think it's more a family thing because a lot of families, they're not attentive or they either have a lot of kids or they work all day or they work all the time. They're never at home and they don't really pay attention to their kids. Or maybe mom has a different partner or dad has a different partner and that is a big influence for the kids too.

When E.Z. was asked to clarify her prior answer, "whatever you do, you do, but there is no push to be better," she explained:

Yes, exactly. It's a little limited. It's like it's small selection for students because they have like a different financial situation or social class that they can do it. In my case I had to work really hard to finish my college, and I had to work all day,

go to school at night, and there were not many opportunities for receiving help.

I'm from a small town and arriving to the city, I felt like I was pushed and not

welcomed because they, like people from the city, feel entitled and because they

speak differently, better, they dress differently. So there's not much support for a

student that wants to go further.

In contrast to direct questions about culture, all of the participants understood the

term "*La Familia*." "*La Familia*", which refers to the protective force of the family in the

Mexican culture (Martinez et al., 2004), was a predominant theme among all of the

participants. While some did not identify *La Familia* or familism as a cultural concept,

two parents specifically identified the close family unit as an aspect of the culture that

they use to help their children. The rest of the parents referred to the importance of the

family unit but did not identify it as a cultural phenomenon. For example, V.S

specifically identified the family unit as something from her culture that she uses to help

her son succeed in school and explained:

> From my culture to bring into Carlos is the family orientation. He, he always
>
> around his family. He knows we have his back. And moral support. Like I keep
>
> telling him, Carlos, don't expect your Tio (uncle) to bring you a Play Station.
>
> Your Tio can bring you a candy cane and say Merry Christmas but he leave you
>
> with heart. He goes okay, okay, I guess.

M.R. stated: "From the culture just to be united together for everything. For my family

we are always together for meals and events, and sleep." When asked how this helps her

talk to her daughter about education, she stated, "I don't know how to explain."

61

Others described "*La Familia*" without referring to their culture. For example, when asked specifically what "*La Familia*" means to J.R., she stated, "So, family is like, God gives you a family. It's not like you look for a family, God gives you a family and it is like this (gesturing) like a big circle and you have to be in the circle. You have to be united together." J.V. noted that working together as a family is one thing that they do to help their children. She explained:

Another thing is that my husband and me are always together as a family. And we support them more than anything. We are always supporting them on everything that they are doing. And, if they do something wrong, then we sit down and talk about it as a family. Indeed, J.V.'s family sat down and discussed as a family whether her daughter would attend Xavier. J.V. also explained that she and her husband "always" do everything together to help their children in school, including homework and going to conferences.

O.M. also explained that his family works as a unit to provide for the children so they can study. He described the communal nature of the family:

For example, when my son comes home with an A, he says 'congratulate me for an A', I tell him, that 'no', it is the work of all four of us. Your mom, sister, dad and you. And your teachers, everything that surrounds your education. Not just your credit."

When O.M.'s son got accepted to Brophy, O.M. stated: "My son was like; 'I am very good dad, I am very good.' And I told him 'we are all very good'."

As stated above, educational researchers have found that the Latino culture, which places a strong emphasis on collectivism and loyalty to the family, often causes a student who may otherwise qualify for an elite four-year university to choose less selective two or four-year colleges closer to home (Nuñez & Crisp, 2012). Despite this common cultural emphasis on collectivism and loyalty to the family, it was surprising that all of the parents expressed a willingness to let their children attend college out of state, regardless of gender; there was no expectation that they would keep their daughters close to home. Additionally, they reported encouraging their daughters to delay marriage and parenthood until after they finish college and are established in careers.

Influence of Discipline

Some participants described discipline as a tool they use to help their children succeed in school. The routines described above reflect discipline by the parents and children, but one parent identified discipline as a family trait that is not common among Mexican parents raising children in the United States.   For example, G.R. described what makes her different from others parents:

> I believe a lot of people when they come to the United States, they leave their culture and give too much freedom to their kids, and a lot of times we have to work a lot but that does not give them a right to not be there with them and for them. I always tell them I'm doing this for them. And here, many parents don't say anything to their kids when they make mistakes, but the kids, if they hit them they said that the kids then call the police and then it's a big problem. But if you ask my kids if I ever hit them, they will tell you that I haven't ever, and -- but I

have punished them and -- but we don't even call it punishment. For example, if

they come and don't have a good grade, I will just restrict video games and

instead of having that time for video games, then we sit down and read a book,

which actually makes them learn more.

However, M.M. explained that "*educacíon*," which includes education regarding morals

and respect, also includes discipline, which is taught in the schools in Mexico:

MM.: Discipline. They were born in Texas but they live at the borders, they live

in the Mexican part. So the two kids went to a school on the Mexican side of the

border. It was a private Catholic school and --

JG: When they were young?

MM: When they were young. They were born in Texas but they lived on the

border side of Mexico and, the Mexican part of the border, I'm sorry, and they

went to this private Catholic school and it was very discipline oriented. And they

checked, they were sure, they were very strict about their appearance. They will

check their nails and their ears, and make sure like all the dressing was perfect

and everything. And the husband here cannot understand how people will speak

to him in the informal you, how a child will speak to him in the informal you.

And the children tried to explain to dad that it's because here it doesn't exist, the

formal and informal you in the language, so people cannot understand. He doesn't

like it. In this school, like the way the children will talk to the teachers and

everything was very respectful and very like discipline oriented. They had -- they

taught the kids in school about morals and respect and like the girls wouldn't be

64

able to dress with pants or anything. So it was more traditional, which for, for the

family was okay, and here it's totally different.

E.Z., a mother explained, "I've been very strict and demanding in terms of his education

so, and the results have been always very good." N.E. explained, "I think that for

everything there's rules that need to be respected and followed inside and outside the

home."

Teacher/Principal Influence.

All of the participants cited the influence of others involved in their child's

education such as teachers, principals, and in one case, a priest who helped one of the

children get into the SFS program because he was aware of her discipline and hard work

in choir and at church activities. Some of the parents explained that their child was

identified at a young age as particularly smart, which influenced the parents' beliefs

about education and motivated them to do their part. For example, long before a teacher

approached V.S.'s son, Carlos, about attending Brophy, a teacher saw potential in Carlos:

When he was in third grade, one teacher asked me if she can do research on him.

And I ask her why? She say because he's bilingual.

. . .

VS: I say, oh, there's a lot of bilingual kids here. She goes, no, Carlos never went

to school here until first grade and I want to know where he pick up the perfect

English and the perfect Spanish. And she, Ms. Velazquez, she's the one who say

can -- are you ever think of Carlos going to college here in United States? I said

yes. She goes, I encourage you. So it wasn't third grade when the teacher -- I

65

don't know why it was with Carlos but always a teacher behind his steps, always,

there's always a teacher behind him.

In response to a question about whether the teachers had a big influence on Carlos, V.S.

stated, "Uh-huh, they did, because I didn't imagine the people in here can support

Hispanic kid to go to school, to be realistic." V.S. also followed a teacher's advice to

involve Carlos and her in a club, Be A Leader, which would help him prepare for college:

I ask her what is the club about it? She explained to me it's to encourage them to

go to college. And she said, what do you, what do you mean? She goes because a

lot of Hispanics, because my son was in Hispanic school over there, doesn't go to

college, she say, and I, and I want the kids from my school to go to college one

day. And she mentioned Carlos had the potential to go to college. He's very

dedicated. He likes school. He always has straight A's. So he will be successful

in college. The only thing she say, I need this, your support. And I ask her, what

do you mean again? She said bring him every Saturday, car washes, donations.

She even take him to New York.

Several of the parents reported that the principal of or teachers in their children's middle

school identified their child as having academic potential, sought out the parents, and

encouraged and helped their children get into the high schools that they now attend. For

example, H.L. said: "So they [teachers] came and they talked about Eduardo, how

intelligent he was and how much potential he had, and then they said they wanted to help

him, and I felt really lucky and I appreciate their help." M.M. stated that a teacher

prepared her son for 6 months to take the entrance examination for Brophy. E.L. also

described the help that the middle school teachers provided to make the opportunity to attend a college preparatory high school a reality for her son, including paying the application fee. While the parents were previously unaware of these kinds of academic opportunities for their children, the parents followed the lead, advice, and help of the teachers and principals. In addition to these sources of support, the parents also noted the important role that their children themselves play in motivating their actions.

Influence of children

In Auerbach's (2007) study, she described some of the low-income parents with the least education as "moral supporters." The moral supporters took their cues from their perceptions of their children's desire and motivation to succeed. When these parents perceived that their children were motivated, smart, and diligent in school at an early age, they were prompted to encourage their studies. Similarly, several parents in the current study expressly stated that their child's desire and motivation to succeed motivated their behavior to help them. For example, E.Z. recounted the story about how her son was admitted to Brophy. She explained that her son wanted to go to Brophy after presentations were made at the middle school. When E.Z. explained to him that they could not afford the school, her son, Mariano told her that he had already applied. As a result, she did her part to support her son:

> But he had already applied and so I came to school and I talked to the counselor
> and I said, okay, so he did his part and I really need to know what my part is and
> what do I need to do. So he (SFS Director) was a great person and he told me
> about the program. And we were already behind so he wasn't sure we were going

67

to get it because it was already February, we had not applied yet, but that day we went home and we were up until one a.m. just filling out all the paperwork and trying to get it all together. And I went to a person we know that knows a lot about computers to see if we could do everything on-line so we wouldn't waste time with the mail service because there were seven days and we were really pushing for the application to go in immediately. And in the meantime then my husband and I talked and he said, well, go ahead and pay for the school application regardless because if he already decided and he has this dream, we are not going to stop his dream. We are going to make everything we can to make it real. So we kept researching and I actually told Mariano to keep his eyes and ears open to everything that came across that sounded like scholarship or support because that's the only way we can make it, and that's the way we've been doing this.

E.L.'s son, Eduardo, did not want to go to public school so she supported his decision, explaining, "Because he felt like he was not going to be comfortable in a public school because he wanted a more serious school." Her son told her, "Because I do really want to learn and it feels like there are too many kids in these schools and they're not receiving attention."

E.L. continued with:

So before the scholarship, he had already expressed his interest in Brophy, said I want to go to this school. I know it's a very good school but we don't have the money, and it was the teachers and Eduardo who prepared himself a lot to pass

the test and to study and that's how he got in.

When the researcher asked, "How did Eduardo know about Brophy?" E.L. responded, "So he knew that he didn't want to go to public school but I think it was through the teachers that he got to know about Brophy." Given his motivation to get into Brophy, E.L. encouraged him, "I try to encourage him and I say like I know it's hard and when you have to stay late at night and come back using the bus and without transportation, but I was telling him to continue, to don't give up." When the researcher asked E.L. for ideas to motivate other parents to do what she does, she explained, "Support, I believe that support is the key, because the desire to do things comes from the kids themselves but they need to be supported, and if that's what they want to do and you should support them like to continue to do the school and education."

Other parents also stated that they have relied on information and ideas from their children about what college or university they want to attend, what majors and careers interest them, and they expressed support for their child's decision. For example, M.M. explained that in contrast to her daughter, who is attending a local private university, her son wants to go to the east coast. She stated, "But Omar is different and he wants to go to the East Coast and do something different, and we'll do everything we can to, to support that." She also explained, "Omar loves in the summers that he has spent on the CTY program, has already dissected animal brains and opened a little piggy and all these things. So they have been and we support it, both mom and dad support it." She explained that through Center for Talented Youth (CTY), her son received a scholarship to spend three weeks in each of the last summers in Rhode Island and other places in the

69

east coast studying nuclear medicine, anatomy, and other medical courses.

Jocelyn's parents rely on her to find the college that is right for her, and they will support her decision. In response to the question, "Is it ok if she goes away to college? Far away?", J.R. explained:

> Yes, if that is what she says. I can't tell her not to go that far away. I know there are opportunities here in Arizona and in California. But not all universities have what you want. Before she wanted Stanford a lot, but it was very limited. Something she said, I don't know.

When probed, "Do you rely on her to tell you about each school or do you research?", he responded, "No, I wait for her to tell me because she is the one who knows about it and if she says this is what I want, I am confident in her. And, I trust what she wants."

The children's specific requests for help motivated the parents to take steps to help their children. However, when asked how others could be motivated to take similar steps, they recommended: 1) educating other parents to prioritize their children; 2) about the opportunities that exist for academically successful children; and 3) the importance of outreach by teachers.

Recommendations by Parents to Increase Latino Parent Involvement

Each of the parents was asked about what can be done to motivate other Latino parents to get involved with their children's education. Most of the ideas reflect the need to educate parents about the importance of making their children a priority and supporting them and explaining the opportunities for grants and scholarships, particularly

for successful students. Additionally, parents pointed out the benefits of reaching out and

talking to the parents in the home or in the neighborhood. For example, M.M. explained:

> Just to talk to the parents and tell them how important it is to, to be there with the
>
> kids and know what the kids like and what their interests are, and this is the
>
> secret, too, to participate with the school because, for example, in the high school
>
> where the daughter was at, there was a meeting once to get to know the new
>
> principal, and you will think with a population of twenty-five hundred students
>
> there would be more than twenty-five parents, but at the most there were twenty-
>
> five parents there meeting the new principal. So to get involved, to know what
>
> their teachers say, what the teachers are doing with the kids and. . .

E.Z. stated:

> I think the most important thing is for parents to, to realize and, and to know that
>
> the fact that parents did not achieve one dream or their dreams, it's now time to
>
> help their kids to do it. And for parents to learn that it's never a waste of time
>
> whatever you do for your kids. Since there are always opportunities at school,
>
> like even in middle school like they offer classes for parents and for education and
>
> support for the kids, like I actually took one and I graduated.

G.R. explained:

> Talk to the parents and to give examples of successful stories like my sons, both
>
> of them, both Miguel and -- like, for example, Loyola gave me tons of
>
> applications and I went with my kids. We walked through the streets and gave it

out to other parents and they -- like other mothers like, like from Hispanic origin, no, it's too far and it's too expensive. And I tell them that it's free but they're still like, well, but this other school is closer and it's more convenient. So it's actually a matter of convincing the parents, and I know sometimes they're afraid and they work and everything, but the work to do is with the parents and convince them that there is the opportunity and benefits of taking it.

M.R. also recommended educating the parents about the opportunities for grants and scholarships, "More education for parents because there may exist other grants, or scholarships or help, but we have to look for them. So, how to look for them."

J.R. further explained:

To tell them, if they support their kids, then they will see the results. Because they said, and its true, whatever you do not what you said. Well, also what you say, it stays marked like in the Bible.

Researcher: So when a mom or dad tells their child something, they remember it. Is that what you are saying?

J.R.: Yes, they will remember, so like myself, I remember things that my dad said and did.

Researcher: So the messages from the parents are important.

J.R.: Oh, Yes.

V.S. recommended home visits to parents and more outreach by counselors:

I think this is not happening here very often, but I think if you do have some home visits, like you're doing right now with me, that will help them to get a better

understanding how they need to be in both of their kids. Because if you send the

flyer, they don't read it. . . . If ask you the kid to tell them, they don't listen. But if

-- in Mexico it's very, it's very respect and adult, or teacher or somebody who

came from educational background or doctor background. But if you go to the

houses, it's more personalized and you give them the time to ask questions and

have their questions answered, and maybe that will give them more like curiosity

to be there. I think that's a key, to have more personalized visits.

With respect to outreach by counselors, V.S. suggested:

And that will be encourage the school counselors to call the parents at least

once a month and let them know what's going on with their kids, and invite them

to go and visit with them. Or have a conference one day twice a year and say, this

is what's going on. We're going towards this. But I think the counselors, the

student needs -- the parents need to be involved, and the counselors are there

connecting the kids with the parents and the school.

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION

This study used a strength-based approach, garnering rich detail about the beliefs, values, and actions taken by these parents to support their academically successful children. By hearing the voices and stories of the parents, this study provides insights about strengths and resources that these parents used to help their children succeed in school. While researchers have analyzed the formal and informal methods of parental involvement, few have undertaken a qualitative approach to understanding the details of parent involvement, particularly of Mexican immigrant parents whose children are succeeding in school. As recognized by other researchers conducting quantitative analysis on parental involvement, qualitative measures provide detailed information that quantitative measures often lack (Walker, et al., 2011). Additionally, Esparaza and Sánchez (2008), noted that most studies explore why students drop out of high school, using a deficit approach rather than a strength-based approach.

Literature suggests that culture and socioeconomic class defines the role parents have in their child's education (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001). In contrast, this study found that education and income levels did not predict levels and types of parent involvement. While the educational and income levels of the study participants varied, the participants' values, beliefs, and actions were similar and reflected aspects of the Mexican culture. Although the participants struggled to identify specific aspects of the Mexican culture that shaped their parental involvement, the Mexican culture explains much of what they did and why.

74

La familia, familism, or the family and how each of the family members supports the family unit was the most dominant theme that influenced parents' actions, beliefs, and values regarding their children's education. In examining academic resiliency from an ecological perspective, Alfaro, Umaña-Taylor, and Bámaca (2006) noted that:

> [c]ultural factors, characteristic of Latinos, coincide well with the basic premise of the academic resiliency perspective, which suggests that the influence of significant others should be taken into account when examining academic success. Scholars have indicated that a familistic orientation, characterized by an emphasis on strong emotional ties, respect for, and obedience to the family, is one of the strongest cultural values possessed by Latino populations (Garcia-Preto, 1996; Sabogal, Marin, Otero-Sabogal, Marin, & Perez-Stable, 1987). Furthermore, it has been suggested that Latinos have a strong relational orientation, which emphasizes the importance of extended kin and social relationships outside the family (Cooper, 1999; Shweder et al., 1998). As a result of these cultural values, parents, teachers, and friends have been theorized to be particularly influential on Latino adolescents' academic outcomes (p. 280).

The current findings provide support for the informal parent involvement that reflects this aspect of traditional Latino culture. Parents in this study identified the family and the roles of each family member as an important aspect of academic support. For example, several parents stressed that the family should organize itself to provide for the basic needs of the student so the student can focus on studies rather than work to help support the family. N.E. stated this most concisely, "I think our responsibility as parents is to give

75

them everything they need to provide for them, as much as we can. And their responsibility as children is to study, is to focus on study." The emphasis on the role of the children whose job is to study refers to the "traditional Latino '*estudios*' schema" (Auerbach, 2007, p. 263). These findings also are consistent with research that suggests that Latino parents view their role and responsibility toward their children's education as ensuring that their children have food, shelter, and clothing (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001) and ensuring their children have the opportunity to study and succeed as students (Auerbach, 2007).

Prior research also reports that Latino parents provide informal support at home by communicating high expectations to their children, by teaching the importance of a good education, and by providing the best education possible. (Auerbach, 2007; Ingram, Wolfe, & Lieberman, 2007). Auerbach (2007) explained that, in her study, the moral supporters, who were all Latino immigrants with the least education and English fluency, described their strategies for promoting educational success as providing moral and emotional support, stressing the importance of education, talking to the children about university and careers, and setting limits on behavior. She noted that these strategies reflect "traditional Latino immigrant cultural values and modes of expression" (p. 263). Interestingly, Ingram et al. (2007) noted that while Epstein's model of parental involvement did not include these types of informal roles at home, their study found that these aspects of involvement were strong indicators of academic success at a school for at-risk, high achieving students.

LeFevre and Shaw (2012), who studied Latino parents, also noted that informal support from Latino parents included telling family stories and giving advice through cultural narratives called "*consejos*," providing moral and emotional support by talking to their children about the value of an education and future career goals, providing a quiet place to do homework, monitoring school attendance, helping with homework, and making sure the children arrive at school on time. LeFevre and Shaw noted that prior research has also shown that Latino parents may caution their children against quitting school and only qualifying for a low paying job or may expressly explain the connection between academic success and higher pay.

Consistent with this prior research, the Mexican immigrant parents in this study involved themselves informally in the home similar to those activities described in the literature. While schools and educators may not observe or know about Latino parents' involvement that occurs at home, this study adds to the literature by providing details about this involvement and how parents communicate their values and goals for their children's education. For example, stories or *consejos* of struggles in the parents' childhood motivated their actions to support their children, including setting high expectations so that their children would have better lives. The parents specifically described that the lack of food, water, electricity, and gas in their childhood motivated them to support their children's education. Another parent's transportation issues as a child prevented him from going to school beyond the sixth grade but also motivated him to drive his daughter across town in the morning, even though this meant that he sleeps less than six hours a night. Several also encouraged and motivated their children to do

77

well in school by contrasting their struggles without an education with the opportunities that will be available to their children, if they succeed academically. One mother stated that she discourages her son from quitting school by explaining that if he does so, he will have to work two or three jobs like she does, work with his hands, and never be able to save money.

Additionally, consistent with the findings in Auerbach's (2007) study, the parents' own unrealized dreams to pursue education and career goals also were powerful in shaping their aspirations and beliefs and actions. For example, one mother communicated the importance of education to her children because she wanted to study to become a lawyer but did not have the opportunity to do it. Another also explained that her motivation to help her children go to college stems from her wish to have pursued a nursing degree and do a job she wanted to do. These unrealized dreams motivated these parents to help their children succeed, and this theme is consistent with the family bonds and collective nature of Latino families. Only one participant, E.L. stated that she did not like school and/or had not wanted to go farther in her education. She reported attending school until only the third grade because she became an orphan and had to take care of her brothers. It is possible that had she had a more stable family and the opportunity to attend school beyond the third grade, she may have developed her own educational aspirations.

Consistent with the literature on informal parent involvement by Latinos, several of the parents in this study described their after-school routine, which included providing time and a place for homework, monitoring and/or helping with homework, and making

sure their children arrived at school on time. Additionally, like the "moral supporters" in Auerbach's (2007) study, discipline was reported by many of the parents as an important part of parental involvement in their children's education. Simply stated by one mother, "I've been very strict and demanding in terms of his education so, and the results have been always very good."

LeFevre and Shaw's (2012) study of Latino parents found that the types of informal parental involvement strategies described by this study's participants were nearly as impactful on academic success as that of formal support. They suggested that the Latino family and collectivist culture may explain why support at home is beneficial to Latinos. In the study conducted by Martinez, DeGarmo, and Eddy (2004), the data revealed that the parents and family played an important role in protecting Latino children from the negative consequences of low socioeconomic status. Regardless of the reason for the informal involvement, this study supports the findings of others that familism plays an important part of the parental involvement for the Mexican immigrants and studies that have found that this results in positive academic outcomes for their children.

The transcripts also revealed the influence of the children in motivating their parents to be involved in education. Specific invitations by the children to be involved in their education have been identified as powerful predictors of parents' involvement (Walker, et al., 2011). The moral supporters in Auerbach's (2007) study "took their cue from their perceptions of their children as students" (p. 264). Auerbach noted that the parents were prompted to help their children with school when they saw that their

79

children were motivated to learn, were identified as bright at an early age, or were diligent students. Like the parents in Auerbach's study, the parents in this study made sacrifices and removed potential distractions like having their children work during their high school years so that their children focused on study instead.

The parents in this study went further than simply removing distractions; when their children showed an interest in education and/or were identified by others or themselves as particularly bright and with academic potential, these parents did their part to help their children take advantage of academic opportunities. For example, a mother was told about the educational opportunities for her son if he participated in the "Be a Leader" program, so she did her part by bringing him to the program every Saturday for several years. After E.Z.'s son applied to Brophy, she did her part, explaining that because her son had the dream of attending Brophy, she and her husband were going to do everything they could to make it happen. When one participant's son wanted to go to a more serious and rigorous school than the neighborhood high school, a mother did her part by encouraging and motivating him to work and study hard, even when it was difficult. Finally, even if they did not have the knowledge needed to help their children in school, they responded and acted when their children told them about college information nights at school and learned about colleges and universities through their children's research. These parents acted, in part, because of their children's influence.

An unexpected finding was the parents' willingness to send their children out of state for college. In contrast to the notion that Latino families tend to stay close, all of these parents stated that they would support their child's choice for college, even though

they realize that their children may leave the state. For example, a mother expressed her sadness but support for the idea that her daughter may leave the state for college, "I haven't really allowed myself to be emotional about it. I know that she needs to do that, but I haven't really haven't gotten into the emotional part until the moment gets here. But that is her decision." When asked if she supports her daughter going out of state, she said that for her "it's perfect." She explained, "Because it's her decision and her destiny and I know that she is responsible because I have taught her to be responsible and I know that she is going to do it well." The other parents expressed similar attitudes about their children attending college out of state.

In the Latino culture, teachers are a powerful influence in shaping parents' involvement (Maríñez-Lora & Quintana, 2009) and children's academic motivation (Alfaro, et al., 2006). Although Latinos highly respect teachers and trust the American educational system, Latino parents may avoid contacting teachers because they want to avoid demonstrating disrespect for them (LeFevre & Shaw, 2012). However, in the study of Latino parents by Walker, et al., (2011) specific invitations from teachers predicted parental involvement. They noted that this aligns with prior research that demonstrates the importance and value of teacher outreach.

As can be seen by the stories told by the study participants, the parents were motivated to do their part to support their children, particularly when teachers and principals reached out, identified their children as having high academic potential, and encouraged their children to apply to the SFS and the private high schools. For example, one father explained that teachers came to his house to tell them about SFS and Brophy

81

and said they wanted to help his son. Another parent learned about Brophy when the "Be a Leader" teacher, who was a Brophy graduate himself, encouraged her son to apply. Other parents had principals who identified their student as high potential and helped them get the scholarship through SFS to attend these schools. In short, when teachers, principals, and, in one case, a priest approached them with the opportunities for their children to attend these schools through SFS, the parents were motivated to do their part to make it happen and to ensure that their children would get to these schools. In addition, parents involved themselves in the SFS activities for parents, which included education on the college application process and college scholarships. This study supports the literature that has found that specific invitations from teachers predict parent involvement for Latinos.

Limitations of the Present Study

The results of this study must be interpreted in light of several limitations. First, as is typical of qualitative studies, a small number of participants participated in the study. Additionally, all of the participants were Mexican immigrants. Because of the small sample size and the fact that all of the participants were Mexican immigrants, living in the Phoenix, Arizona metropolitan area caution must be taken to avoid generalizing to all Latinos or all Mexican immigrants. Nonetheless, the study reveals beliefs, values, and parent involvement strategies that are consistent with prior research regarding Latinos in general and Mexican immigrants. Thus, this study provides insights that may guide the development of parental involvement programs for Mexican immigrants and provides a guide for future research. Future research is also needed to

82

target other Latino subgroups.

Second, this study did not interview the children or teachers about what types of parental involvement are most helpful or attitudinal views of familism from the child's perspective. As recognized by Park and Holloway (2012), data coming from self-reported measures of parent involvement are vulnerable to social response bias. Future research that corroborates the data based on reports by their children, teachers, and others involved in the child's education could be helpful. It should be noted, however, that the strategies identified by these parents are consistent with other research reports regarding successful involvement strategies.

Third, causal connections cannot be made regarding a particular type of parent involvement and successful student outcomes. However, the parent involvement strategies of the study participants are consistent with findings from other research studies that have reported that many of the parental involvement strategies described in the current study by parents were related to successful academic outcomes for children. This is an additional area for future research. For example, additional research is needed to evaluate whether the approaches taken by these Mexican immigrant parents when used by other similarly situated parents improve academic outcomes for their children and to evaluate the role of this type of parental involvement versus academic resiliency of the students.

Implications and Future Directions

In spite of the limitations above, the study supports prior research about the benefits of using culture as a source of strength for parents seeking to help their children.

While educators and policy makers cannot necessarily improve the educational attainment of parents or improve their income, this study suggests that parental education and income are not necessary ingredients for successful students or motivated parents. Although the education and income levels of the study participants varied, they reported similar values, beliefs, and actions to help their children succeed in school and all of their children are academically successful. Their Mexican culture influenced what they did and why, even though they did not always recognize the connection between their culture and how they help their children and why. For example, the parents identified the use of the protective force of the family, known as "*La Familia,*" the use of *consejos* or stories to motivate their children, and the personal outreach by teachers, principals, and the children themselves as examples of what they do to help their children and why.

To the extent that parents avoid involvement in their children's education because they feel ill-equipped to help, this study supports the notion that Mexican immigrant parents can use their culture as a source of strength. For example, rather than assuming that a parent's lack of education is a deficit, this study suggests that children can benefit from their parents' stories or *consejos* of their struggles as a child along with the parents' messages about the benefits of an education and their aspirations for their children. Parents can also set homework routines, provide a quiet time to finish homework, and organize the family to work together to support their children's academic success. Parents can respond to specific invitations from educators and educators can ensure that parent outreach occurs in a more specific and culturally relevant way. Thus, this study supports a strength-based approach for developing a culturally relevant parent

84

involvement program for Mexican immigrants. As De Gaetano (2007) concluded in his study of parental involvement, "cultural diversity needs to be given more than a superficial or stereotypic focus; it is a strength that needs to be emphasized" (p. 160).

When helpful aspects of the culture, values, and actions of involved parents are identified, educators and policy makers can promote the same values and behaviors for similarly situated Latino parents with similar cultural backgrounds. Specifically, by identifying themes and practices used by these parents that have resulted in student success, other Mexican immigrant parents may learn how to help their children succeed in school. By incorporating cultural concepts into intervention programs, Mexican immigrant parents may feel empowered by their own strength and resources to be effective.

This study also supports research that found that specific invitations from teachers are powerful motivators for parents to get involved with their children's education. Respect for teachers and the American education system is a strong cultural value of these Mexican immigrant parents. Thus, incorporating this value and recognizing the value and importance of teacher outreach to parents on an individual basis also are important factors in parental involvement with Mexican immigrants. Beyond teachers, counselors and others in the child's education system can improve outcomes by recognizing that they can influence and motivate the child's parents and families to act, if the counselors and others reach out to the parents and communicate these messages in a personal way.

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APPENDIX A

IRB APPROVALS

ASU Knowledge Enterprise Development

Office of Research Integrity and Assurance

To:	Sharon Kurpius
	EDB
From:	Mark Roosa, Chair
	Soc Beh IRB
Date:	09/24/2013
Committee Action:	**Exemption Granted**
IRB Action Date:	09/24/2013
IRB Protocol #:	1309009659
Study Title:	Understanding Latino Parental Involvement in Children's Education

The above-referenced protocol is considered exempt after review by the Institutional Review Board pursuant to Federal regulations, 45 CFR Part 46.101(b)(2) .

This part of the federal regulations requires that the information be recorded by investigators in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects. It is necessary that the information obtained not be such that if disclosed outside the research, it could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability, or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

You should retain a copy of this letter for your records.

Dear Sharon Kurpius and Jill Goldsmith,

The modification to your study, HS# 1309009659 "Understanding Latino Parental Involvement in Children's Education" has been determined not to alter the risk of the approved exempt research. Therefore, use of the demographic form translated to Spanish may begin.

Kind Regards,
-Dayna

APPENDIX B

LETTER OF PARTICIPATION, CONSENT AND CONTACT SHEET

Dear Potential Participant,

I am a student in the Master's of Counseling program at Arizona State University (ASU). To complete my program, under the supervision of Dr. Sharon Robinson Kurpius, I am conducting research with Latino parents whose child is in the Sponsors for Scholars program. My goal is to understand Latino parents' involvement in their child's education.

I am inviting you to participate in the study, which will involve filling out an information sheet that provides background information about you and your family and participating in an interview, which will be recorded. The information sheet will take approximately 5 minutes to complete and the interview will likely take 30 to 60 minutes and will be conducted at Interlingua, or at your home, whichever you prefer.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary, and there are no penalties for deciding not to participate or for deciding to withdraw in the study at any time. Your decision to participate or not to participate in the study will have no impact on your child's participation in the SFS program. Additionally, your name and answers to interview questions will not be shared with SFS. You will receive a $20.00 gift card for participating in this study.

Your participation will help us understand Latino parents' involvement in their child's education. While there may be no specific benefits to you, the information that we learn may help other Latino parents involve themselves in their child's education. There are no anticipated risks for your participation.

The personal identifying information in the consent form, background information

sheet, and interview for you and your family will be kept confidential and known only to me. While the results of the study may be used in reports or publications, the names and other personal identification information of you and your family will not be shared or used.

The interview will be recorded and then transcribed. I will erase the recording after the transcript is prepared. When the interview is transcribed, the names of the family members and you will be changed and your real names will not be identified in the transcript. The transcription will not have your personal identifying information. Your contact information, transcription, and the background information sheet will be kept in a secured cabinet in my supervisors' office and I will shred the contact information, transcription, and background information in two years.

If you have any questions about the research study, please contact the research team by calling Jill Goldsmith at 602-320-1791 or Dr. Sharon Robinson Kurpius at 480-965-6104. If you have any questions about your rights as the participant in the research or you feel that you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board, through the ASU Office of Research Integrity and Assurance at 480-965-6788.

Sincerely,

Jill S. Goldsmith

Consent and Contact information

Please let me know if you wish to be part of this study by filling in the following

information:

Name: _____

Telephone number: _____

Address: _____

Spanish translation
Querido participante potencial,

Soy estudiante en el programa de maestría en consejería en la universidad estatal de Arizona (ASU). Para completar muy programa estoy conduciendo un trabajo de investigación con pares latinos cuyos niños están en el programa de patrocinadores de becas (Sponsor for Scholars), bajo la supervisión de la Dr. Sharon Robinson Kurpius. Mi meta es entender la participación de padres Latinos en la educación de sus hojas.
Le estoy invitando a participar en este estudio llenando la forma de información sobre usted y su familia y participando en una entrevista que será grabada. Llenar la información sobre usted y su familia le tomará aproximadamente 5 minutos y la entrevista tomará entre 30 y 60 minutos y se hará ya sea en Interlingua (calle 7 y Camelback) o en su casa, como usted prefiera.

La participación en este estudio es completamente voluntaria y no hay penalidades por decidir no participar o por desistir en cualquier momento. Su decisión en participar o no participar en el estudio no impactará en le participación de su hijo(a) en el programa SFS. Además, su nombre y sus respuestas en la entrevista no serán compartidas con SFS. Usted recibirá una tarjeta de $20 por participar en el estudio.

La información que nos dé nos ayudará a entender la participación de los padres latinos en la educación de sus hijos. Aunque usted no vaya a recibir beneficios específicos, la información que obtengamos podría ayudar a otros padres latinos a involucrarse en le educación de sus hijos. No anticipamos ningún riesgo en la participación en este estudio. La información que nos proporcione en las formas que llene y en la entrevista se mantendrá confidencial y sólo la sabré yo. Los resultados del estudio podrá ser usado en publicaciones o reportes, pero los nombres y otra información de identificación personal de usted y su familia no serán compartidos ni usados.

La grabación de la entrevista será transcrita y borrada después de que los transcripts sean preparados. Cuando la entrevista se transcriba los nombres de usted y sus familiares se cambiarán y no serán identificables en los transcripts. Los transcripts no contendrán ninguna información de identificación personal. Toda su información y transcripts, serán guardados en un archivero seguro en la oficina de mi supervisor y yo trituraré su archivo dentro de dos años.

Si tiene alguna pregunta acerca de éste proyecto de investigación, por favor contacte al equipo de investigación llamando a Jill Goldsmith al (602) 320-1791 o a la Dr. Sharon Robinson Kurpius al (480) 965-6104. Si tiene alguna pregunta acerca de sus derechos como participante en este estudio o si siente que se le ha puesto en algún riesgo, puede llamar a Carlie, quien es director del instituto del consejo de revisión de sujetos humanos (Human Subjects Institutional Review Board) por medio del la oficina de integridad y seguridad de investigación (Office of Research Integrity and Assurance) al 480-965-6788

Atentamente,

Jill S. Goldsmith

Información de contacto y consentimiento

Por favor déjeme saber sí desea participar en este estudio llenado la siguiente
información.

Nombre: _____
Número de teléfono _____
Dirección / domicilio _____

APPENDIX C

PARTICIPANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Background information about research participant and family:

1. Date of birth:

2. Where were you born?

3. In what country did you attend school?

4. What is the highest grade of school you completed?

5. If you work outside the home, what is your job or occupation?

6. What is your primary language?

Background information about your family:

1. Identify by type, the people who are living with the SFS student, such as sister, mother, father, aunt, uncle, cousin, etc.

2. Is the household income:
   $0-$9,999_____
   $10,000-19,999_____
   $ 20,000-29,999_____
   $30,000-$49,999_____
   $50,000-$74,999_____
   Over $75,000_____

Information about your Sponsor for Scholars (SFS) student:

1. Date of birth of SFS student_____

2. School your SFS student is attending this year?

3. In what grade is your student this year?

4. What elementary and middle school did your student attend?

5. In what year do you anticipate your SFS student will graduate high school?

6. In what activities is your SFS student involved in high school?

7. How does your SFS student get to and from school?

8. How long does it take for your SFS student to get to and from school?

(Spanish translation of background information)

Información demográfica y de origen.
Información del participante

Fecha de nacimiento
¿En dónde nació?
¿En qué país asistió a la escuela?
¿Cuál fue el último año escolar que terminó?
Si trabaja fuera de casa, ¿en qué trabaja? ¿Cuál es su ocupación?
¿Qué lengua (idioma) usa principalmente?

Infomación de la familia

Identifique quien vive con el estudiante SFS (hermanos, madre, padre, tíos, primos)

El ingreso familiar es:
_____   0- $ 9,999
_____ $ 10,000 - $ 19,999
_____ $ 20,000 - $ 29,999
_____ $30,000 - $ 49,999
_____ $ 50,000 - $ 74,999
_____ más de $ 75,000

Información del patrocinador del estudiante becado

Año de nacimiento
Estudiante _____
Escuela a la que el estudiante SFS asistirá este año
¿En qué año escolar está el estudiante este año?
¿A qué escuela primaria y secundaria asistió el estudiante?
¿En qué año anticipa que su estudiante SFS se gradúe de la preparatoria?
¿En qué actividades está involucrado el estudiante SFS?
¿Cómo va y viene de la escuela el estudiante SFS?
¿Cuánto tiempo le toma al estudiante ir y venir de la escuela?

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Participants' thoughts, beliefs, actions, and cultural capital used to promote their child's success in high school and prepare them for college and career

1. Who, if anyone, influenced you to encourage your child to further their education?

        Is there anyone in your family you modeled what you do to help your child succeed in their education?

        Were there any events in your life that encouraged you to influence your child?

2. Can you give me examples of what you do to encourage your child in school?

3. Is your child's mom/dad involved in encouraging your child in his/her education? (If interviewing dad, ask about mom and vice versa)

4. Why do you think a parent should do these things? **or**
    How do you think that doing these things will help your child succeed?

5. When thinking about your family culture or (Mexican culture) that you grew up in, what do you find helpful as you encourage your child to succeed in school?

6. Give me examples the ways in which you were involved in your child's education before your child was asked to participate in SFS?
        What would you have liked to do?
        Is there anything different or additional that you would have liked to do if you had more time, money, or information?

7. Tell me about specific conversations you have had with your child regarding education and what it means? Tell me about how you have felt about these conversations and how well it went with your child? Is there anything about your Mexican culture or family cultural upbringing that you used in your conversations with your child?

8. How do you view formal education?
        It is my understanding that *educació*n includes morals, respect for elders and teachers. Is this your understanding?

        As you think about formal educational and *educación*, how is it similar or different?

9. Have you had any conversations with your child regarding college? If so, please tell me about your conversations with your child regarding college.

Would you be willing to let your child move away (or move into an apartment or dorm) to go to college? What reservations, if any, do you have?

10.   What careers are you aware of that require college education or degree beyond high school?

11.   Please tell me about conversations you have had with your child about future jobs or careers. How did you feel about having those conversations and how did they go? Is there anything about your Mexican culture or family background that influenced those conversations?

Have you ever considered encouraging your son/daughter to become a doctor, dentist, lawyer, or other profession that requires education beyond a four-year college degree?

12.   If you have both sons and daughters, do you have different feelings about college and occupations for them?

Participants' involvement and beliefs about the benefits of involvement in a program that provides guidance to the children and parents:

1.   Did anyone from middle school such as a teacher encourage you to enroll your child? Tell me about the conversation(s) and what happened as a result?

2.   How did you feel when your son/daughter was invited to participate in the SFS program? Did it feel like it was a personal invitation?

3.   Who was involved in the decision to involve your child in the SFS program?

4.   Tell me about your conversations with your child about attending high school through the SFS program? What did you feel was important when talking to your child when making the decision that your child would attend high school through SFS? Is there anything about your Mexican culture or family culture that influenced those conversations?

5.   How have you involved yourself at your child's school and in the SFS program?

Do you attend parent meetings? Sporting events?

Do you talk to other parents whose children are in the SFS program?

Do the parents help each other out or provide support to each other?

Is there anything from your cultural background or family culture that influences your involvement?

6.   How have your family and friends reacted to your son's/daughter's involvement in SFS and a private college preparatory high school?

Broad, general questions

1.   What else do you think I should know that may help other parents help their child succeed in high school and go to college?

<u>Participants' thoughts, beliefs, actions, and cultural capital used to promote their child's success in high school and prepare them for college and career</u>

¿Quién le ha influenciado para motivar a su hijo/a a continuar con su educación?

¿Alguien en su familia ha sido su modelo para ayudar a su hijo/a a ser exitoso en su educación?

¿Algún evento en su vida fue la motivación para influenciar a su hijo/a?

¿Me puede dar ejemplos de lo que hace para motivar a su hijo/a en la escuela?

La madre/padre de su hijo/a participa en motivar a su hijo/a en su educación?

¿Por qué piensa que los padres deben hacer estas cosas?
¿En qué cree usted que hacer estas cosas le ayudarían a su hijo/a a tener éxito?

Cuando piensa en la cultura en la que creció (de su familia, de su origen étnico), ¿que elementos piensa que son útiles para motivar a su hijo/a en la escuela?

Deme ejemplos de maneras en las que usted ha participado en la educación de su hijo/a antes de que a su hijo/a se le invitara a participar en SFS?
     ¿Que le hubiera gustado hacer (diferente o que no hizo)?
     ¿Hay algo que hubiera hecho diferente o adicional a lo que ha hecho si hubiera tenido más tiempo, dinero o conocimiento?

¿Cuénteme de conversaciones especificas que haya tenido con su hijo/a respecto a su educación académica y lo que significa tener una buena educación académica? Platíqueme como se sintió con estas conversaciones y como fue la respuesta de su hijo/a? hay algo de la cultura Mexicana o de la cultura de su familia que usted uso en estas conversaciones con su hijo/a?

¿Qué piensa usted sobre la formación académica?
Lo que yo entiendo es que "educación" incluye valores morales, respeto por los adultos y maestros. ¿Qué piensa usted?

Cuando piensa en educación formal y educación, ¿en que son similares y en que son diferentes?

¿Ha tenido conversaciones con su hijo/a acerca del Colegio después de la preparatoria/Universidad? Por favor platíqueme sobre estas conversaciones si las ha tenido.

¿Estaría dispuesto a que su hijo/a se mude lejos (a un apartamento o dormitorios de estudiantes) para ir a la Universidad? Tiene algo en contra de eso?, en caso de que su respuesta sea si, ¿qué?

¿Qué carreras está usted informado de que requieren estudios universitarios o diplomas más que de preparatoria?

Por favor cuénteme sobre las conversaciones que haya tenido con su hijo acerca de futuro empleo o carreras. ¿Cómo se sintió usted al tener estas conversaciones con su hijo/a? ¿Hay elementos de la cultura Mexicana o de la historia de su familia que hayan influenciado estas conversaciones?

¿Ha considerado motiva a su hijo/a a ser doctor, dentista, abogado u otra profesión que requiera educación académica mas allá de los 4 años de Colegio (Universidad)?

Si tiene hijos e hijas, ¿tiene diferentes pensamientos o sentimientos sobre el tipo de carreras u ocupaciones para cada uno?

<u>Participants' involvement and beliefs about the benefits of involvement in a program that provides guidance to the children and parents:</u>

¿Alguien en la escuela secundaria (middle school) como un profesor o mentor le ha motivado para que registre a su hijo/a en este programa? Cuénteme sobre las conversaciones que ha tenido con ésta persona y el resultado de éstas conversaciones.

¿Cómo se sintió cuando invitaron a su hijo/a a participar en el programa SFS? ¿Sintió como si fuera una invitación personal?

¿Quiénes participaron en la decisión de hacer a su hijo/a partícipe en el programa SFS?

Cuénteme sobre las conversaciones que ha tenido con su hijo/a sobre asistir a la preparatoria (high school) participando en el programa SFS? ¿Qué piensa usted que fue de mayor importancia hablar con su hijo/a acerca de la decisión de participar en el programa SFS para su preparatoria? ¿Hay algo de la cultura mexicana o de su familia que haya influenciado estas conversaciones?

¿Cómo ha participado usted en la escuela de su hijo/a y en el programa SFS?
¿Asiste usted a las juntas de padres? ¿a los eventos deportivos?
¿Habla con otros padres cuyos hijos/as participan en el programa SFS?
¿Los padres se ayudan o se apoyan entre sí?
¿Hay algo de su cultura de origen o familiar que influencie su participación?

¿Cómo han reaccionado su familia y amistades a la participación de su hijo/a en el programa SFS y su educación en una preparatoria privada?

<u>Broad, general questions</u>

¿Qué otra cosa piensa usted que yo debo saber que pueda ayudar a otros padres a ayudar a sus hijos a tener éxito en la preparatoria o a continuar su educación académica en la universidad?

APPENDIX E

CODEBOOK

Codebook

Theme	Definition(s)	Exclusion(s)	Examples(s)
Parental Motivation	Parents' use of personal experiences, knowledge of opportunities for academically successful students, and own academic desire	Motivations of the participants' parents' experiences, knowledge of opportunities for successful students, and own academic desire.	Interview of E.Z. I tell him he's more prepared, he will -- the chances to have a better life are better, are higher. So he'll have to work less and have benefits, and so he can have an office inside and not to work outside in the weather and work outside like his dad, and he'll be earning more money. . . . So, so it's just what I believe on and I don't want my kids to have the same lifestyle that we have had and to have the extreme like work conditions that their dad have or even my own by not having learned the language.
Parental Actions	Actions taken to help children succeed in school	Actions taken to help children succeed in areas other than school	Interview of J.R. Supporting them for what they need. . . . What they need in terms of supplies or transportation, going to the events at school. Whatever they need. With their homework, because I am not bilingual then I can't. In terms of education, I will support them. For me it is not a sacrifice, but a commitment that I have. I want them to succeed.
Influence of La Familia	Use of family unit to help children succeed academically	Use of family unit to help parents or children in areas other than academic success of children	Interview of M.R. From the culture just to be united together for everything. For my family we are always together for meals and events, and sleep.

Influence of Teachers/Principals	Teachers' and/or principal' actions to help children succeed academically	Teachers' and/or principals' actions to help children in areas other	Interview of H.L. So they [teachers] came and they talked about Eduardo, how intelligent he was and how much potential he had, and then they said they wanted to help him, and I felt really lucky and I appreciate their help.
Influence of Children	Actions taken by children which motivate parental involvement	Actions taken by children that results in parental actions in areas other than education	Interview of E.L. Support, I believe that support is the key, because the desire to do things comes from the kids themselves but they need to be supported, and if that's what they want to do and you should support them like to continue to do the school and education.