An Exploratory Study of Mexican-Origin Fathers' Involvement in Their Child's Education: The Role of Linguistic Acculturation

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Abstract

The present exploratory study examined the involvement of 77 Mexican-origin fathers in their school-age (grades 4-6) child's education. Fathers were classified into one of three groups based on their linguistic acculturation status. The three groups were predominantly English-speakers (n = 25), English/Spanish-speakers (n = 27), and predominantly Spanish-speakers (n = 25). Five analyses of covariances (ANCOVAs) were conducted using the following father involvement dimensions as outcomes: Perceptions of School, Positive Contacts with Teachers, Attitudes Toward Parental Responsibility, School Involvement (e.g., participation in school activities and events), and Home Involvement (e.g., helping with homework, developing an environment conducive to education). Family socioeconomic status was included as a covariate in all five ANCOVAs. Results indicated that Spanish-speaking fathers reported more negative perceptions of their child's school, less positive contacts with their child's teachers, and were less involved in their child's school than either English/Spanish-speaking or English-speaking fathers. No group differences existed on the other two father involvement indices. Interpretations of the study's results and research implications are presented.

Key Words: father involvement, parent involvement, Mexican-origin fathers, linguistic acculturation

Introduction

Mexican-origin youth are at high risk for academic underachievement and dropping out of school (Census Bureau 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, as presented by Jensen, 2001), and this is especially true for students classified as Non-English Proficient (NEP) or Limited English Proficient (LEP; U.S. Department of Education, 2000, 2001). The need for finding ways to help Mexican-origin youth, particularly those who are NEP/LEP or who come from NEP/LEP family backgrounds, should be a high priority for educators, researchers, and policymakers. Parental involvement, particularly as it applies to fathers with limited English-speaking abilities, represents one key area on which to focus. For this reason, the intent of the present study is to explore how Mexican-origin fathers at different points along the linguistic acculturation continuum (Spanish-speakers, English/Spanish-speakers, English-speakers) differ with regard to their involvement in their elementary school-age child's education. Furthermore, because parental involvement is a multidimensional concept that has been variously defined in terms of educational expectations and aspirations (Goldenberg, Gallimore, Reese, & Garnier, 2001; Keith & Lichtman, 1994; Spera, 2005), parent-child communication (Keith & Lichtman), parent-teacher communication (Epstein, 1991), participation in school events and activities (Bogenschneider, 1997; Desimone, 2001; Nord, Brimhall, & West, 1997), and establishing a home environment conducive to education (Desimone), the present study will focus on how fathers of varying linguistic acculturation levels differ across a number of involvement domains.

Linguistic Acculturation

Acculturation is a complex, bi-directional, multidimensional process involving the cultural transformation of one culture as a result of its constant contact with another culture (Cúellar, Arnold, & Maldonado, 1995). Language use represents one dimension of this process. Items assessing language use are a significant component of multidimensional acculturation measures and continue to account for the majority of the variance in the acculturation construct (Marín & Gamba, 1996; Marín & Marín, 1991; Marín, Sabogal, Marín, Otero-Sabogal, Pérez-Stable, 1987). Recognizing this, a number of researchers have relied solely on language-based assessments of acculturation (Cúellar, Harris, & Jasso, 1980; Epstein, Botvin, & Díaz, 1998; Marín et al.; Plunkett & Bámaca-Gómez, 2003). The present study focuses on the linguistic dimension of acculturation because language is a crucial dimension of acculturation and is relevant to the understanding of why and how Mexican-origin fathers are involved in their children's education. Linguistic acculturation also

represents a good proxy of other acculturation dimensions (Berry, 1980; Marín & Gamba; Marín & Marín; Marín et al.; Padilla, 1980) that might be related to the degree to which fathers are involved in their children's schooling.

Linguistic Acculturation and Parental Involvement

Ability to speak English is an important skill that is related to the degree to which Mexican-origin parents believe they have the linguistic skills needed to help their children succeed academically (Chavkin & Gonzalez, 1995; Hyslop, 2000; Inger, 1992; Trumbull, Rothstein-Fisch, Greenfield, & Quiroz, 2001). These beliefs are often rooted in reality given that many school teachers and personnel do not speak Spanish (Aspiazu, Bauer, & Spillett, 1998). As a result of this linguistic barrier, Spanish-speaking parents cannot effectively communicate with teachers about their child's overall academic and behavioral performance. Additionally, linguistic barriers may limit parents' ability to be active participants in school-related events and activities. Faced with these linguistic barriers, NEP/LEP Mexican-origin parents might be more inclined than their English proficient counterparts to develop negative perceptions of their children's teachers and school, ultimately leading them to decrease their school-based involvement.

Because linguistic acculturation is a proxy for acculturation, any interpretation of its correlation with parental involvement attitudes and behaviors must be interpreted with this in mind. Put another way, linguistic acculturation differences may be related to other acculturative dimensions that are correlated with, yet distinct, from the linguistic dimension. For example, while many Latino immigrant parents are concerned with and do express high expectations for their children's education (Qian & Blair, 1999), they also maintain beliefs about their role and place in schools that are in stark contrast to how teachers and schools view "good parents" (Floyd, 1998; Trueba & Delgado-Gaitain, 1988). More specifically, research suggests that many Latino parents define the parental role in terms of providing nurturance and teaching morals, respect, and good behavior, whereas they view the school's role as instilling knowledge (Chavkin & Gonzalez, 1995; Trumbull et al., 2001). As a result of this cultural division, both parents and teachers might develop feelings of frustration. For less acculturated parents, these feelings might result in the development of negative perceptions toward their child's teachers and school, eventually resulting in decreased school involvement.

Alternatively, different levels of involvement across linguistic acculturation levels might be indicative of cultural values related to gender roles. Although some research indicates that Latino fathers want to be as involved in their children's lives as mothers (Baca Zinn, 1972; Hawkes & Taylor, 1975), many

researchers continue to depict Latino fathers as authoritarian heads of households whose primary duty is to provide for the family (Galanti, 2003). These inconsistencies may result from failing to take into account acculturation differences. It may be that less acculturated fathers maintain more traditional patriarchal views of fathering, whereas more acculturated fathers maintain more egalitarian views.

Socioeconomic Status, Acculturation, and Parental Involvement

Socioeconomic status (SES) also must be taken into account when exploring fathers' involvement across linguistic acculturation levels. When we consider that lower income parents often have less flexible schedules than higher income parents, it is easy to see why the former might not be as involved in their children's schooling as they might like. Matters become even more complicated when linguistic acculturation is added to the mix. NEP/LEP parents, who are already at a linguistic disadvantage when it comes to obtaining employment, may be hesitant to risk upsetting their employers by asking for time off to visit with teachers or attend school functions (Fuentes, Cantu, & Stechuk, 1996). They also may not have the time or the perceived skills to actively foster their child's learning at home. In this way, low SES combined with decreased linguistic acculturation abilities can conspire to keep parents from being involved in their child's education (Tinker, 2002). For this reason, SES is controlled for in the present study.

Study Purpose

To reiterate, the current study will explore how fathers at different points along the linguistic acculturation continuum (Spanish-speakers, English/Spanish-speakers, English-speakers) differ with regard to their involvement in their 4^{th}-6^{th} grade child's education. Additionally, because it has been well established that parental involvement is a multidimensional concept, the present study will examine fathers' involvement levels across a number of attitudinal and behavioral dimensions. Three of the indices – Perceptions of School, Positive Contacts with Teachers, and Attitudes Toward Parental Responsibility – are attitudinal measures, whereas the other two measures – School Involvement and Home Involvement – are behavioral measures. The following hypotheses were developed based on an examination of the Latino parental involvement and father involvement literatures:

- Both English-speakers and English/Spanish-speakers will report more positive perceptions of their child's school than Spanish-speakers.
- Both English-speakers and English/Spanish-speakers will report more positive contacts with their child's teacher than Spanish-speakers.

- Both English-speakers and English/Spanish-speakers will report more positive attitudes toward parental responsibility than Spanish-speakers.
- Both English-speakers and English/Spanish-speakers will report more involvement in their child's school than Spanish-speakers.
- Both English-speakers and English/Spanish-speakers will report higher levels of home-based direct involvement with their child than Spanish-speakers.

Method

Participants

This sample was obtained from a larger random sample of 189 Mexican-origin and European American families who had a 4th-6th grade child (target child) attending an elementary school in a major metropolitan area in the Southwestern United States. Of the 189 families, 123 were of Mexican descent. Eighty-three of these 123 families had a father living in the home for at least six months; 77 of these fathers agreed to participate and are the focus of the current study. While most fathers were biological, there were five stepfathers and one adoptive father.

Fathers were categorized into one of three groups, based on their preferred language use/linguistic acculturation status. The first group of fathers (n_1 = 25) reported that they preferred to speak mostly English or only English. The second group of fathers (n_2 = 27) reported that they preferred to speak English and Spanish equally. The third group of fathers (n_3=25) reported that they preferred to speak only or mostly Spanish.

A one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) indicated that fathers across the three groups did not differ in terms of age. In contrast, chi-square tests of independence indicated significant relationships existed between linguistic acculturation group and country of origin, and between linguistic acculturation group and highest education level completed. English-speaking fathers were more likely to have been born in the U.S. and to have completed a higher level of education than Spanish-speaking fathers, who were more likely to have been born in Mexico and to have completed a lower level of education. Means, standard deviations, and frequency data are presented in Table 1 for these demographic variables.

Table 1. Sample Demographics by Fathers' Linguistic Acculturation Group

	English-Speaking Fathers (n = 25)	English/Spanish-Speaking Fathers (n =27)	Spanish-Speaking Fathers (n = 25)	F or χ^2
Age				
Mean (SD)	38 (5.73)	36 (6.41)	36 (6.87)	.89
Country of Origin				
U.S.	17 (68%)	14 (52%)	2 (8%)	25.59***
Mexico	8 (32%)	13 (48%)	23 (92%)	
Highest Education**				
Less than 12th Grade	5 (20%)	5 (18%)	15 (60%)	
High School Graduate or Equivalent	6 (24%)	11 (41%)	5 (20%)	18.59*
Some College/ Technical Training	11 (44%)	11 (41%)	4 (16%)	
BA/BS	2 (8%)	0 (0%)	1 (4%)	
Post-Graduate	1 (4%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$ ****Level Completed in U.S. or Mexico

School, Student, and Personnel Characteristics

The school in this study serves 4th-6th grades only. Out of six possible ranking levels – Failing, Underperforming, Performing, Performing Plus, Highly Performing, Excelling – the school was ranked "performing" at the time of the data collection phase indicating that state performance standards were met. Of the 27 teachers and 5 administrative/specialist personnel (e.g., Principal, School Psychologist, Librarian) at the school, only 2 (6%) were classified as Bilingual. Both of these individuals were Latino teachers. In contrast, 249 (57%) of the school's 438 students were Latino. Of these, 104 (42%) were classified as "English Learners." Of the total student population, 86% were eligible for reduced or free lunch (Arizona Department of Education, 2006).

Procedure

Various efforts were made to recruit Mexican-origin fathers including sending home initial letters and consent forms asking fathers to participate in a study on fathers' involvement in their child's education, follow-up phone calls by bilingual interviewers in which fathers were asked what language they preferred the interview to take place in, and allowing the interviews to take place in the fathers' home on evenings and weekends. Interviewers from Mexico

who self-identified as native Spanish-speakers were specifically recruited and matched with Spanish-speaking fathers.

All interviewers were trained in a university setting and were undergraduate or graduate students in either an interdisciplinary or social science program. Interviewers recorded fathers' answers on a standardized interview protocol. In order to reduce possible bias from variations in literacy levels, interviewers read each item and its possible responses out loud in the participants' preferred language. Fathers were paid $25 each for their participation.

Measures

The standardized interview questionnaire contained demographic questions and father involvement measures. All items and measures were available in both English and Spanish. All Spanish items were translated and back translated to and from Spanish by native Spanish speakers from Mexico.

Demographic Variables

Demographic information was obtained using a questionnaire in which respondents were asked to provide their age, country of origin (U.S. = 1; Mexico = 2), and highest level of education completed in either the U.S. or Mexico (Less than 12th Grade = 1; High School Graduate or Equivalent = 2; Some College or Technical Training = 3; BA/BS = 4; Post Graduate = 5). Participants also provided information on their child's age and family data such as annual gross family income.

Linguistic Acculturation

The measure of linguistic acculturation used by Epstein, Botvin, and Díaz (1998; 2000) and Plunkett and Bámaca-Gómez (2003) was used in this study. Fathers were asked what language they usually speak with their child at home. Response options were: "only English," "mostly English," "English and Spanish," "mostly Spanish," and "only Spanish." Because, with acculturation, language use can remain Spanish, become bilingual, or change to English, the measure was collapsed into three categories: 1 = Only or Mostly English; 2 = English and Spanish; and 3 = Only or Mostly Spanish.

Fathers' Involvement in Child's Education

Five measures of fathers' involvement in their child's education or school were included in the present study. Each scale either came directly or was adapted from Epstein and Salinas (1993).

1. Perceptions of School. This scale contains six items. Higher scores indicate more positive perceptions of the target child's school. Sample items include: "This is a very good school," and "This school is one of the best schools for students." Response options are: 1 = Disagree Strongly; 2 = Disagree a Little; 3 =

Agree a Little; and 4 = Agree Strongly. Cronbach's alphas for this measure for the overall sample was .77, indicating adequate reliability.

2. Positive Contacts with Teachers. This scale contains four items. Higher scores are indicative of more positive contacts with the target child's teachers. Sample items include: "When my child has a problem at school, the teachers are very helpful," and "My child's teacher regularly lets me know when my child has done good things at school." Response options are: 1 = Disagree Strongly; 2 = Disagree a Little; 3 = Agree a Little; and 4 = Agree Strongly. Cronbach's alpha for this scale for this sample was .75, suggesting acceptable reliability.

3. Attitudes Toward Parental Responsibility. This scale contains eight items. Higher scores are indicative of attitudes consistent with the notion that parents should take an active role in their children's education. Sample items include: "Children do better in school if parents regularly check on their progress," and "It is the parents' responsibility to emphasize to children the value of getting an education." Response options are: 1 = Disagree Strongly; 2 = Disagree a Little; 3 = Agree a Little; and 4 = Agree Strongly. Cronbach's alphas for this measure for this sample was .93, indicating strong reliability.

4. School Involvement. This subscale contains four items specific to parent involvement in school activities or events. High scores indicate higher levels of involvement. Sample questions include: "In the past year, I visited my child's classroom," and "In the past year, I went to a PTA/PTO meeting." Response options are: 1 = Never; 2 = Once or Twice; 3 = A Few Times; and 4 = Many Times. Cronbach's alpha for this measure for the overall sample was .84, suggesting strong reliability.

5. Home Involvement. This scale includes six items. Higher scores on this scale indicate higher levels of involvement in home-based activities focused directly on the child and his/her education. Sample items include: "In the past year, I listened to my child read," and "In the past year, I helped my child with homework." Response options are: 1 = Never; 2 = Once or Twice; 3 = A Few Times; and 4 = Many Times. Cronbach's alpha for this measure for the overall sample was .87, indicative of strong reliability.

Results

The statistical procedure used in the current study was Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA). ANCOVA is a useful procedure when dealing with non-equivalent intact groups because it allows researchers to eliminate initial group differences on **y** which are confounded with **x** so that if a group effect does occur, researchers can be more confident that differences were not simply the result of pre-existing group differences (Keselman et al., 1998). Two

pre-existing group differences were explored: child's age by linguistic acculturation group and family SES by linguistic acculturation group. ANOVA results indicated that fathers in the three groups did not differ in terms of their child's age, but did differ with regard to family income (See Table 2).

Table 2. Means and Standard Deviations for Fathers for Tested Covariates: Child's Age and Family Income (df = 2, 74)

	English-Speaking Fathers (n = 25)		English/ Spanish-Speaking Fathers (n = 27)		Spanish-Speaking Fathers (n = 25)			
Covariates	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	F	Tukey's Test[a]
Child's Age	10.21	.80	10.30	.79	10.27	.82	.61	--------
Family Income[b]	33,372	3,022	32,000	3,989	24,760	2,845	13.86***	1-3, 2-3

[a] Post-hoc Tukey's Test distinguished groups separated by hyphen as significantly different from each other at the .05 level of significance.
[b] in U.S. Dollars
*** $p < .001$

Tukey's post hoc tests indicated that both English-speaking and English/Spanish-speaking fathers had a higher mean family income than Spanish-speaking fathers. Thus, in order to parcel out the effect of SES, family income was controlled for in the five one-way ANCOVAs used to examine whether fathers' involvement, as measured by the five subscales (Perceptions of School, Positive Contacts with Teachers, Attitudes Toward Parental Responsibility, School Involvement, Home Involvement), differed by linguistic acculturation level. The assumption of homogeneity of variance was examined for all five ANCOVAs using Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances (Stevens, 1996). The assumption was not violated in any of the five cases, indicating that the linguistic acculturation groups were homogenous in terms of their variances.

Results of the first ANCOVA indicated that there was a significant effect of linguistic acculturation level on fathers' perceptions of their child's school. Planned contrasts indicated that both English-speaking and English/Spanish-speaking fathers reported more positive perceptions of their child's school than Spanish-speaking fathers. A significant main effect for linguistic acculturation on fathers' positive contacts with teachers was also found. Planned contrasts indicated that both English and English/Spanish-speaking fathers have more positive experiences with their child's teachers than Spanish-speaking fathers. No significant effect of linguistic acculturation level on attitudes toward parental responsibility was found. However, there was a significant effect of linguistic

acculturation level on fathers' involvement in their child's school. Planned contrasts indicated that English-speaking and English/Spanish-speaking fathers were more involved in school events and activities than Spanish-speaking fathers. Finally, no effect of linguistic acculturation level was found on fathers' home-based involvement with their child. See Table 3 for statistical results.

Table 3. Means and Standard Deviations for Father Involvement Dimensions (df = 2, 74)

	English-Speaking Fathers (n = 25)		English/Spanish-Speaking Fathers (n = 27)		Spanish-Speaking Fathers (n = 25)			
Sub-Scales	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	F	Tukey's Test[a]
Perceptions of School	3.58	.45	3.52	.43	3.14	.53	4.19*	1-3, 2-3
Positive Contacts with Teachers	3.21	.75	3.30	.76	2.76	.80	3.10*	1-3, 2-3
Attitudes Toward Parental Responsibility	3.77	.16	3.69	.18	3.67	.21	1.63	--------
School Involvement	2.02	.45	2.18	.48	1.64	.42	4.83*	1-3, 2-3
Home Involvement	3.25	.52	3.29	.60	3.30	.62	.24	--------

[a] Post-hoc Tukey's Test distinguished groups separated by hyphen as significantly different from each other at the .05 level of significance.

* $p < .05$

Discussion

Summary of Findings

The purpose of the present study was to conduct a preliminary explanation of whether Mexican-origin fathers' involvement in their child's education varied by fathers' linguistic acculturation status. It was hypothesized that English and English/Spanish-speaking fathers would report more positive perceptions of their child's school, more positive contacts with teachers, more positive attitudes toward parental responsibility, more school involvement, and higher levels of home-based involvement. Three of the hypotheses were supported.

As expected, English and English/Spanish-speaking fathers reported more positive perceptions of their child's school than did Spanish-speaking fathers. This finding makes sense in light of previous research, which indicates that many immigrant Latino parents feel unwelcome in their child's schools due to

a variety of linguistic (Chavkin & Gonzalez, 1995; Inger, 1992), cultural (Hyslop, 2000; Trumbull et al., 2001), and socioeconomic barriers. As a result of these barriers, the Spanish-speaking fathers may have developed more negative perceptions of their child's school. However, this remains speculation because school process data and information on fathers' explanations for their perceptions were not collected.

English-speaking and English/Spanish-speaking fathers were more likely than Spanish-speaking fathers to report positive contacts with their child's teachers. This finding is consistent with previous research, which indicates that many Latino parents, particularly those who are less acculturated, feel intimidated by teachers (Hyslop, 2000; Inger, 1992). These feelings of intimidation may be further heightened when parents are faced with the difficult challenge of trying to communicate with English-speaking teachers. Because most school personnel and teachers do not speak Spanish (Chavkin & Gonzalez, 1995; Inger, 1992), communication about grades, behavior, and homework can be very difficult and frustrating for both parents and teachers. As a result, Spanish-speaking parents might develop negative perceptions of their child's teachers. This might have been the case in the present study given that only 2 of the 35 teachers and professional staff members were bilingual.

As hypothesized, English-speaking and English/Spanish-speaking fathers reported higher levels of direct school involvement than Spanish-speaking fathers even after controlling for family SES, a finding consistent with previous research which indicates that many Latino, Spanish-speaking parents have a difficult time engaging in school activities due to language barriers (Chavkin & Gonzalez, 1995; Hyslop, 2000). If Spanish-speaking parents attend meetings or try to volunteer in their child's school, they cannot understand what is being said (Aspiazu et al., 1998). Because of these linguistic barriers, Spanish-speaking parents may be less inclined than their English-speaking and English/Spanish-speaking counterparts to be directly involved in their child's school-based activities. Indeed, previous research indicates that differences in languages between parents and school personnel and a lack of bilingual staff contribute to parents' feelings of powerlessness and decreased likelihood of interacting with their children's schools (Chavkin & Gonzalez; Hyslop).

Because linguistic acculturation is a proxy of other cultural shifts, it makes sense to consider the possibility that the aforementioned findings might be a reflection of gender role values or parenting responsibility beliefs as opposed to English skills. However, these explanations are not likely for the present sample because fathers, irrespective of linguistic acculturation status, reported high mean scores on the parenting responsibility scale. That is, in contrast to what was hypothesized, the fathers in this study believe that parents, not just

mothers or schools, should be responsible for children's education. This finding is in contrast to a number of studies, which indicate that Latino parents see a sharp divide between parental and school roles (Chavkin & Gonzalez, 1995; Trumbull et al., 2001). This finding is also in contrast to a number of anecdotal studies which suggest that Latino fathers define their roles in terms of patriarchal authority in which the father's primary role is to work hard, provide financially, protect the family, and be the decision maker (Galanti, 2003). Differences between this study's findings and those of previous researchers may be a result of sampling or data collection differences: Much of the previous work on Latino childrearing beliefs and gender role expectations has focused almost exclusively on mothers, generally not taking acculturation or Latino sub-ethnic differences into account, and has been largely anecdotal in nature.

The final hypothesis concerned fathers' home involvement levels. In contrast to what was hypothesized, no significant differences existed across linguistic acculturation groups. Fathers, irrespective of linguistic acculturation status, did engage in home involvement activities. This finding is consistent with what would be expected given that the fathers – regardless of linguistic acculturation status – generally believe that parents, as opposed to mothers only, should be involved in their child's education.

Study Limitations and Strengths

Several limitations should be kept in mind when interpreting this study's findings. First, only the linguistic aspect of acculturation was examined. A more complex and multidimensional measure of acculturation (Cúellar et al., 1995) would have provided specific information about how linguistic acculturation above and beyond other acculturative dimensions (i.e., value changes) impacted fathers' involvement. A second limitation of the study concerns the measure of SES, which was based on fathers' self-report of his family's gross annual income in the absence of family size data. Per capita income would have been a more sensitive measure of SES. A third study limitation is the small sample size, which resulted in decreased power as well as a limited ability to generalize the study's results. Studies with larger samples would provide a stronger test of the hypotheses. On the other hand, the fact that these results supported the hypotheses despite the sample size issues is encouraging. Finally, school-level data and data on fathers' explanations for their involvement levels would have facilitated the interpretation of the study's findings.

Even though this study was exploratory in nature and had several limitations, it also has several strengths. First, this is the only known study that has examined Mexican-origin fathers' involvement in their child's education as it varies by linguistic acculturation status. Second, most studies on parental

or father involvement specifically focus on only one or two parental involvement dimensions. This study examined five dimensions of father involvement. Finally, most parental involvement studies focus on mothers and on Latinos generally. This study's unique contribution is that it focused on Mexican-origin fathers, an understudied group in the vast parental involvement literature.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study represents a preliminary, exploratory examination of fathers' involvement in their child's education. However, as previously indicated, data on fathers' explanations for why they viewed their child's teachers and school in a certain way as well as data on why they chose certain types of involvement levels would have illuminated the quantitative results. More specifically, future researchers could ask Mexican-origin fathers about what contributes to their involvement decisions. Future researchers could also collect school process data in order to determine what resources and outreach efforts schools use to promote fathers' involvement. The Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995) model, which states that parents choose certain types of involvement activities in response to the specific types of skills and knowledge that they possess, the total demands on their time and energy, and the school's specific requests for parents' involvement, would be an ideal framework for such a study.

Future research is also needed to understand if and how father involvement dimensions are differentially predictive of children's school achievement. For example, the present study found that fathers, irrespective of linguistic acculturation status, are involved in their child's education when it comes to being involved in home-based activities designed to promote children's learning. Is this type of father involvement predictive of school achievement? What other types of father involvement activities are predictive of school achievement? Future research studies are needed to address these questions.

Conclusion

This study's results indicate that Spanish-speaking fathers report less positive views of their child's school and teachers than English-speaking and English/Spanish-speaking fathers. Additionally, they are less likely to be involved in their child's school. These results suggest that more emphasis needs to be focused on engaging limited-English proficient fathers, particularly in light of previous research, which indicates that fathers can play an important role in increasing children's academic achievement (Blanchard & Billard, 1971; Nord, 1998; Nord, Brimhall, & West, 1997; Radin, 1976). Understanding why and how fathers of different cultural backgrounds are involved in their children's

education is critical in terms of developing appropriate prevention and intervention programs designed to impact children's academic achievement. This research study, though small in scope, is a step in this direction.

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