

***Herramientas Culturales: The Relationship Between Parental Influence, Social Initiative,
and Academic Aspirations***

by

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between parental influence, social initiative, and academic aspirations among Latino adolescents. Additionally, this study examined gender differences between the variables. Sample data were collected from the Youth and Family Project (2003-2004). Overall findings demonstrated an indirect positive association between parental influence on academic aspirations through social initiative for both males and females. Gender difference were present, with females receiving greater effect from social initiative to academic aspirations.

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Introduction

Latinos have the highest birth rate in the United States leading to a projected population increase of 115%, from 55 million in 2014 to 119 million in 2060, making them the largest ethnic group, at 29 percent of the total U.S. population (Krogstad & Lopez, 2015). Yet, Latinos remain among the least educated and poorest ethnic groups in the U.S. (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013; U.S. Census Bureau, 2016). Likewise, research indicates no meaningful gains in Latino college educational attainment in the United States in the last three decades (US Department of Commerce, 1984; US Department of Education [USDOE], 2014). In fact, although there is a large gap in the educational attainment between white and black students, both groups show steady growth while Latino students' education attainment does not (Gándara, 2010).

Furthermore, educational attainment is linked to better health outcomes (Zimmerman & Woolf, 2014), higher earnings and employment rates (US Census Bureau, 2011; US Department of Labor, 2013), increased cognitive skills, such as problem-solving ability, personal effectiveness, learned control (Mirowsky & Ross, 2005), and social resources (OECD, 2013). Therefore, if a large portion of the population is struggling with educational attainment, then the effects of a plurality with low education will have far-reaching impacts on society. Thus, more attention needs to be given to the enhancement of Latino education aspirations, including understanding factors that positively impact educational attainment.

The desire to positively influence Latino educational attainment can be evaluated within the framework of Human and Social Capital theories. Human and Social Capital theories suggest that a lack of educational attainment negatively impacts the welfare of Latino communities' due to lower marketable skills and smaller social networks (Becker, 1964; Glaeser & Spaiz, 2003; Stanton-Salazar & Dornbusch, 1995). Human capital theory espouses the need to attain new

skills and abilities (e.g. education) to increase personal productivity and personal wages (Coleman, 1988). The theory also emphasizes that social capital comes about through relational changes among people that unleash action, especially knowledge related information (e.g. college admission or job advancement) via people's social networks or relationships (Coleman, 1988; Stanton-Salazar & Dornbusch, 1995). For example, a Latino student who works closely with a high school guidance counselor or STEM teacher is now increasing their social capital due to their new network connections. As students increase their human capital via education, they also increase social capital by the peer and adult networks they build (Baum, & Ma, 2007; Dinda, 2013; Temple & Reynolds, 2007). Parents and families can also influence an adolescents' social capital through their positive involvement and influence to seek academic and extracurricular activities (Shahidul, Zehadul Karim, & Mustari, 2015). Parental influence in monitoring academic and peer activities increases adolescent social capital. As students take the initiative to work with teachers and fellow students, they likewise increase their academic status influencing their educational opportunities.

Parental influence in their children's school and social spheres is an example of a desire to increase their child's social capital within the school setting, among peers and a value of taking social initiative, all of which influence human capital. While an abundance of literature exists focusing on parental limit setting's relationship to academic achievement (Barnard, 2004; Keith & Lichtman, 2014, Keith, Reimers, Fehrmann, Pottebaum, & Aubey, 1986; Kim & Hill, 2015; LeFerve & Shaw, 2012), the literature is sparse in relation to Latino parental limit setting, social initiative, and educational aspirations. The current study will address the influence of parental limit setting on Latino student's academic aspirations and their pro-social initiative

within the high school setting impacting social capital and as a consequence increases the aspiration of college attendance, one aspect of human capital.

Educational aspiration is one of the best predictors of academic outcomes (Gil-Flores, Padilla-Carmona, & Suárez-Ortega, 2011; Kao & Tienda, 1998; Khattab, 2003; Tseng, 2006). Aspirations are strongly associated with completing high school and attending college, even more than GPA (Newcomb & Bentler, 1986; Eccles, Vida, & Barber, 2004). Adolescent educational aspirations also influence the decrease in dropout likelihood (Beal & Crockett, 2010; Rumberger, 1983). However, there is a gender difference in aspiration with female Latinas applying to (Castillo, Lopez-Arenas, and Saldivar, 2010) and attending college at greater rates than male Latinos (Sciarra, 2007). Latinas also have higher grades, on average, than their male peers, and are more academically motivated (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2009; Dornbusch et al., 1987; Plunkett and Bámaca-Gómez, 2003). The gender difference suggests that while research needs to focus on Latino educational aspirations, male youth need specific attention, especially related to individual and family factors supporting academic aspirations.

Familial influences of educational aspirations are important, and parental limit setting could play a significant role in the changes in academic aspirations and the simultaneous prosocial capital building behaviors of taking the initiative with peers and teachers (Gándara, 2002; Henry, Merten, Plunkett, & Sands, 2008; Jung & Zhang, 2016). While the literature suggests a perpetual cycle with low education and poverty, promoting hopelessness and acceptance of low social capital, the family can change the cycle (Shahidul et al., 2015). With the Latino cultural emphasis on family, parental hierarchy, and respect for parents, Latino parents who work closely with their children regarding academic success could engender motivation for educational advancement (Ramirez, Machida, Kline, & Huang, 2014). Understanding the

parental contributions could facilitate policy emphasis on family and parent dynamics to improve academic aspirations among Latino students, allowing children to break out of the common generational cycle of poor educational attainment by harnessing the cultural strengths within the community (Ream & Rumberger, 2008).

Previous studies show that parents have an impact on a myriad of outcomes from mental health to academic achievement (Steinberg, 2001). Furthermore, longitudinal research suggests that parental factors influence adolescent competence (Steinberg, 2001; Steinberg, Elmen, and Mounts, 1989). Since parental practices have serious implications for the well-being of adolescents, it is imperative to study the effects of parental limit setting and peer involvement as a model to facilitate both social initiative (social capital) and educational aspirations (human capital) for their sons and daughters. The research focus on parent influences on Latino academic aspirations and social initiative is particularly salient given the cultural importance of families and parental support for children. Additionally, it was assumed parental limit setting will influence the social initiative among Latino adolescents and that social initiative will be the primary variable associated with educational aspirations. The theoretical perspective assumes that an increase in social capital will facilitate the desire for increased human capital. The assumption is that by influencing social capital, parents influence the internal locus of control among their sons and daughters towards the expectation of improved human capital. The gender discrepancies in academic aspirations within the Latino community suggests a need to evaluate daughters influence by parental influence in relation to sons.

Literature Review

Human Capital and Social Capital and its relationship to educational aspirations

Becker (1964) outlines the motivation to study human capital in his seminal work, *Human Capital: A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis, with Special Reference to Education*, as for how to account for the substantial growth of income in the United States after accounting for physical capital and labor. Becker (1964) reviews how increased human capital in the form of education has societal benefits from increased productivity. Cities with higher human capital benefit from increasing growth, higher housing rates, higher patenting per year, and quicker transition from manufacturing industry to other industries (Glaeser & Spaiz, 2003). College degree attainment and dropout rates are usual indicators of human capital. (Glaeser & Spaiz, 2003). Cities with higher education and human capital are more likely to have spillovers in productivity where having a higher concentration of educated people influences those without education to more productive and increased wages of the less educated (Moretti, 2004a, 2004b). Increasing educational attainment among the Latino population would influence social and human capital, increasing the productivity of the Latino community and via social capital adding value to the larger society via spill-over effects (Glaeser & Spaiz, 2003).

Social capital describes what resources are available to a person via that person's relational network (Coleman, 1988). Social capital is higher where trustworthiness/trust is also high, and that will increase productivity due to limiting the need for cumbersome regulations, insurance, or penalties (Coleman, 1988). Social facilitates a connection to resources and activities (e.g. protest, acquire education, see specialists) when without social connections, access would be much harder (Coleman, 1988). Where human capital exists in the skill of a person, social capital exists in the relationships of people (Coleman, 1988). Coleman (1988)

suggests social capital is the mechanism of intergenerational transmission of human capital from parents to children. Coleman (1988) suggests a sturdy family and school background contribute to educational development in children. Academic aspirations are high when social capital in the family context creates an environment conducive to academic achievement (Shahidul et al., 2015). Researchers (Shahidul et al. 2015) measured social capital in the family setting by a parental discussion of school matters, parents helping with homework, and parents talking with students about school matters. Researchers (Shahidul et al. 2015) emphasize SES as a driver of social capital. However, Teachman and Paasch (1998) disagree stating a sole focus on SES fails to encapsulate the wide spectrum of social processes related to the development of aspirations in children. Teachman and Paasch (1998) conclude a sizeable amount of variation in educational aspiration of a student is not explained by SES and that understanding what is going on in family relationships is of most value in future research. Furstenberg and Hughes (1995) find social capital to be a vital determinant in the successful development (i.e. not dropping out of school) of at-risk youth, and, as noted earlier, the Latino population seems to be at greater risk of low educational attainment (Gándara, 2010).

Social Capital and its relationship to social initiative, parental limit-setting, and parent-peer relationships

Coleman (1988) states income is the measure of financial capital while human capital's measure is skills embodied in a person. Social capital, Coleman (1988) reviews, is less tangible than human capital due to social capital existing within the relational networks people have. Social capital is present in every imaginable relationship. The family is the basic relational network of society (The United States, 1965). This idea of the family as the basic unit of society coincides well with what Coleman (1988) contends, the family unit is instrumental in the

development of social capital. People principally cultivate social capital in the family setting (Dufur, Parcel, & Troutman, (2012).

Coleman (1988) explains social capital develops in children as their parents are physically present and spend time and effort on and with the child. Therefore, parents are the teachers of social capital, with children as the students, and the family as the classroom. Coleman (1988) asserts the measure of social capital is the robustness of the relationship between parent and child. Teachman, Paasch, and Carver (1996, 1997) used patterns of parent-child interaction as an indicator of social capital. Their measure includes the amount and frequency of time parents talk to their children about what they do in school, and the frequency of conversations where parents are discussing academic plans for after high school. Dufur and colleagues (2013) used variables such as parent checking student's homework and students discussing issues with parents as indicators of social capital. Dufur and colleagues (2013) found social capital in the family setting, parental limit setting/influence with their student, to be more influential on academic outcomes indicated by higher test scores. Weiss (2012) found the intergenerational transmission of social capital from parent to child. Parents model socialization to their children and thus teach children through example the required skills and values to form and preserve relational networks (i.e. social capital) (Padilla-Walker, 2007). Students needed to accept parental values in order for intergenerational transmission of social capital to occur (Padilla-Walker, 2007).

If social capital is the glue that keeps relationships together (Schutjens & Völker, 2010), then social initiative is the behavior that produces that glue. In the current study, the measure of social initiative takes place within the context of behavior at school (an indicator of social capital in the school setting). Dufur et al. (2013) found social capital in the family setting to be

predictive of student involvement in extracurricular activities. According to Coleman (1988) being part of a team is a form of social capital by increasing the relational network via teammate affiliation. Barber and Erickson (2001) found an adolescent's social initiative informed by their key relationship with parents. Parental support and limit-setting instructs and models how an adolescent reaches out to their many social groups outside the home, especially in the school setting (Barber & Erickson, 2001; Dufur et al., 2013). Parents also affect who the adolescent interacts with, in turn influencing their social capital in the peer sphere, which in turn impacts the friend network (Mogro-Wilson, 2008). Mogro-Wilson (2008) found that Latino parents who exhibit high control, meaning the parents made decisions about who the adolescent spent time with, had children who were less likely to experience negative outcomes (i.e. underage drinking). Mogro-Wilson (2008) states the effect of parent control lowering drinking is unique to the Latino racial/ethnic group. Mogro-Wilson (2008) also found a link between Latino parents trust and lower alcohol usage among their children. Coleman (1988) states the vital ingredient for maintaining social capital is the presence of trust. Monitoring and control of parents concerning peer networks may actually increase trust (social capital) and improve outcomes for students.

Parental limit setting, parent-peer relationships, and academic aspirations

Parental academic limit setting is a consistent predictor of educational outcomes. Four parenting strategies are commonly associated with academic success: 1) Parental helping with homework and reviewing schoolwork; 2) restricting television time; 3) parents setting curfews; and 4) parent influence in student friendship relations (Alfaro, Umaña-Taylor, & Bámaca, 2006; Bui & Rush, 2016; Fan, Williams, & Wolters, 2012; Hill & Tyson, 2009; Jeynes, 2003; Johnson, Giordano, Manning, & Longmore, 2011; Keith & Lichtman, 1994; Mau, 1997; McCarron & Inkelas, 2006; Moroni, Dumont, Trautwein, Niggli, & Baeriswyl, 2015; and Plunkett and

Bámaca-Gómez, 2003). Measures utilized in the current study assess the four strategies above. Researchers found parental checking and helping in homework and studying to be related to increased student academic motivation and educational aspirations among Latino students (Alfaro, Umaña-Taylor, & Bámaca, 2006; Fan, Williams, & Wolters, 2012; McCarron & Inkelas, 2006; and Plunkett and Bámaca-Gómez, 2003).

Parents helping with homework and limiting television time have a positive relation to student's academic expectations (Bui & Rush, 2016). Likewise, parental influence of student peer relationships relates to lower rates of delinquency (Johnson, Giordano, Manning, & Longmore, 2011). Gender differences appear as Latino parents influence their children's academic motivation along same-sex lines of mother-daughter and father-son (Alfaro, Umaña-Taylor, & Bámaca, 2006). While the family is important in Latino culture, there are gendered norms that can be more strident when dealing with children and adolescents (Azmitia & Brown, 2000; Valenzuela, 1999). Parental influence is limited in its relationship to academic outcomes when solely measuring homework (Jeynes, 2003; Hill & Tyson, 2009; Mau, 1997; Moroni, Dumont, Trautwein, Niggli, & Baeriswyl, 2015). Parental limit setting and parental influence in peer relationships will serve as markers for social capital. The current study is measuring important aspects of the parental limit-setting construct. Mounts (2001) found that adolescents who report moderate levels of parental prohibiting behavior report higher levels of academic achievement at the last time measurement.

While social capital theory would suggest that parental limit setting would influence adolescent decisions about future education, it also emphasizes that parental limit setting influences the skills that adolescence obtains throughout the process. Consistent with the theory it would be essential to measure parental limit setting influencing adolescent social initiative as it

relates to academic aspirations. Social capital is a mechanism to transmit human capital from parent to child (Coleman, 1988). While parental limit setting demonstrates direct associations with academic aspirations and motivations, less research focuses specifically on the potential influence in the adolescent's social initiative seeking behaviors.

Parental limit setting and parent-peer relations related to social initiative

Gray and Steinberg (1999) explain the maintaining standards, a parenting type, as containing the elements of parental support (help with homework), monitoring youth activities (parents know where the youth is during evening hours), setting boundaries (setting clear rules), and exertion of control (consequences for broken rules). Gray and Steinberg (1999) found parents who actively maintain standards over time continued to influence their youth's social competence throughout their adolescent years. A limitation to their study relevant to the current study is the sample is on European-American.

Social initiative, a form of social competence, is associated with a supportive parent-child relationship (Hair, Jager, & Garrett, 2002). Supportive parenting also influences social competence skills among peers (Engels, Finkenauer, Meeus, & Dekovic, 2001). Engels et al. (2001) show that parent-adolescent interactions relate to decreasing anxiety with peer relations. This may be indicative for better social initiative behaviors based upon more time adolescents spend interacting with adult parents in their family. The family may be serving as a model for peer relationships in later adolescence. The sample in Engels et al. (2001) is from the Netherlands. Supportive familial relationships not only increase the quality of the parent-child relationship but also predict adolescents' social initiative skills in individual and group settings with peers (Barber & Erickson, 2001). Mounts (2001) also explored adolescent's perceptions of parental management of peer relationships.

Mounts and Kim (2007) found parents of Latino adolescents were more prone to have a goal for their children to associate only with people of their same ethnicity/race. Mounts and Kim (2007) interpret this finding as Latino parents being more restrictive in their parenting while trying to influence their socialization goals. These results provide evidence that exploration of associations between social initiative and aspiration is important. Mounts (2004) found lower levels in mediating in intact Latino families, but higher in single mother Latino families. Results also show higher autonomy granting was associated with higher drug use but not delinquent behavior. Higher parental mediating, influencing friend choice, were related to higher levels of positive friendship quality. Mounts (2011) found when caregivers who report having more goals and beliefs of improving their kids' friendships, adolescents report higher social initiative behaviors, such as cooperation, assertion, empathy, and self-control over time. When there was a conflict between caregivers and adolescents, there was a decrease in social skills with peers. If parental limit setting is foundational in developing social initiative among those outside the family system, then a further exploration of the relationship between social initiative, parental limit-setting and parent-peer relationships among the Latino population would add to the literature.

Social Initiative

Social competence develops in the relationships parents cultivate with their children in the home setting and parental limit setting influences that growth (Domina, 2005; Farver, Xu, Eppe, & Lonnigan, 2006; McNeal, 1999; Simons-Morton & Crump, 2003; Valdez, Shewakramani, Goldberg, and Padilla, 2013). Social competence has a positive relation to academic outcomes (Baroody, Rimm-Kaufman, Larsen, & Curby, 2016, Simons-Morton & Crump, 2003). Social initiative also consists of the degree of initiative shown during group

interaction settings (i.e. participation in school-based activities), and e (Chung & Elias, 1996; Crockenberg, Jackson, & Langrock, 1996). Participation in extracurricular activities in school relates to positive academic outcomes (Beal & Crockett, 2010; Im, Hughes, Cao, & Kwok; 2016; Marsh, 1992; Morris, 2016; Snyder & Spreitzer, 1977). Mother-daughter and father-son leisure indoor play link to the development of social competence during early childhood years (Torres, Verissimo, Monteiro, Ribeiro, & Santos (2014). The literature will expand because the variable of social initiative combines participation in extracurricular activities, and social assertiveness in both groups and one on one interactions; all are markers of social competence.

Monahan and Steinberg (2011) suggest that social competence (what social initiative falls under) in conjunction with academic aspirations is vital to survival during the transition from adolescence to young adulthood. Monahan and Steinberg (2011) find social competence changes during transitional periods (e.g. secondary and post-secondary education) where the socially competent gain more competence and the less socially competent lose competence. Social capital theory would presume that increases in social initiative would indicate an increase in social capital due to increased behavior related to creating new relationships (Coleman, 1991). Social capital relates to lower levels of social aggression in boys and has a marginal association with social competence (Caughy, Franzini, Windle, Dittus, Cuccaro, Elliot, & Schuster, 2012). Lower levels of aggression and higher social competence, should increase relationships between students and peers, and thus increase social capital. Researchers (Caughy et al. 2012) posit unmeasured parent/family factors may be important for mediating the effects of social capital and social competence. The current study will go further by using parental behaviors as a predictor for students' social initiative, being comprised of social/academic self-efficacy and participation in extracurricular activities. Since social capital is about gaining more relationships,

then social initiative and parental limit setting could be vehicles for growing more social capital for Latino students (Coleman, 1991).

Social Initiative and relationship to academic aspirations

Social initiative consists of social assertiveness in interpersonal relationships and is a form of social competence (Bartle-Haring & Sabatelli, 1997; Buhrmester, Furman, Wittenberg, & Reis, 1988; Levenson & Gottman, 1978). Social initiative is a type of adolescent social competence that indexes the degree to which adolescents initiate social contacts outside the home (Barber & Erickson, 2001). Barber and Erickson (2001) conceptualize social initiative as encompassing interpersonal relationships in both group and individual contexts, and participation in school-based group activities.

Gottfredson (1981) conceptualized aspiration as a possible outcome an individual can achieve. Aspiration is one type of many possible selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986). Gottfredson (1981) suggests that adolescents will aspire and then continually compromise between reality and their aspirations. As adolescents face reality and circumstances out of their control, their aspirations change per their immediate expectations (Gottfredson, 1981). Markus and Nurius (1986) explain aspirations as a hoped-for self and expectations as a most likely outcome. Markus and Nurius (1986) discuss how gaining more experience bring aspiration and expectation into closer agreement. Eccles, Barber, Stone, and Hunt (2003) found that as adolescents gain experience, self-knowledge develops, followed by aspirations adjusting and becoming more precise. Therefore, social interaction in both groups and one-on-one settings could be a way to gain self-knowledge that refines aspirations.

Social Initiative as Extra-Curricular Participation

Extra-curricular participation is one method of measuring social initiative in adolescents (Barber & Erickson, 2001). Beal and Crockett (2010) sought to see if academic aspirations relate to educational attainment and if educational aspirations predict extra-curricular activities or vice-versa. The variable in the study is academic expectations. However, the measure is worded like the present study and will be called academic aspirations. Beal and Crockett's (2010) measure asks, "How far do you plan to go in school," with response options ranging from 1 (*some high school*) to 6 (*completing a professional degree*). The current study's variable of academic aspirations simply asks how likely they student thinks that they will graduate from a 4-year college of university on a Likert scale from 1 (*definitely would not*) to 4 (*definitely would*). The sample was over 95% European-American and measurement times were during grade 7, 8, and 9 for this single cohort. The measure on educational aspiration was one item, "How far do you plan to go in school," with responses ranging from 1 (some high school) to 6 (completing a professional degree). The measure on high school activities was a single item asking which kind of activities a student participates in and includes academic, extra-curricular, volunteer, and vocational.

Beal and Crockett (2010) found academic aspirations to be highly correlated to educational attainment (.57). Additionally, academic activities (i.e. school projects) and extra-curricular activities were both significantly correlated ($p < .01$). Beal and Crockett (2010) found extra-curricular activities to mediate the association between academic expectations and educational attainment.

Im and colleagues (2016) research connects the association of extra-curricular participation to academic motivation, a component of academic aspiration. They posit extra-

curricular participation to increase educational attainment among students at elevated risk of failure. Data collection occurred at two points, during 7th and 8th grade. The sample was diverse, containing a distribution of 38% European-American, 37% Latino, 25% African-American, and the remaining less than 1% as other. Extra-curricular participation covered a variety of activities: sports, music, performance arts, academic clubs, student council, and the school newspaper. Latino students participated at lower levels than Euro-American and African-American counterparts. Im and colleagues (2016) found participation in extra-curricular activities to promote academic motivation.

Marsh (1992) explores the influence of extra-curricular activity participation on various facets of student life. Marsh's (1992) sample was nationally representative of the population of a cohort experiencing sophomore and senior years of high school at two different measurement times. Results show extra-curricular participation significantly related to educational aspirations and college attendance. Morris (2016) also found extra-curricular participation positively related to 4-year college attendance. Morris's (2016) study measured a mostly European American sample in three waves: during 10th grade, 12th grade, and two years after expected high school graduation. Educational expectations mediated the relationship between involvement in a letter sport and 4-year college attendance. Extra-curricular activities provide another path to 4-year college attendance that was independent of family SES. Morris (2016) also found that social capital accumulates during extra-curricular participation via social connections and communication among parents of participating students. If extra-curricular participation can assist low SES students to break educational boundaries, further research is critical.

Social Initiative as Peer Support in Relation to Academic Aspirations

Kanchewa, Rhodes, Schwartz, and Olsho (2014) investigated same- versus cross-gender matching for boys in formal school-based mentoring programs. Although the researchers found no gender differences, they found pro-social behavior to be significantly correlated with future orientation (a part of aspirations). Pro-social behavior items were assessing youth relationships, volunteerism, and personal responsibility. Kanchewa et al.'s (2014) future orientation measure include, "how important is it to graduate from high school." This relationship provides a basis for the current study to explore social initiative's association with academic aspirations.

Social Initiative as Interaction with Peers/Teachers Relation to Academic Aspirations

Berzin (2010) sought to delineate associations related to academic aspirations, specifically aspirations to attend college. The study measured support from peers, teachers, parents, and neighbors. The teacher support measure includes 11-items, the peer support measure includes 5 items, a 6-item measure was used for parent support, and the neighborhood support measure includes 12-items. Subscales addressed youth perceptions of people wanting to help them, care for them, and being interested in student well-being. Findings indicate a significant relationship between support from peers and parents and academic aspirations. Ulriksen, Sagatun, Zachrisson, Waaktaar, & Lervåg (2015) found teacher social support was positively associated with adolescent academic achievement and educational plans (a type of aspiration) among Norwegian students. Teacher's social support relates to students' self-reported grades, regardless of immigrant status. These findings suggest the presence of a solid network between student and teacher is positively related to academic achievement. More research is needed to explore the relationships between social initiative and academic aspirations.

Conclusion

In summation, the current educational hardship occurring within the Latino population within the United States of America needs a remedy. Values of *Familismo*, *respeto*, and *educación* within the Latino community are cultural strengths that can influence both social initiatives and academic aspirations (Calzada et al., 2010; Martinez, 2013, Reese, et al., 1995). Research suggests aspects of parenting associated with limit setting and influence with peers are related to increased social competence, social initiative (Gray & Steinberg, 1999; Mounds, 2001; Mounds & Kim, 2007)) and academic achievement (Jeynes, 2003; Moroni et al., 2015). Finally, there were relationships in the literature between social initiative and academic aspirations (Im et al., 2016; Kanchewa et al., 2014; Ulriksen, et al. 2015). By exploring the relationship between parental influence on educational aspirations and peer relationships and social initiative, and subsequently academic aspirations, the researcher's aim to elucidate a path to assist the Latino community to navigate their current education impediments.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1 (Direct effects): Significant direct effects will be present for paths *a*, *b*, and *c*, in all models, parental influence to academic aspirations (path *c*), parental influence to social initiative (path *a*), and social initiative to academic aspirations (path *b*).

Hypothesis 2 (Indirect Effect): Parental influence indirectly affects academic aspirations through social initiative for both males and females.

Hypothesis 3 (Multi-group): Gender differences in the relationship between social initiative and academic aspirations

Methods

Participants

The sample consists of secondary data from the Youth and Family Project, a school-based, self-reported survey of 9-12th-grade students (ages 14-18) from West Texas area school districts (N = 2214). Latino students were 37.9% of the original sample, n = 840, including 92 ninth graders, 249 tenth graders, 279 eleventh graders, and 272 twelfth graders. Females consisted of 57.16% of the sample while 42.79% were male. More than half (55.1%) of the sample identified themselves as being about as well-off as most of their peers. About 19% rated themselves as being a little richer than most of their peers, 11.8% rated themselves as being a little poorer than most of the peers, 2.3% rated themselves as being a lot poorer than most of their peers, and 2.7% rated themselves as being a lot richer than most of their peers. Sixty-seven percent of the sample report living with two parents, 21.9% report living with a single parent, and 11% report living with other (either friends, relative, foster parent or legal guardian). Adolescent participants responding to items dealing with parental behaviors for the parenting measure. All respondents answered regardless if they lived with their parents or a non-parental custodian.

Measures

Educational Aspirations. The measure of educational aspirations, utilized the following single-item question, “How likely is it that you will...graduate from a four-year university.” Respondents were asked to rate how likely they were to graduate from a four-year college or university. Responses ranged from 1 = definitely would not to 4 = definitely would. Higher scores indicate higher educational aspirations, while lower scores indicate lower educational aspirations. Reliability was adequate ($\alpha=.71$) for males and ($\alpha=.71$) for females.

Parental Involvement in Peer Relationships Items. Respondents answered a five-item assessment that describes their parents' involvement in their friendship relations (e.g. "My parents like the young people I select as friends," and, "After I have been out with my friends, I enjoy telling my parents about what my friends and I did"). Response options ranged from 1 = never to 5 = very often, with higher scores indicating more parental involvement in peer relationships, and lower scores indicating less parental involvement in peer relationships. Cronbach's alpha was used to find reliability ($\alpha=.81$) (one item deleted, "Parents worry about the friends with whom I associate). The reliability before the deletion was good ($\alpha=.797$). While the original scale (McCoy, 1992) had 22 items, only 4 items are used for this study. Reliability was good ($\alpha=.71$) for males and ($\alpha=.80$) for females.

Parental Limit Setting. To measure limit setting by parents, respondents answered a six-item assessment, for example; an item asked respondents how often in the last 30 days their parents "check to see whether your homework was done," "go over your homework with you," or "check over papers you brought home that a teacher had graded." Response options ranged from 1 = never to 4 = often with higher scores indicating more parental monitoring, and lower scores indicating less parental monitoring. The Cronbach's alpha for the full scale was adequate ($\alpha=.71$). This scale was created for the original study. Reliability was adequate ($\alpha=.73$) for males and ($\alpha=.69$) for females.

Social initiative. To measure the degree to which adolescents initiate social contacts outside the home was measured with a 13-item scale from the Monitoring the Future Study (Bachman, Johnston, & O'Malley, 1993). Participants responded on a 5-item Likert-type scale from 1 = never/almost never true to 5 = very often/always true. The set of items indexes youth efforts to initiate social interaction with peers and adults outside the home and group settings.

Respondents were asked, “How true are the following statements?” such as, “I talk to teachers and staff about things other than class,” and, “I ask questions in class when I don’t understand the material.” Higher scores indicate higher social initiative and lower scores indicate lower social initiative. The Cronbach’s alpha is ($\alpha = .86$) for the full scale. Reliability was excellent ($\alpha = .86$) for males and ($\alpha = .86$) for females.

Plan of Analysis

This study hypothesizes parental limit setting and parent/peer relationships will have a direct effect on academic aspirations and an indirect effect on aspirations via social initiative. Likewise, social initiative will have a direct effect on academic aspirations and act as an intervening variable for parental limit setting and parent/peer relationships and academic aspirations. Parental limit setting and parent/peer relationship are both exogenous variables. Social initiative is both exogenous and endogenous. The academic aspirations variable is endogenous.

First, preliminary analyses were conducted; univariates and frequencies of variables and demographics were obtained. The model fit were tested to determine the relationship between the independent and the dependent variable. Parental limit setting and parental influence of peer relationships were combined into a latent variable, named parental influence. Second, a model was fit where path *c* was parental influence to academic aspirations, path *a* was parental influence to social initiative, and path *b* was social initiative to academic aspirations. The Monte Carlo method for testing indirect effects was used. The analyses were conducted in AMOS 24, to fit the data for the various models. The variables of age and family structure were used as controls. The model was tested, and the control variables were not significantly related. The variables were eliminated in favor of a more parsimonious model.

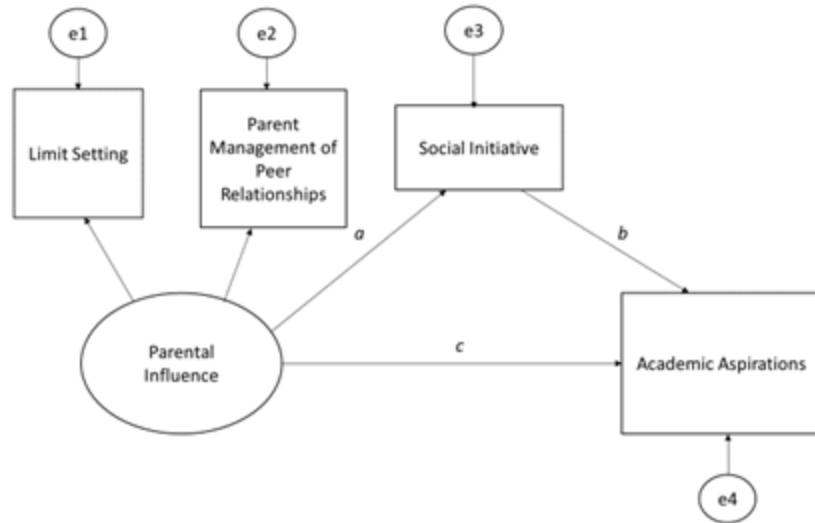


Figure 1. Proposed Path Involving Parental Limit Setting, Parent-Peer Relationship, Social Initiative and Academic Aspirations.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1 (Direct effects): Significant direct effects will be present paths a, b, and c, in all models, parental influence to academic aspirations (path c), parental influence to social initiative (path a), and social initiative to academic aspirations (path b).

Hypothesis 2 (Indirect Effect): Parental influence indirectly affects academic aspirations through social initiative for both males and females.

Hypothesis 3 (Multigroup): Gender differences in the relationship between social initiative and academic aspirations

Results

Preliminary Analysis

The purpose of this study was to test the social capital theory that parental influence indirectly affects academic aspirations through social initiative. Because male and female Hispanic adolescents respond differently academically, it is hypothesized that gender would act

as a moderating variable. Descriptive statistics, frequencies, and correlations were analyzed and are found in Table 1, Table 2, and Table 3. Of greatest importance to my hypothesis was that parental influence was positively correlated with social initiative, and social initiative was positively correlated with academic aspirations. The Monte Carlo method of testing indirect effects was used, which does not require the independent variable, parental influence, to be significantly correlated with the dependent variable, academic aspirations (Preacher & Selig, 2012). Means and standard deviations for each of the predictor variables: Parental Limit Setting, Parental Influence on Peer Relationships, and Social Initiative were examined, along with frequencies for the outcome variable Academic Aspirations.

Table 1
Correlations Split Between Genders, Lower is Male, Upper is Female

Measure	1	2	3	4
1. Academic Aspirations		0.129**	0.147**	0.277***
2. Parental Limit Setting	0.224**		0.257***	0.275***
3. Parental Management of Peer Relationships	0.084	0.240***		0.310***
4. Social Initiative	0.379***	0.299***	0.392***	

*Note * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics, and Paired- Sample t-tests For Study Measures

	N	Men <i>M (SD)</i>	Women <i>M (SD)</i>	<i>t</i>
Parental Limit Setting	357	12.16(4.16)	12.89(3.93)	-79.04***
Parental Management in Peer Relationships	339	8.99(4.25)	9.96(4.20)	-53.57***
Social Initiative	306	35.44(10.04)	37.57(10.33)	-93.39***
Academic Aspirations	355	3.13(.95)	3.25(.864)	-46.76***

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$,
*** $p < .001$.

Table 3

Frequencies of Academic Aspirations for Graduating 4-year College

	Male Frequency	Male %	Female Frequency	Female %
Definitely Would Not	29	8.10%	22	4.60%
Probably Would Not	54	15.00%	67	14.00%
Probably Would	114	31.80%	158	32.90%
Definitely Would	158	44.00%	230	47.90%
Missing	4	1.10%	3	0.60%
Total	356		480	

Age, income, and family structure were the control variables. Age was a single item measure. Income was measured as “Compared to other kids your age, how well-off do you think your family is?” The item was recoded as 1 ‘not poor’ and 2 ‘poor.’ Family structure was a one item measure with 9 answer choices asking, “Which parents or guardians do you live with now?” The item as recoded to three value labels, 1 “two parent,” 2 “single parent,” and 3 “other.” These items were not correlated with the outcome variable and were non-significant in the model. The model was fit without the control variables in favor of a more parsimonious model. Recommended practices for evaluating indirect and moderated indirect effects (Preacher, Rucker, & Hayes, 2007) were followed. All parameters for each model were estimated simultaneously in AMOS 24. Model fit was evaluated using comparative fit index (CFI), chi-square statistic (χ^2), and the root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA), (Hooper, Coughlan, & Mullen, 2008), where a CFI value higher than .95 (Hu & Bentler, 1999) and RMSEA with values of .07 or less indicating strong fit (Steiger, 2007). The indirect effect was tested using a Monte Carlo method for assessing indirect effects using a 95% confidence interval (Selig & Preacher, 2008; Preacher & Selig, 2012).

Model 1 is an analysis of the whole sample with males and females combined. Model 2 has two distinct groups, males and females. Multiple goodness-of-fit indicators were utilized to determine model fit. Model 1 demonstrated excellent levels of fit ($\chi^2 [1, N=840] = 4.15, p < .05$; CFI = .99; RMSEA = .06). Model 2 also demonstrated excellent levels of fit ($\chi^2 [4, N=840] = 13.12, p < .01$; CFI = .97; RMSEA = .05).

A multigroup analysis (Floh & Treiblmaier, 2006) was used to test for gender differences due to the categorical nature of the gender. The multi-group analysis tool from AMOS 24 was used to determine moderation.

Hypothesis 1 (Direct effects): Significant direct effects will be present paths a, b, and c, in all models, parental influence to academic aspirations (path c), parental influence to social initiative (path a), and social initiative to academic aspirations (path b).

Model 1 had excellent model fit [$\chi^2 (4) = 4.15, p = .04$; CFI = .99; RMSEA = .06 $p = .04$]. Parental influence was not significantly associated with higher academic aspirations ($b=.13, p = .09$). Parental influence was associated with social initiative ($b=.63, p < .001$). Social initiative was associated with higher academic aspirations ($b=.25, p < .001$). Model 1 accounted for 40% of the variance in social initiative. It accounted for 12% of the academic aspirations.

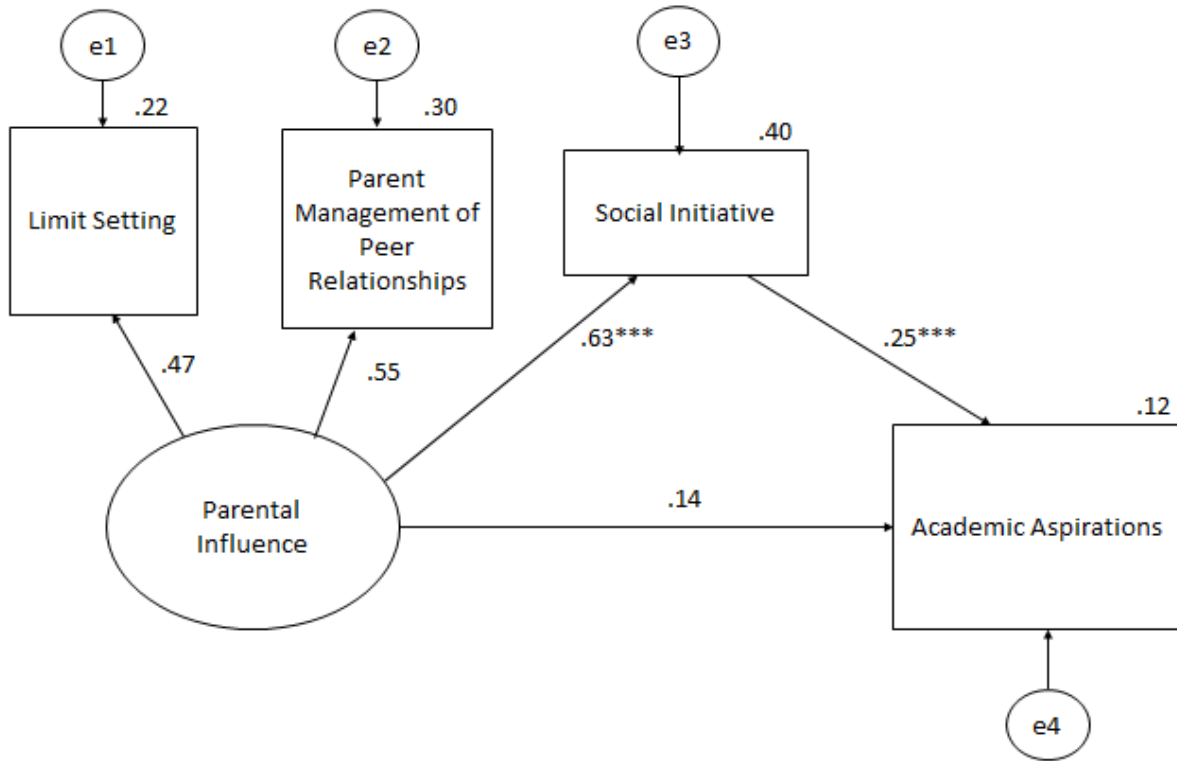


Figure 2: Standardized Coefficients and R² for Model 1

Model 2 had excellent model fit [$\chi^2(2) = 10.12, p = .006$; CFI = .97; RMSEA = .06 $p = .04$]. Parental influence was not significantly associated with higher academic aspirations for males ($b = -.003, p = .96$), or for females ($b = .17, p = .10$). Parental influence was associated with social initiative for males ($b = .68, p < .001$), and for females ($b = .57, p < .001$). When parental influence changes positively by one standard deviation, social initiative changes positively by .68 standard deviations for males and .57 standard deviations for females. Social initiative was associated with higher academic aspirations for males ($b = .39, p < .001$), than for females ($b = .19, p < .001$). Model 2 accounted for 47% of the variance in social initiative in males, and 33% in females. Parental influence pathway through social initiative accounted for 15% of the academic aspiration in males, and 10% in females.

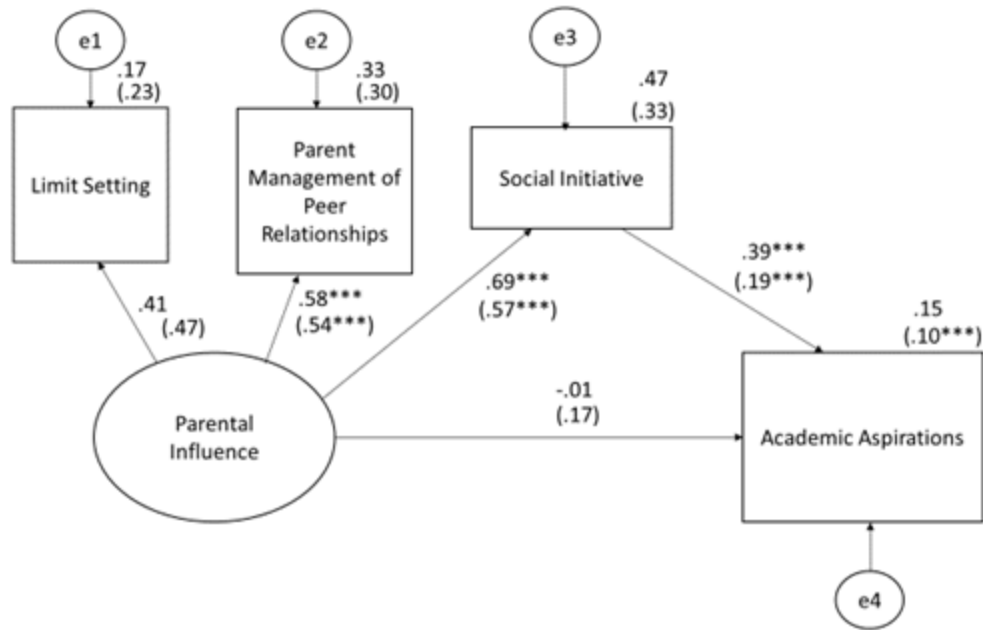


Figure 3: Standardized Coefficients and R² for Males and (Females), Model 2

Hypothesis 2 (Indirect Effect): Parental influence indirectly effects academic aspirations through social initiative for both males and females.

Indirect effects were examined, parental influence on academic aspirations through the indirect effect of social initiative. These are the coefficients and asymptomatic sampling variance for this indirect effect ($a = 3.44$, $\text{Variance}(a) = .26$; $b = .02$, $\text{Variance}(b) = .00003$; $\text{Covariance}(a,b) = -.0005$). Statistics were entered into a Monte Carlo calculator (Selig & Preacher, 2008) to compute a 95% CI based on 20,000 repetitions from the distributions for the a and b parameters. Figure 5 shows a simulated sampling distribution for the indirect effect ($a \times b$), indicating a normal distribution. The Monte Carlo method of testing indirect effects indicated evidence for an indirect effect (95% CI [0.03, 0.11]). Parental influence indirectly effects academic aspirations through social initiative.

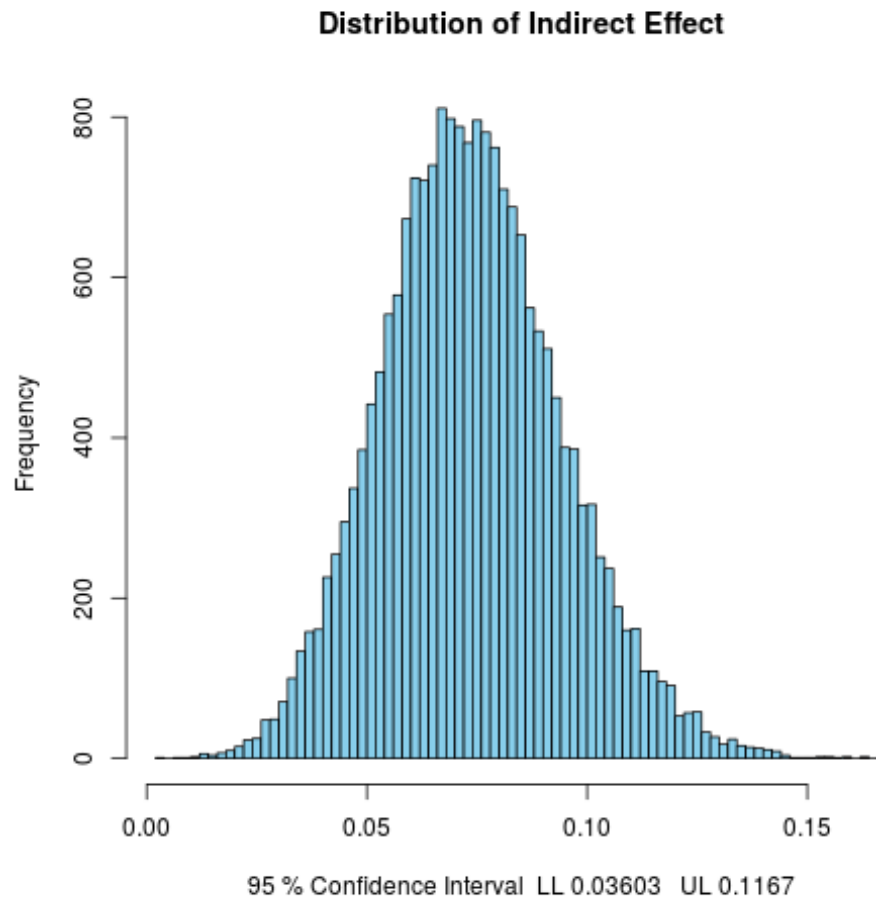


Figure 4: Histogram with confidence intervals for indirect effect of Model 1

To further test the indirect effects the model was fit separately for males and females. The indirect effects were present via gender through a multi-group model. After fitting the model, the coefficients and the estimated variance of the estimate of parameters for males are ($a_1 = 4.07$, $\text{Variance}(a_1) = .91$; $b_1 = .04$, $\text{Variance}(b_1) = .0001$; $\text{Covariance}(a_1, b_1) = .00018$), and females are ($a_2 = 3.18.07$, $\text{Variance}(a_2) = .41$; $b_1 = .02$, $\text{Variance}(b_1) = .00004$; $\text{Covariance}(a_1, b_1) = -.00085$). A Monte Carlo post-hoc provided confidence intervals for indirect effects (Selig & Preacher, 2008). Figure 6 and 7 shows histograms for both females and males, respectively, with a normal distribution for females and a slight right skew for males, but within normal range. The Monte Carlo method of testing indirect effects indicated an indirect effect for both males (95 % *CI*

[0.05, 0.28]), and females (95 % *CI* [0.01, 0.09]). Parental influence indirectly effects academic aspirations through social initiative for both males and females.

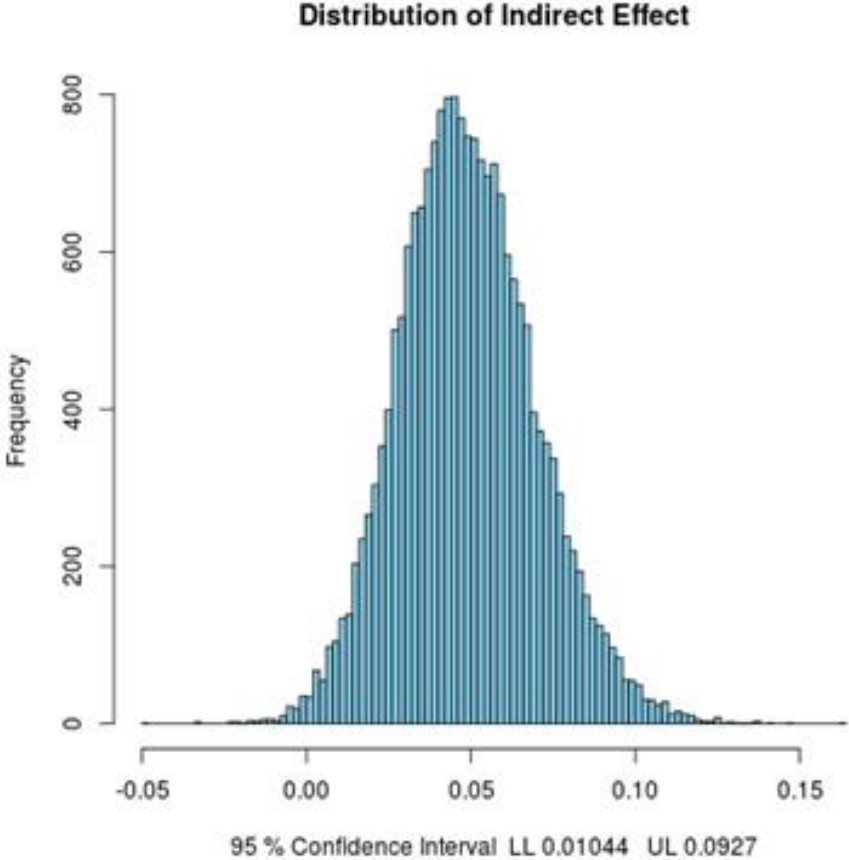


Figure 5: Histogram of Confidence Interval for females for Model 2

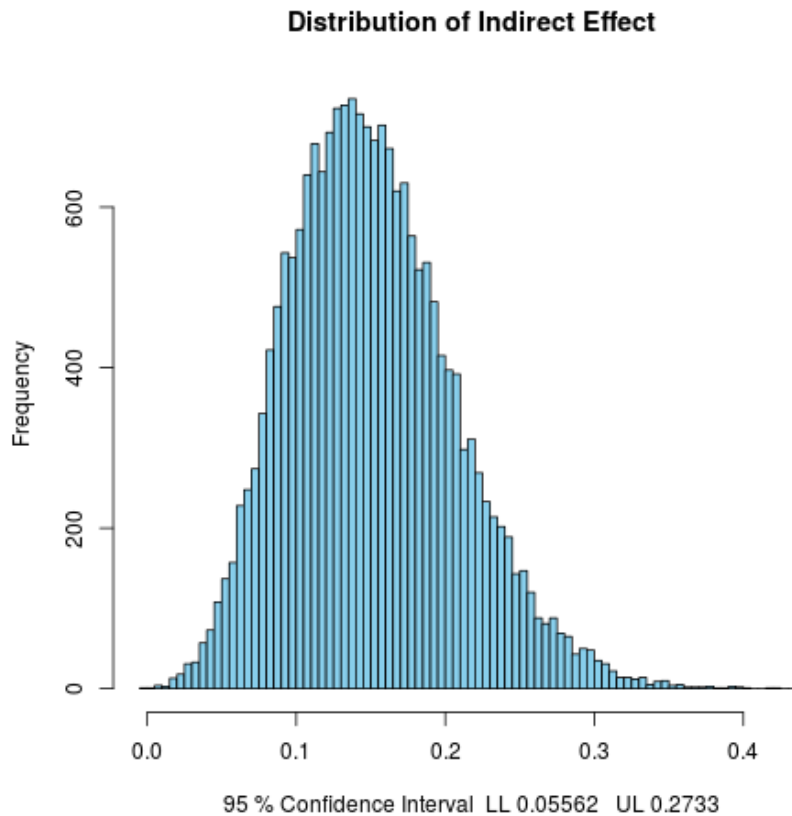


Figure 6: Histogram of confidence intervals for males for Model 2

Hypothesis 3 (Multigroup): Gender differences in the relationship between social initiative and academic aspirations

A chi-square difference test was fitted following recommended practice (Floh & Treibmaier, 2006), to test whether the model and paths are moderated by adolescent gender. Path *c* was trimmed of the insignificant association of parental influence and academic aspiration due to the full indirect effect of social initiative. Model 3 exhibited excellent fit, [$\chi^2(4) = 13.18, p = .01$; CFI = .97; RMSEA = .05 $p = .01$]. Multi-group analysis was fit with all paths constrained to evaluate if males and females exhibit different model fit. The chi-square difference test showed the model difference between males and females, at the model level, ($\Delta\chi^2 = 20.99, \Delta DF$

=6, $p < .001$). Since the groups are significantly different at the model level, it was expedient to examine path differences.

The model was fit with one path constrained, parental influence to academic aspirations (path *c*), while the others were freely estimated. Parental influence on academic aspirations was equal across groups. ($\Delta\chi^2 = .68$, $\Delta DF = 1$, $p = .41$). There are no gender differences on path *c*, from parental influence to academic aspiration. The model was fit with parental influence to social initiative constrained (path *a*), while the others were freely estimated. Parental influence to social initiative was equal across groups ($\Delta\chi^2 = .61$, $\Delta DF = 1$, $p = .43$). There are no gender differences on path *a*, from parental influence to social initiative. The model was fit with social initiative to academic aspirations constrained (path *b*), while the other is freely estimated. Path *b*, social initiative to academic aspiration, is different between groups ($\Delta\chi^2 = 4.37$, $\Delta DF = 1$, $p = .03$), with the effect being stronger for females ($B = .34$) than for males ($B = .31$).

Discussion

Latino youth have the lowest college attendance rate among all ethnic groups (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016), and the growth rate for Latino college attendance has been flat for almost three decades while other ethnic minorities are improving (US Department of Commerce, 1984; US Department of Education [USDOE], 2014). Following the framework of social and human capital, it was hypothesized that parents could help their children improve their social capital in the academic setting. This parental influence should improve not only the student involvement in school but also the aspirations of attending college, a positive link to human capital.

A few studies have measured either parental influence on academic aspiration (Ramirez, Machida, Kline, & Huang, 2014), or social initiative to academic aspiration (Im et al., 2016; Kanchewa et al., 2014; Ulriksen, et al. 2015), but none have ever measured an interaction

between the three variables with a Latino sample. Because of strong cultural influences related to family and respect for parents, social capital theory would postulate that parents will have a significant effect on social initiative and that parental influence of academic aspirations is not directly related, but is indirectly related to academic aspirations through the social initiative indirect path. Thus, the parental tactics of academic monitoring and peer management strengthen their son's and daughter's social capital, which in turn leads to the desired change in human capital through academic aspirations, with the effect being stronger for daughters than for sons.

Social Initiative

Most researchers found a direct link between either parental influence and academic aspiration (Alfaro, Umaña-Taylor, & Bámaca, 2006; Fan, Williams, & Wolters, 2012; McCarron & Inkelas, 2006; and Plunkett and Bámaca-Gómez, 2003), or social initiative and academic aspiration (Berzin, 2010; Im et al., 2016; Kanchewa et al., 2014; Marsh, 1992; Morris, 2016; Ulriksen et al., 2015). The current study found relationships between parental influence and academic aspiration through social initiative. This finding is similar to Beal and Crockett (2010), who found extra-curricular activity participations, an indicator for social initiative, to partially mediate the relationship between educational expectations and educational attainment. The effect for Beal and Crockett (2010) was smaller ($B = .20$) than the current results ($B = .25$). Possible reasons for the greater effect in the current study, especially for males ($B = .39$), may be due to the sample being purely Latino, whereas the sample in Beal and Crockett (2010), was 96% middle to low-income white students. Social initiative, as measured here, is a broader measure than that used in Beal and Crockett (2010), which only focused on extra-curricular activities. Social initiative may be a way of generating social capital leading to the development of human capital (Coleman, 1988).

To understand these findings a look at Becker (1964) and Coleman's (1988) theories of human and social capital, respectively, underlines the importance of learning how to build social capital in the family setting and building social capital actively in the school setting. For both genders, parental influence was significantly associated with social initiative, and social initiative was positively associated with academic aspirations. Parental influence explained 47% of the variance in males in relation to social initiative and 33% for females. The current finding while similar to previous research, Barber and Erickson (2001), accounted for more explained variance (47% and 39% versus 19%). Both Barber and Erickson (2001), and the current study examined Latino samples and may have benefitted from familial attitudes in Latino families that are a type of social capital related to academic success (Valenzuela & Dornbusch, 1994). Barber and Erickson (2001) did not measure any indicators relating to academic aspirations, motivations, or even GPA. However, the sample in the current study was nearly twice as large (N = 840) as Barber and Erickson's (2010) sample (N = 450). A larger sample may have allowed for a clearer picture of the population. The current study sampled from a larger urban center than the sample from Barber and Erickson (2010). A reason for the discrepancy in results may be the larger city sampled in the current study. A larger city has more potential relationships for gaining social capital. Parents in those cities may have had larger relational networks, and thus could train their children better in acquiring social capital in their school setting.

Academic Aspirations

Additionally, findings indicate that the pathway between parental involvement and social initiative is positively related to academic aspirations. Past research by Berzin (2010), also showed that school engagement, and peer and parent support, types of social connections that are antecedents to social initiative (Barber and Erickson, 2001), were related to educational

aspirations. As a person's social fabric or social glue is thicker or stronger (i.e. social capital) then there will be a stronger association with building human capital (i.e. educational aspirations) (Coleman, 1988). These findings differ from Shahidul et al. (2015), in that they found social capital in the family to be more influential in academic aspirations than social capital at school. Different results may relate to the different samples. Shahidul et al. (2015) worked with Bangladeshi secondary school students. The school environment and the politics involved might be an influencing factor. Having a sample from a poorer country with less available resources might have also influenced the outcomes. The families' social capital might carry more significance in upward mobility than in gaining support within the school system. Further knowledge concerning support characteristics in other countries and the benefit to school performance versus academic aspirations is needed.

Within the relationship between social initiative and academic aspirations, the effect is greater for females than for males, although both are statistically significant. This is contrasted with Ulriksen et al. (2015) who did not find gender differences while examining perceived social support, part of social connection, an antecedent of social initiative (Barber & Erickson, 2001), and its relationship to educational plans. However, Ulriksen et al.'s (2015) population of Norwegian students and school system might have confounded the outcome. Ulriksen et al.'s (2015) population was 80% white Norwegian and 20% immigrants. Of those immigrants, 87% were from non-Western countries. Being Latino in West Texas is significantly different from being a Norwegian student who resides in a more homogeneous society. The fact that 84% of the Norwegian sample were students within the majority racial group rather than a minority confounds the results of their study. Social and human capital accumulation in a minority group is more salient than gaining social capital in a virtually homogeneous society.

Although McCarron and Inkelas (2006) did not find gender differences related to academic aspirations, the researchers did find differences between first-generation and non-first-generation students, where greater parental involvement was the main predictor of greater academic aspiration for non-first generation students; however, the main predictor for academic aspirations among first-generation students was perception of good grades (6.5% of variance) followed by parental involvement (5.9% of variance). This gender difference in Latino immigrant families may be partially explained by the fact that the female children are much more likely to fulfill a role of spokesperson for the family when dealing with community and government agencies, even as young children. Their efforts allow the family to integrate into American society (Valenzuela, 1999). Latina adolescents engage in more roles and interact with more people, increasing the number of social relationships in the school setting and thus increasing their aspirations. The current sample did not control for immigration status and might be different in that most students are planning on attending college. This would suggest a different life expectation and social construction.

This leads into a brief introduction about the necessity of looking at Latino culture as a factor.

Latino Culture

Knowing how impactful parents are in relation to pro-social behaviors of their children that impact social capital will be beneficial for schools and community groups. This model matches values in Latino culture, namely: *familismo*, *respeto*, and *educación*. *Familismo* is comprised of putting the wants and needs of the family before the individual; strong attachment, identification, and relationship with the nuclear and extended family; and seeing the family as a source of emotional support (Martinez, 2013; Smith-Morris, Morales-Campos, Alvarez, &

Turner, 2012; Staples and Mirandé, 1980). *Respeto* emphasizes decency and politeness, especially to older people, with the aim to maintain harmonious relationships with self, family and others (Calzada, Fernandez, & Cortes, 2010; Cauce & Domenech Rodriguez, 2002; Halgunseth, Ispa, & Rudy, 2006). *Educación* is moral development in a home setting concurrent with learning done at school (Valdés, 1996; Valenzuela, 1999). The value *educación* was associated by Latino parents as being related to study as well as upbringing (Reese, Balzano, Gallimore, & Goldenberg, 1995). The cultural perspective matches well with Social and Human Capital Theories. Social capital theory posits that relationships between people provide certain boundaries, expectations, and affords greater opportunities depending on the number of people in a person's relational network (Coleman, 1988). The Latino value of *respeto* and *educación* focus on building aspects of a child being more moral, honest, and harmonious within the relational context (Calzada et al., 2010; Reese et al., 1995), focusing on more collectivistic attributes (Triandis, 2001), familiar to social capital theory. *Familismo* is highly correlated to social capital due to Latino students having denser social networks with proximate kin than European-American students (Valenzuela & Dornbusch, 1994). Parents of Latino adolescents focus on the value of education in the family setting (Martinez, 2013). Gaining more education is a way to raise human capital (Becker, 1964).

Limitations and Future Research

Although several novel contributions are offered in this study, it is acknowledged that there are limitations that need to be considered. Among those are methodological and design limitations. Because the data come from a single point in time, true mediation could not be ascertained. By evaluating the academic aspirations and subsequent academic choices research will be able to solidify how parents influence the social and human capital of their children.

Relatedly, because the current study only measures the adolescent perspective, the key demographic data related to income a factor that impacts human capital projections of securing and education and improved employment is not known.

Assertions cannot be made concerning causality or that parental involvement and social initiative ultimately impacts attending and graduating from college for lower income groups whose parents also have lower education levels.

Another limitation is not differentiating between first-generation and non-first-generation students or parents. McCarron and Inkelas (2006) found a difference between those two groups in relation to academic aspirations and academic attainment. Kao (2004) also contends that parent immigrant status is more salient than student immigrant status in determining the pattern of parent-child relationship.

A final limitation is this sample expected to attend college. It suggests more privilege and a focus on college because of where the student lived. Future research should look at family isolation, poverty, and immigration status as factors influencing the model.

Future research including assessing across multiple timeframes, and evaluating college attendance, social initiative within college, graduation, and employment would provide a clearer picture of the parents' level of influence in the process.

Future researchers should also track the parental influence of mothers and fathers separately rather than as a combined group to evaluate the impact based upon parent sex. Given the cultural dynamics of the Latino community sons and daughters are probably influenced differently based on the gender of the child and the parent (Alfaro et al., 2006).

Conclusion

This study examined the relationship between parental influence and academic aspirations among Latino adolescents and how social initiative influences that association. It was found that social initiative serves as an intervening variable between the two variables and that males and females are influenced at difference levels overall. Parents of Latino adolescents, by virtue of cultural norms, hold a degree of power in the family hierarchy to teach their adolescents how to gain more social capital that could ultimately determine aspirations in gaining more human capital in the form of education. The generative relationship between social and human capital is already well defined in the literature (Teachman et al., 1997), but tackling the issues of generational poverty among Latinos via the lens of social and human capital has scantily been examined. This study breaks ground for more in-depth examination in the future.

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Appendix A

Parent Involvement in Peer Relationships

Answer choices range from Not at all true (1) to Very true (5).

1. My parents like the young people I select as friends
2. After I have been out with my friends, I enjoy telling my parents about what my friends and I did.
3. My parents enjoy talking with the friends I bring home.
4. My parents worry about the friends with whom I associate with.
5. I feel comfortable bringing friends home.

Parental Limit Setting

Respondent answer “during the past 30 days, how often did one of your parents...” Answering from 1 (Never) to 4 (Often) on a 4 point Likert scale. Restrict the amount of time you could watch television?

1. Check to see whether your homework was done?
2. Go over your homework with you?
3. Check over papers you brought home that a teacher had graded?
4. Set a time you had to be home on school nights?
5. Set a time you had to be home on the weekend?

Social Initiative

Respondents responded on a 5-item Likert-type scale from 1 = never/almost never true to 5 = very often/always true. The set of items indexes youth efforts to initiate social interaction with

peers and adults outside the home and in group settings. Respondents were asked, “How true are the following statements?”

1. I enjoy doing things and talking with peers.
2. I get into conversations with adults (e.g., teachers, staff) at the school.
3. I share feelings and ideas with peers.
4. I actively participate in topic clubs (e.g., political, history, Honor Society).
5. I talk to teachers and staff about things other than class.
6. I actively participate in the school newspaper or yearbook.
7. I help other students who might need assistance (e.g., lost in the building, sick or hurt).
8. I ask questions in class when I don't understand the material.
9. I actively participate in drama (e.g., school plays) or music (e.g., band).
10. I express liking and caring for my friends.
11. I actively participate in student government.
12. I join in class discussions.
13. I am comfortable joking with teachers and staff.