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thesis entitled

Participation and Satisfaction of
Latino Parents in Parent Education Programs

presented by

Stephanie Ann Eddy

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for

Master of Arts degree in Psychology

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Major professor

Date _5-7-02_ 5-7-02

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PARTICIPATION AND SATISFACTION OF LATINO PARENTS IN PARENT
EDUCATION PROGRAMS

By

Stephanie Ann Eddy

A THESIS

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of Psychology

2002

ABSTRACT

PARTICIPATION AND SATISFACTION OF LATINO PARENTS IN PARENT EDUCATION PROGRAMS

By

Stephanie Ann Eddy

Parents may parent differently due to their cultural values, socioeconomic status, and minority status. Culturally competent programs for Latino parents are needed, as generic programming can be inappropriate and ineffective. This study tested the effect of program characteristics mentioned in the literature on parent satisfaction with programs and on parent retention level in programs. *Personalismo* of staff predicted greater parent satisfaction, and one measure of culture-specific program content predicted less satisfaction. Bilingual staff, in-home programming, and *personalismo* of others in programs predicted greater program retention; while cultural competence and *personalismo* of staff predicted less retention. Acculturation moderated the effect of bilingual staff on satisfaction, such that bilingual staff was more related to satisfaction with more highly acculturated parents. Overall, findings suggest that satisfaction and retention of Latino parents are not correlated in a straightforward way and are predicted by different program characteristics.

This work is dedicated to my God and friend Jesus Christ and to His Spirit, who kept me company during the four long years in which it was created; to my parents Rick and Susan Jacobson, who helped me start, encouraged me to continue, and on whose love I could always depend; and to my "other parents," Randy and Elaine Eddy, who provided me with a safe place away from home.

Finally, I dedicate this work to my husband Jason, whose partnership is the ultimate fruit of this season in my life and whose friendship has enabled me to cross this finish line. In you I am deeply blessed!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Ethnographic research and documentation has provided solid evidence that

childrearing behaviors differ from one culture, or one nation, to another (DeMause,

1998). It is no surprise to most people that parents in Kenya raise their children

differently than parents in the United States. Of more pressing national interest, however,

is the way in which childrearing varies between different groups occupying the same

nation. Because various groups occupy the same space and utilize the same child welfare

system, clashing childrearing values can complicate the creation of intervention programs

aimed at promoting "good" parenting.

The most common parenting models were originally designed to describe the

white majority population, but programs based on these models can be ineffective and

irrelevant to other populations. This is because minority groups may parent differently

due to their cultural values, socioeconomic status (SES), and minority status (Garcia Coll,

1990; Harrison, Wilson, Chan, Pine & Buriel, 1990).

Culture and parenting values

Ogbu (1981) is one much-cited source on the contribution of culture to

childrearing. According to Ogbu, the childrearing habits of a group result in large part

from the group's cultural values. One specific category of cultural values is called

competencies, and these are defined as the set of characteristics that make an individual

able to survive and thrive in a given culture (Ogbu, 1981). These are determined by the

culture's theory or definition of success. For example, in an agricultural culture, survival

itself may be the ultimate goal, the definition of success. If this is the case, then skill in crop-cultivating is the crucial competency to have, because it ensures survival. Parents in such a culture will prioritize teaching their children to cultivate crops. In contrast, in the United States, some groups or families place a high value on monetary success acquired by succeeding in corporate business. In this type of group, which could also be called a "culture," individuals with ambition and independence achieve success, so these are qualities that parents work to instill in their children. The qualities that predict occupational success contribute to the total set of competencies, or values, held by parents.

Multiple cultures exist within the United States, and each culture has its own values and preferred competencies. While some groups value success in corporate business or academia, and thus the competencies of ambition and independence, occupational success for other groups is defined differently. If a group has more access to employment in a factory than a business firm, they may value competencies of conformity and dependability, qualities more likely to predict success in a factory or at a worksite that requires compliance with authority (Kohn, 1969). Furthermore, occupational values define only one set of competencies. A culture may value some things other than, or even more highly than, occupational success, such as respect for family.

All these competencies affect parenting because, as parents' values vary, so do their childrearing techniques. For example, if parents in a working-class population value the conformity that predicts occupational success in that sub-culture, their parenting is likely to be more obedience-oriented and less democratic than that of parents who value

self-direction in their children (Kohn, 1969; Ogbu, 1981).

Harrison et al. (1990) introduced another model whereby culture influences parenting. Harrison et al. described a model where "adaptive strategies," or strategies of living that are determined to be adaptive for a population, lead to "socialization goals" (p. 347). These goals are similar to Ogbu's "competencies". Harrison et al. (1990) agree with Ogbu (1981) that culture provides the context within which parenting goals are formed, and these goals in turn predict parenting behavior. Figure 1 is a simplified version of Ogbu's cultural-ecological model of childrearing, incorporating some of the language from Harrison et al.

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┌──────────────┐      ┌──────────────┐      ┌──────────────┐
│   Cultural   │      │   Cultural   │      │   Cultural   │
│  definition  │ ───▶ │ competencies │ ───▶ │    child-    │ ───▶
│      of      │      │(socialization│      │   rearing    │
│   success    │      │    goals)    │      │    values    │
└──────────────┘      └──────────────┘      └──────────────┘
              ┌──────────────┐      ┌──────────────┐
              │   Cultural   │      │   Dominant   │
              │    child-    │ ───▶ │cultural child│
              │   rearing    │      │   types and  │
              │  techniques  │      │ competencies │
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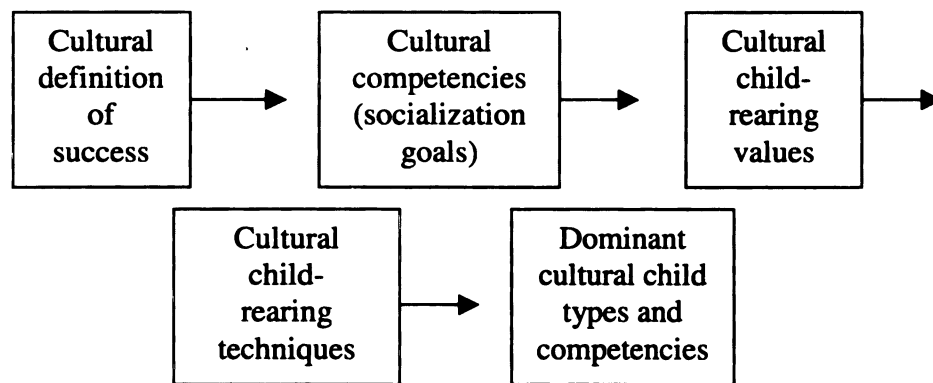
Figure 1. A simplified cultural–ecological model of childrearing (adapted from Ogbu, 1981).

Based on this understanding that parenting goals predict parenting behavior, and that parenting behaviors impact child development (see Figure 1), Ogbu (1981) argues that most children grow up to be what the child's culture defines as a competent man or woman. Therefore, it could be said that the vast majority of youth in any nation, including the United States, are competent and successful. If this does not appear self-

evident it may be because, even within the United States, there are varied definitions of success and competence.

Definitions of success may vary according to cultural values or other population characteristics, such as socioeconomic status (SES). Speaking of low-income urban families, Ogbu (1981) argues that self-reliance, resourcefulness, and mistrust of authority (p. 424) are appropriate, adaptive child competencies because they make a child more likely to survive and thrive in the culture of the street. To instill these competencies in their children, urban poor parents may use parenting techniques that include physical punishment and what Ogbu calls "inconsistent demands for obedience." These techniques contrast the nurturing, warm parenting skills highlighted in the parenting literature. However, as Ogbu argues, they may be appropriate for developing this mix of adaptive competencies in children.

Socioeconomic status (SES), minority status, and parenting values

As just mentioned, population characteristics other than culture, such as SES and minority status, also contribute to the parenting values its members hold (Harrison et al., 1990; Inkeles, 1968; Ogbu, 1981). First of all, Garcia Coll (1990) argues that socioeconomic factors contribute largely to child development, and specifically minority child development, as minority children are more likely to live in poverty. For example, parents of low SES often raise their children in neighborhoods where there are a greater number of dangers, and this makes strictness a more adaptive parenting trait, in terms of their children's safety.

Another example of how SES affects competencies and parenting values is evident in the differing reward systems for working-class and middle-class citizens. Jobs

held by working-class citizens promote workers who exhibit conformity and respect for authority. White-collar workers, in contrast, are more likely to be promoted or rewarded for exhibiting self-direction and innovation (Kohn, 1969; Ogbu, 1981). Therefore, it makes more sense for working-class parents to raise their children to value conformity and respect for authority, and for white-collar parents to promote independence and innovation in their children.

Apart from SES, the minority status of a population also has an effect on parenting. Minority status in the United States may involve educational disadvantage, and generally involves some degree of social stigma and discrimination (Harrison et al., 1990). For this reason, ethnic minority parents find themselves raising their children to deal with a different set of issues and obstacles than white parents. Self-esteem and an appreciation for culture of origin are important qualities for parents to instill in their children. This has been addressed clearly in the literature on African-American parenting education (Alvy, 1994). Thus, minority status, along with SES and cultural beliefs, contribute to the parenting values of minority parents.

Context, culture, and parenting style

Unfortunately, most early parenting research was conducted with white parents. It therefore follows that the typology of parenting styles developed from this research best describes and explains white parenting.

Parenting style in the psychological literature has generally been described in terms of two continuums: parental control and parental warmth (accepting versus rejecting). Four parenting styles are commonly distinguished from these two parent characteristics: authoritative, authoritarian, indulgent, and neglecting parenting styles

(Lamborn, Mounts, Steinberg, & Dornbusch, 1991; Maccoby & Martin, 1983). An authoritative parenting style, characterized by warmth, supervision and yet promotion of autonomy, has been shown to be predictive of the best outcomes on a variety psychological, psychosocial, behavioral, and academic scales (Lamborn et al., 1991; Radziszewska, Richardson, Dent, & Flay, 1996). In contrast, other parenting styles have been shown to impede certain aspects of social and psychosocial development (Dornbusch, Ritter, Leiderman, Roberts, & Fraleigh, 1987; Lamborn et al., 1991; Maccoby & Martin, 1983).

One of these other parenting styles, authoritarian parenting, is characterized by a high level of control, an emphasis on obedience and order, and a discouragement of "verbal give and take" between parent and child (Maccoby & Martin, 1983, p. 40). Authoritarian parenting is generally considered detrimental to child development, and this is of particular interest because when tested on these parenting measures, minority populations have often scored higher on the authoritarian scale than white parents (Baumrind, 1972; Chao, 1994; Dornbusch et al., 1987; Steinberg, Dornbusch, & Brown, 1992). Furthermore, in the realm of academic development and achievement, where much parenting style research has been conducted, some minority children and adolescents have less success. This could lead researchers to conclude that indeed an authoritarian parenting style is detrimental to child development, as these children of more authoritarian parents are having less academic success.

However, the parenting typology described above was not created to predict minority child development, or describe minority parenting. Bronfenbrenner (1979) argued that in his ecological theory of human development that child development must

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always be understood in the context of the family and culture. Indeed, as researchers have considered context and culture, the picture changes somewhat. For example, while research shows that an authoritative parenting style predicts academic success in children, a closer look reveals that the statistical relationship is <u>strongest</u> for white middle-class children. Culture changes the nature of the effect at least to some degree, perhaps because parenting varies by culture and context, which make the picture more complex than a simple cause and effect.

How might culture and context make the picture more complex? Consider for example of a family of low SES that makes economic survival, or the ability to pay the rent and the utilities, its first priority. To this family a child's ability to supplement the family income may be considered more important than her report card, so the child may spend her time after school working an extra job rather than doing homework. These parents might also score high on an authoritarian scale of parenting style as described above, perhaps because they have cultural values requiring a high level of respect for parents, or because they live in a dangerous neighborhood where obedience can be the difference between a child's safety and harm. This does not mean that the child receives low grades because she has parents with poor parenting skills; rather, the grades of the child reflect the life circumstances of the family.

This child may indeed have poor academic performance, and it may be correlated with 'authoritarian' parenting; however, the picture is much more complex than the initial analysis might suggest. Parenting in this case is influenced by the larger context within which the family lives, a context including culture that helps to determine the family's priorities, values, and thus parenting behaviors.

Because of the complexity of parenting and the contributing factors, it would be expected that the traditional parenting typology does not always accurately predict the outcomes of minority groups, and this has been found to be true. For example, some immigrant groups have excelled in the United States school system despite not being raised according to the authoritative model of development and parenting. Specifically, Asian immigrants consistently excel in school (Chao, 1994; Ogbu, 1981) although Asian parenting behaviors are consistently described in the literature as more authoritarian than those of white parents (Dornbusch et al., 1987; Steinberg, Dornbusch, & Brown, 1992). Furthermore, while authoritarian parenting is considered a risk factor for poor self-esteem (Lamborn et al., 1991), it has actually been shown to predict self-assertiveness in Black preschool girls (Baumrind, 1972). Overall, the parenting typology described at the beginning of this section is most consistently found to be predictive of developmental outcomes for white children (Dornbusch et al., 1987; Steinberg, Dornbusch, & Brown, 1992; Steinberg, Lamborn, Dornbusch, & Darling, 1992).

Some researchers have tried to create parenting measures that take into account some of the complexity of parenting across cultures. One piece of this complexity is differing parenting values or belief systems. Parenting, as any human interaction, involves many subtle interpersonal characteristics and great depth. Chao (1994) did a study of Chinese immigrant versus white US mothers and found that, although Chinese mothers did appear to be more controlling and authoritarian, Chinese parenting involved many more nuances than the traditional measures acknowledged.

Chao (1994) developed a new parenting measure, one which measured a Chinese parenting construct called *chiao shun*, or "training". *Chiao shun* is a Confucian-based

understanding of parenting which includes a strong belief in parental control, but in the context of extreme devotion on behalf of the mother, and a very close, supportive relationship with her. Chao tested Chinese and white mothers on both the traditional Western typology, and on the measure that tested *chiao shun* ideology. As expected, the Chinese mothers scored more authoritarian on the traditional measure. But the Chinese mothers also scored higher than white mothers on the "training" ideology, which measures a parenting ideology including a large degree of warmth in the mother-child relationship. Cultural differences in how this warmth is acted out or understood may have precluded the traditional Western parenting typology from picking it up.

In any case, although words such as *authoritarian*, *strict*, and *demanding* have been used to describe Asian parenting, they do not paint a complete or accurate picture. It is then no surprise that Asian parenting characterized in the literature as "authoritarian" fails to have the negative developmental outcomes predicted by the typology. As mentioned, Asian immigrant children actually excel academically (Chao, 1994).

It is evident for these reasons, both because parenting values differ and because a construct as complex as parenting style cannot be measured without being understood, that generic parenting constructs are inadequate for the cross-cultural study of parenting (Florsheim, Tolan & Gorman-Smith, 1996). Likewise, generic parenting behaviors are not necessarily relevant to multiple groups of people, and parenting education should also not be generic, but rather reflect the diversity of the population with different assets, needs and beliefs. Historically, however, this has not been the case.

The system's inadequacy to serve minority populations

The child welfare system in the US has historically slow to provide services for

minority populations. This is first evident in the history of policy toward African-Americans in the social service system, as described by Hogan and Siu (1988), who illustrated the national progression from blatant oppression to more subtle forms of discrimination, which still exist today. According to them, in the 1700s, 1800s and a good portion of the early twentieth century, African-American children and families were excluded from white social service institutions. After the Civil War the federal government began to take upon itself the social welfare of its citizens, and this included some services to African-American children, such as reuniting former slave children with their parents. However, these children continued to be largely excluded by the mainstream child welfare system until the post-World War II era, when increasing urbanization and prevalence of poverty among minority populations made it necessary to include them. (Hogan & Siu, 1988).

The trend of white control in the social services has continued to a large extent, and minority populations such as Latinos still endure discrimination in the realm of government-sponsored social services. Protective services offices are one place that this type of discrimination continues to exist. Herrerías (1988) described the experiences of Spanish-speaking families who were suspected of child maltreatment in one protective services office. First, a lack of bilingual staff made any communication difficult. This prevented family history from being sufficiently explored in some cases. In one case, a social worker actually forbid a mother to speak in Spanish, threatening that if she continued to do so, "future mother-children visitation would be jeopardized (p. 106)."

Secondly, in this same protective services office, a lack of understanding cultural values led to misunderstandings and misdirected services. For example, one social

worker chose to use a child from the family to interpret for the mother. This elevated the child to a power position over the parent, undermining the role of the parent as the authority in the home. This is an offense in Latino culture, and possibly put the child at greater risk for future harm (Herrerías, 1988). The social worker apparently did not have enough cultural background or training to recognize this risk.

Overall, As Hogan and Siu (1988) put it:

The system responds more slowly to crises in minority families; such families have less access to support services…black and Hispanic children receive less comprehensive service plans; and parents of color have been viewed as less able to profit from support services. (p. 493)

Parent education and minority populations. When parent education programs operate under assumptions made by the traditional parenting typology, a consequence of this would be that minority parents are expected to conform to a white, middle-class parenting model. Ogbu (1981) describes this as it occurred in the proliferation of preschool programs for "disadvantaged children" that started in the 1960s. These were accompanied by educational programs for parents to correct what was thought to be "missing" in minority childrearing. Thus, parents were taught how to stimulate and train their children to develop the skills and competencies that would make up for perceived "developmental deficits" which were being exhibited by their children (p. 415). Not surprisingly, Ogbu stated these programs were unsuccessful in their attempts to adjust the behaviors of minority students and parents to fit a white middle-class standard.

According to Bronfenbrenner and Weiss (1983), a deficit model pervades the social service system in our nation, and regarding welfare services specifically, they state:

To qualify for help, potential recipients must first prove that they and their

families are inadequate – they must do so in writing, a dozen times over, with

corroborating documentation, so that there can be little doubt that they, and their

children, are in fact the inadequate persons they claim to be. (p. 395)

Bronfenbrenner and Weiss go on to note that individuals and families entering the realm

of social service provision become categorized and referenced according to the

"problem," or "problems," they exhibit.

Given this broad trend of deficit orientation in the social services, which is also

true in protective services offices, minority participants who come to parent education

programs may have already dealt with this at several levels. First, if they are being

investigated for suspected abuse and neglect, they are likely already considered

dysfunctional in some way. Secondly, if agency staff is not culturally competent, or is

unaware of families' values and cultural practices, the behaviors of these families might

well seem foreign and suspect, leading protective service staff to be even more

suspicious.

Ineffectiveness of universal parent education programs

As was just mentioned, services that are not culturally competent are not only

offensive and alienating, they may also be ineffective. Programs serving minority

populations have been ineffective in many cases. In 1981 Ogbu noted that, overall, parent

support and education programs were having little outcome success with minority

populations. One of their main failures was to attract and retain participants. A study that

illustrates this was conducted by Holden, Lavigne, and Cameron (1990). They studied a

project aimed at teaching mothers behavioral techniques to control their toddlers, which

was administered across ethnic groups. Holden, Lavigne, and Cameron mentioned no specific cultural considerations in the description of the program. This is common in the parent education literature (Miller, 1997).

Among the outcomes studied by Holden, Lavigne, and Cameron (1990) were completion of the intervention, and length of time it took those who completed it to do so. Criterion for completion was that mothers would be able to elicit the desired behavior from their toddlers. Minority participants and those of lower social classes were less likely to complete the training. Furthermore, if minority participants did complete the intervention, they were more likely to be in the group which took a longer time to do so.

Another study that illustrates the difficulty of retaining minority participants was conducted by Danoff, Kemper, and Sherry (1994). They studied a parenting education program in Seattle, Washington that utilized the Systematic Training for Effective Parenting (STEP) curriculum, a curriculum that is used widely across the nation. Danoff, Kemper, and Sherry looked specifically at risk factors for dropping out of the program across three different sites, and found in their univariate analyses that ethnicity was a factor, with African-American parents most likely to drop out.

<u>Culturally specific programs</u>

Those in the field of parenting education have become increasingly aware of these problems, and examples of culturally appropriate programs have been developed for certain Hispanic-American (Herrerías, 1988), African-American, (Miller, 1997; Myers, Alvy, Arrington, Richardson, Marigna, Huff, Main & Newcomb, 1992) and Native-American populations (Cheng Gorman & Balter, 1997). Some outcomes of these programs are encouraging, but the fact remains that parent education sanctioned by the

government usually takes a generic form with little consideration for cultural issues (Miller, 1997).

Furthermore, many of the attempts that have been made to develop culturally appropriate curriculum have been too shallow in their adaptation. These programs may translate an existing program to a new language, or even adapt it to include cultural traditions and values. However, very few programs actually create a parent training framework which is based on the "different ways of being and acting" that make up a specific minority culture (Cheng Gorman & Balter, 1997, p. 342). Cheng Gorman and Balter (1997) refer to this as a "culturally specific" program. The importance of having the unique perspective of a specific culture as a foundation for program and curriculum development cannot be understated. Without doing so, differences between the minority culture practices and mainstream practices are generally interpreted as deficits on the behalf of the minority group.

Despite these inadequate examples, there are a handful of culturally specific programs that have been developed for Latino parents, although the evaluation data is limited. Two programs were identified and reviewed by Cheng Gorman and Balter (1997). One program was developed by Alvy (1994) at the Center for the Improvement of Child Caring, and is entitled *Los Niños Bien Educados*. Cheng Gorman and Balter (1997) were unable to access and review any numerical evaluation data on this program, although Alvy (1994) does report qualitatively on the evaluations he conducted.

The other culturally specific program reviewed by Cheng Gorman and Balter (1997) was the Houston Parent-Child Development Center (PCDC) program. There was published evaluation data on this program that Cheng Gorman and Balter found to be

methodologically sound. However, the effect sizes in the evaluations of this program were mixed, and the magnitude of change in parents as a result of the program is uncertain.

Thus, it is evident that there has been very little evaluation to date on programs that serve Latino parents. Furthermore, the evaluation data that exist are not conclusive. In the literature, many program characteristics are suggested to make programs more relevant to the needs and parenting beliefs of Latino families, but there is little evidence to support these recommendations. To clarify what factors of a program truly make it more accessible and relevant to Latino parents, research is needed which measures the direct impact of the specific program characteristics, to see if they do indeed have the intended effect. Furthermore, it would be useful to compare these characteristics to determine which have the greatest effect on minority participants' experience. These are the endeavors of the current study.

<u>Cultural competence of parent support and education programs.</u>

Dana (1998b) has studied cultural competence in the field of mental health care in particular. About the field he stated that "primarily Euro-Americans have been responsible for definitions or descriptions of psychopathology, development of interventions, styles of service delivery, and decisions as to which patient or client received what services (p. 284)." For this reason, Dana, Behn, and Gonwa (1992) compiled literature on culturally relevant social service programming, and from that have identified a checklist of important characteristics for agencies that serve minority populations, to assess their level of cultural competence. The checklist has been tested on human service agencies known to be culturally competent and has held up well (Dana,

1998a).

The checklist itself includes several sections: (1) staff and policy attitudes, including bilingual and bicultural staff, flexible hours, indigenous intake, and agency environment; (2) culturally relevant services at all levels (e.g., assessment, intervention, prevention, crisis); (3) relationship to minority community; (4) training for minority and nonminority staff; and (5) evaluation (Dana, 1998a). The current study applied some aspects of this checklist, particularly the first two aspects, to parent education programming that serves Latino families nationally.

Five program characteristics that fall within the first two aspects of Dana's checklist (1998a) were chosen for this study because the literature talks about them with regard to Hispanic and Latino groups, and specifically with regard to parent education. The five program characteristics are as follows: bilingual staff, culturally competent staff, in-home programming, experienced *personalismo* (warmth) within a program, and parent education program content.

Bilingual and culturally competent staff

The first two program characteristics, which fit within Dana's first aspect (1998a), are staff members who are bilingual and culturally competent. Programs that neglect to offer this are inaccessible to Latino families, as was discussed earlier. The presence of bilingual staff in a program is necessary for even basic communication, and culturally competent staff members are necessary to a program that truly incorporates an understanding of Latino parents' stated and implicit values. Dana, Behn, and Gonwa (1992) describe cultural competence of mental health practitioners as follows: "…a cognitive basis for practice with each cultural group is necessary. This knowledge

includes history and experiences with prejudice, discrimination, and racism as well as culture-specific beliefs about health or illness, culturally unique symptoms, and interventions (p. 221)." In this study, culture-specific beliefs about parenting and family relationships are more relevant.

In-home setting for parenting program

The third program characteristic fits within the second aspect on Dana's checklist (1998a) regarding cultural relevance of service at all levels. It has been suggested in the literature that the setting in which parent education takes place can make it more accessible and approachable for Latino parents. The Houston PCDC program cites a "cultural expectation" that mothers of infants should not leave the home except to visit relatives and do necessary shopping (Johnson, 1989). For this reason, the program uses in-home sessions for a good deal of its program, which may be most suited to Latino mothers of infants. Other places in the literature suggest that this natural setting is less threatening (Herrerías, 1988).

Experienced *personalismo*

Fourthly, a personalized format for programs is extremely important due to cultural emphasis on positive relations (Sue & Sue, 1990), and this fits again within Dana's first aspect of cultural competence (1998a). Important elements of *personalismo*, as conceptualized in the literature on Latino interpersonal relations, are trust and warmth. It has been suggested that the extent to which a parent feels personally engaged in a program with a professional he/she trusts and has a warm relationship with, will be particularly important to his/her experience with the program.

Personalismo is an important Latino cultural construct, defined by Paniagua

(1994) as "an orientation toward people rather than toward impersonal relationships (Cuéllar, Arnold, & González, 1995, p. 342)." According to Cuéllar, Arnold, and González (1995) people who value *personalismo* respond favorably to items such as "I like to greet people in a friendly manner when I see them," "I try to get to know everyone I meet," "I enjoy being with people," and "I can trust many people to do me favors."

Content of a culturally appropriate program

Finally, given that childrearing values and behaviors differ according to culture, and because parent education programs provide information with the intent of changing or improving the parenting beliefs and skills of their clients, the actual content and/or curriculum of parent education programs should reflect the cultural beliefs and values of participants. This fits under Dana's second aspect of cultural competence (1998a).

It must be cautioned that there is a great deal of diversity among and between Latino populations. All Latin-American nations have a culture unique to themselves. Further, these nations are themselves multi-cultural as they are composed of the original indigenous populations, descendents of the European (primarily Spanish) colonialists and African population brought by the Europeans. It would naïve to combine this heterogeneous group of people and cultures and assume that the parenting issues among them were identical.

However, the resources to create culturally appropriate programs and evaluations for each of these populations individually are not currently available, and are clearly beyond the scope of this paper. In fact, this is a problem faced repeatedly in the literature on the topic. The approach taken here is the same one taken by Alvy (1994) in his development of the *Los Niños Bien Educados* program. Because the research hypothesis

and the program characteristics studied are still quite general, it is still useful to conduct this study across multiple Latino populations.

Latino parents do share the Spanish language as well as immigrant and minority status, and so the same shared experience of marginalization in the social services system. They also share some aspects of culture and beliefs. One of the most prominent common cultural characteristics shown in the literature, and the most relevant to this study, is familism, which suggests the significant role played by the family unit in the lives of Latinos (Marín & Marín, 1991; Vargas & Busch-Rossnagel, 2000).

The literature contains suggestions of some specific characteristics of Latino populations that must be part of relevant programming content. These characteristics center on family roles and issues of acculturation (Alvy, 1994). In the most traditional families, sex roles and the differing roles of children and parents are very rigid. The rigidity of these roles varies among Latino families living in the United States as a result of their level of acculturation and the type of community in which they live (Spiwack, 1982).

One particularly interesting occurrence related to acculturation is that children acculturate at a faster rate than parents. They may learn the language more quickly as a result of being in school, and they may also be more likely to pick up U.S. customs. This may lead to more progressive and less traditional understandings of family roles among the children, which creates a potential for intergenerational conflict. Furthermore Santos, Bohon, and Sánchez-Sosa (1998) showed that families who have migrated recently are already involved in redefining roles within the family.

Brim (1959) explains that an important function of parent education can be to

bring these topics to a level of consciousness. Because assumptions of appropriate family functioning and status relationships are largely determined by culture, they are also likely to be preconscious. Parents and children may be experiencing conflict over issues they do not even understand to be issues.

For this reason, Alvy (1994) has incorporated consciousness-raising related to family roles and acculturation in the parenting curriculum developed by the Center for the Improvement of Child Caring. What this means is that in parenting sessions parents talk about their expectations for their children, making these explicit, and also talk about the potential conflicts caused by differing expectations. It is clear that the purposes of this conversation do not include judgment of parents' values, but are primarily concerned with making these values explicit so they can be discussed and examined.

Thus, literature on culturally competent parent programming has suggested the importance of raising the topics of family roles and acculturation in parenting programs for Latino families. However, it has not been shown empirically that just talking about these issues makes parents more likely to participate and be satisfied with programs, or to perceive a benefit from these programs.

Likewise, the four other components of programs are described in the literature as appropriate and necessary for culturally competent programming, but they have not been tested as to their direct impact on parents in parent education programs. That is the endeavor of this study.

Acculturation

Acculturation was mentioned above as a relevant aspect of the lives of Latino and Hispanic individuals living in the U.S., and thus something that should be addressed in

program curriculum and content. A closer look at acculturation reveals that it may have a relationship to the other variables in this study as well.

Acculturation has been described as "the process of adaptation or assimilation by an ethnic or racial group to a host culture (Berry, 1989, in Dana, 1996, p.317)." A study by Cuéllar, Arnold, and Gonzalèz (1995) showed that acculturation is related to change in various cognitive beliefs. They measured acculturation in 379 Mexican and Mexican-American individuals and found that adherence to several cultural belief sets (Familism, Fatalism, Folk Illness Beliefs, and Machismo) decreased as the level of acculturation increased.

For this reason, acculturation was included in this study as a potential moderator, expected to change the degree to which the program variables mattered to the parents. Specifically, the importance a Latino individual placed on the five program characteristics (bilingual staff, culturally competent staff, culturally competent program content, in-home programming, and *personalismo* of staff and others in the program) was expected to decrease as his/her acculturation level increased. Therefore, the program characteristics should have had less of a predictive effect on parent satisfaction as acculturation increased.

Past research such as a study by Spiwak (1982) has indicated that acculturation level changes Latino parenting beliefs over time (Spiwak, 1982). It follows, therefore, that the importance of focusing content of a parenting program on traditionally Latino issues would lessen as acculturation increases. Further, as English language proficiency is a significant part of the acculturation measure that will be used (Marín & Gamba, 1996), the importance of bilingual staff should decrease with increasing acculturation levels.

<u>Endeavors of this study</u>

This study examined the described characteristics of parent education and support programs targeted at child abuse and neglect prevention, to evaluate their influence on Latino parent participation in the programs. This evaluation study was a cross-sectional design, utilizing a national sample of parent education programs and program participants.

The research questions of the study were as following: Does the presence of consciousness-raising discussion about family roles and acculturation increase the participation and satisfaction of Latino parents in parenting programs? Do bilingual and culturally competent staff, setting of program, and level of *personalismo* within programs predict the participation and satisfaction of Latino parents in parenting programs?

Because measuring actual parenting outcomes was beyond the scope of this study, common proxies were used: retention rates of Latino participants and the satisfaction of these same participants with the program in which they are enrolled. Specifically, satisfaction was hypothesized to mediate the relationship between program characteristics and retention rates.

Thus, the hypotheses were as follows:

<u>Hypothesis 1</u>: It was predicted that culturally appropriate content, bilingual staff, culturally competent staff, in-home programming, and experienced personalismo would increase satisfaction of Latino parents in parenting education programs, and increased satisfaction would lead to higher retention rates.

<u>Hypothesis 2</u>: It was predicted that acculturation would moderate the

relationships between the five program characteristics (between culturally appropriate content, bilingual staff, culturally competent staff, in-home programming, and experienced personalismo) and parent satisfaction, and specifically, that higher levels of acculturation would decrease the effect of program characteristics on satisfaction.

Method

<u>Sample</u>

These research questions were investigated by surveying a national sample of parent education administrators and Latino parent participants. One administrator and some Latino parent participants, as few as 2 and as many as 60, participated from each program. Fifty-one programs participated total.

<u>Feasibility study and sample recruitment.</u> Sample recruiting began with a national database of 276 child abuse and neglect prevention programs that included parent education participants. This database was obtained with cooperation from the National Alliance of Children's Trust and Prevention Funds.

To identify the programs in this database that serve Latino participants, and to assure the adequacy of the sample size, a prequestionnaire postcard was sent to these 276 parent education programs. A cover letter was sent to each program (see Appendix C) along with a self-addressed stamped postcard to be returned. The postcard asked the number of Latino participants served by the program, as well as general contact information (see Appendix E). Of the programs that returned postcards, 62 indicated that they served 10 or more Latino parents. If they said they served 10 or less, they were not included in the study.

In addition, a mailing was sent to 10 state Children's Trust Funds in states known to have large Latino populations. Each trust fund was sent a letter (see Appendix D) and five packets identical to the ones sent to the 276 programs individually. Trust funds were asked to distribute these to programs they believed to serve large numbers of Latino

participants, and were encouraged to ask for more. One state did request 10 more postcards and they were sent the additional 10 accordingly. In all, this process yielded an additional 22 postcards from programs indicating they served 10 or more Latino parents.

To again increase the number of programs, the researcher contacted more Children's Trust Funds in states not represented on the list so far, as well as other states known to have large Latino populations. Trust Funds were asked for contact information of parent education programs serving Latino parents. This yielded contact information for 48 programs in 8 states.

Additionally, the Children's Trust Fund of New Mexico sent two agency directories including some parent education programs. Twenty-three programs were noted in these directories and added to the list, now totaling 156. Finally, the Texas Children's Trust Fund referred the researcher to the website of the University of North Texas, which houses a parent education database for the state of Texas. An additional 44 programs were randomly selected from this database and included in the list, increasing the total to 200.

Procedures

Phone calls were made to programs starting with the first on the list, to confirm that they did conduct parent education for Hispanic or Latino parents, and to ask if they would be willing to participate in the study. The researcher sent a packet of questionnaires to each of the parenting programs that agreed to participate. Each packet contained one Program Administrator Questionnaire (Appendix A) and between 5 and 40 Parent Questionnaires (Appendix B). These two questionnaires measured all of the constructs in the study. English and Spanish translations of each were available.

Questionnaires for administrators and program participants were sent together in one packet directly to each participating program. One staff contact person within each organization was identified, and the researcher directed all correspondence to this individual. Each packet contained a personalized cover letter with instructions to the administrator.

To maximize completion rate of participant questionnaires, the researcher requested that for parenting programs operating in groups or classes, the administrator allow for completion of parent questionnaires during program time, rather than sending them home with participants to complete independently.

In addition to the cover letter in the packets, contacts were made, in the form of a phone call or e-mail message, with each participating program administrator one week after their packet was put in the mail. The purpose of this contact was to check that the packet had arrived, that the instructions made sense, and to see if there were any questions. The programs were told in the letter that they should send the packets back within six weeks. At the six-week mark, the researcher made follow up phone calls to the programs that had not returned their questionnaires.

In total the researcher and team made attempts at contacting 219 programs. One hundred and eighty-one of these were from the original list, and the additional 38 were referrals given by those on the list with whom the researcher or team member spoke. One hundred and eighty-four programs were actually contacted, 124 agreed to participate (and were eligible), and 128 program packets were sent out because a couple administrators asked for additional packets because they oversaw more than one program. Of those, 51 complete packets were returned; another 9 were returned but incomplete.

The distribution of returned packets by U.S. state is included in Table 1. Twenty-three states were represented in the sample of returned complete packets. The most packets were returned from Massachusetts, Texas, and New Mexico. These states accounted for 16%, 14%, and 12% of the complete returned packets, respectively. This sample is approximately representative of the original list of 200 programs, in which the largest numbers of programs serving Latino parents were found in the same three states: Texas, New Mexico, and Massachusetts. The numbers of programs from each of these states are also included in Table 1.

Table 1. Number of programs by state.

	Number of programs that returned complete packets	Number of programs on original list of 200 programs
Massachusetts	8	22
Texas	7	58
New Mexico	6	27
Arizona	3	3
California	2	4
Colorado	2	8
Florida	2	4
Idaho	2	2
Nebraska	2	3
North Carolina	2	6
Oklahoma	2	2
Washington	2	5
Alabama	1	5
Arkansas	1	2
Connecticut	1	1
Georgia	1	3
Michigan	1	1
Minnesota	1	3
New York	1	5
Ohio	1	8

Table 1 (cont'd).

Oregon	1	2
Pennsylvania	1	5
South Dakota	1	1

Measures

Retention of Latino parents. Retention rate of Latino participants was measured on the program administrator questionnaire (see Appendix A). A multi-part question asked administrators the number of Latino parents that had participated since the beginning of the year 2000, and the number who completed the program (or had completed it thus far). Retention was calculated by dividing the number of those who had completed the program (question 6b) by the number of those who had participated (question 6a).

Satisfaction of Latino parents. The satisfaction of Latino parents was asked of the parents in 3 items on the program participant questionnaire. The first question asked for an overall satisfaction rating, and responses were on a 5-point Likert-type scale, with responses ranging from *Extremely satisfied* to *Not satisfied at all*. The second question asked how helpful the program had been for the participants' parenting and parent-child relationships, and responses were again on a 5-point Likert-type scale, with responses ranging from *Extremely helpful* to *Not helpful at all*. The third question was whether the parent would recommend the program to other parents, and required a *Yes* or *No* answer (see Appendix B).

Acculturation scale. The program participant questionnaire included a short 4-item acculturation scale to be filled out by the parent (see Appendix B, questions 7

through 10). Responses to these items were on a 5-point scale. Acculturation scores were calculated by averaging the scores on these four items.

Because there are insufficient direct comparative data to show which acculturation measures are most useful (Dana, 1996), measures must each be evaluated according to their characteristics and matched to the needs of the study at hand. The scale that was used is a shortened version of a published acculturation scale by Marín, Sabogal, Marín, Otero-Sabogal, and Pérez-Stable (1987). It was chosen for several reasons.

First, this scale is short enough (4 items) to be included in the larger measure without taking an extraordinary amount of the participants' time. Because acculturation is not the main focus of the study, the amount of information provided by these 4 items is sufficient. Second, this scale has been tested and found to correlate with commonly used validity criteria; for example, respondents' generational status (r = .69), length of residence in the United States (if foreign-born) (r = .76), and age at arrival in the United States (r = -.72) (Marín & Marín, 1991).

Thirdly, this shortened scale works equally well with different Latino subgroups (Marín & Marín, 1991). Many scales are only tested on one specific Latino subgroup. For example, a common scale is the Acculturation Rating Scale for Mexican Americans-II (ARSMA-II), but as the name suggests, it was designed and tested on Mexicans and Mexican-Americans only (and White non-Hispanics) (Cuéllar, Arnold, & Maldonado, 1995). Equal usefulness for multiple Latino subgroups is important for this study because the sample was not limited to one subgroup.

Program content. Administrators were asked three sets questions on the program administrator questionnaire regarding the content of parent programming (see Appendix

A, questions 8 through 10). Specifically, they were asked how many program hours are spent discussing Latino-specific family roles (male/female roles and adult/child roles) and general acculturation issues, or "adapting to U.S. culture."

These questions each consist of several parts. Question eight has two parts. The first asks "what ways of adapting to U.S. culture discussed in your parenting program." Programs were given a score of 1 if they answered that the "topic is raised only if parent(s) bring it up in discussion," and a score of 2 if they answered that the parent educator raises the topic (whether or not it is part of the curriculum). Question 8a goes on to ask how many hours are spent addressing this topic. "Less than one hour" received a score of 1, "between 1 and 2 hours" received a score of 2, and so on, with "more than four hours" receiving a score of 5. Both 8 and 8a were included as separately as measures of program content.

Questions 9 and 10 each had four parts. The first part of the question asked if the topic in question was addressed (the two topics being "male/female family roles" and "adult/child rules"). If they answered yes, they were asked whether this topic was addressed generally or in a manner specific to Latino culture. A score of zero was given to generally addressing the topic, and a score of 1 was given to those who addressed the topic in a culturally specific manner. This latter score was used as a measure of program content (questions 9a and 10a), because it reflects the culturally specific nature of program content, and it was answered by virtually every program, which was not true of the last two segments of questions 9 and 10 (questions 9b, 9c, 10b, and 10c ask about the nature and extent of the discussion on each of these two topics, similar to questions 8 and

8a that are described above). Therefore, there were four 4 measures of program content used in the analysis: questions 8, 8a, 9a, and 10a.

Bilingual staff. Program administrators were asked on the administrator questionnaire how many program staff members were bilingual, speaking English and Spanish (see Appendix A). A score was calculated as a percentage by dividing the number of staff speaking both English and Spanish (question 2) by the total number of staff (question 1)

Culturally competent staff. Parents were asked two questions on the program participant questionnaire (see Appendix B) that describe the cultural competence of agency staff, as described by Dana, Behn, and Gonwa (1992). First, parents were asked how well staff appear to understand their family relationships, an indicator of staff competence related to culture-specific beliefs that are relevant to these parent programs. Second, parents were asked how well staff seem to understand living as a Latino in the U.S., an indicator of staff awareness of issues of prejudice and discrimination. Responses to these questions were on a 5-point Likert scale, with responses ranging from *Very well* to *Not at all*. A score for cultural competence of staff was calculated by averaging the responses on the two questions (questions 14 and 15).

Program setting. Administrators were asked on the administrator questionnaire what percentage of program time is spent in the homes of participants (see Appendix A, question 7). This was scored on a 6-point scale ("less than 10" was scored as one point, "91 to 100" was scored as six).

Experienced *personalismo.* Experienced *personalismo* of the program was measured by six Likert-type items on the program participant questionnaire (see

Appendix B). Response stems vary by question.

The questions asked participants about three qualities that have been included in previous conceptualizations of *personalismo* (Cuéllar, Arnold, & González, 1995; Sue & Sue, 1990): friendliness, enjoyment of being with people, and level of trust. Parents were asked about how much these characteristics describe their relationships with (a) agency staff (questions 20 through 22) and (b) the other parents who utilize the program (questions 17 through 19). Responses were scored as two separate measures, *personalismo* of agency staff and of others at the program. Each was scored as an average of the responses of the three related items.

Translation of questionnaires. Straight translation was the method used to translate those portions of the questionnaires not already existing in Spanish forms (the acculturation sub-questionnaire already has a Spanish version). While this is not the optimal method of translation (Marín & Marín, 1991), the financial and temporal restrictions of the current study made it the only feasible method.

Results

<u>Sample</u>

<u>Power analysis.</u> The final number of programs participating in this study was 51. A power analysis conducted using Cohen's criteria (1988) showed that responses from 93 programs (alpha = .05) would be necessary to detect an effect of a medium size (.15 for multiple regression) at a power level of .80 (recommended by Cohen for exploratory power analysis). Because there were not enough programs in this study to detect a medium effect at a power level of .80, none of the results should be considered conclusive, but rather suggestive.

<u>Program demographics.</u> The sample of programs ranged in size from 12 to 3000. The number of parents participating in this study from the each program ranged from 2 to 60; the mean was 11.88. One program actually returned 234 parent questionnaires, but for purposes of not over-representing that program in the overall sample, a random sample of 36 parent questionnaires was selected from that program. 36 was chosen because aside from the program with 234 parents, and one other outlier with 60, 36 was the largest number of parents from one program in the sample, and much closer to the average of 11.88.

The number of parent education staff at programs in this sample ranged from 1 to 49, with a mean of 8.16. The mean percentage of staff that spoke English and Spanish was 52.28%, and it ranged from 0 to 100%.

<u>Parent demographics.</u> The parents in the sample programs were all of age 18 or older; the mean age was between 22 and 30. The sample was mostly female, with a mean

household income between $10,000 and $19,999.

The average level of acculturation was 1.94 on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 meaning least acculturated and 5 meaning the most. The mean level of generational status was 1.42 on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 meaning first generation and 5 meaning fifth.

Scale reliabilities

Several subscales were included in the parent questionnaire. A four-item **acculturation** scale, developed and published by Marín, Sabogal, Marín, Otero-Sabogal, and Pérez-Stable (1987), was included to measure the acculturation level of Latino parent participants. The scale is found in items 7 through 10 in the parent questionnaire (Appendix B). (The merits and validity of this scale were described in the methods section, p. 24.) One commonly used validity criteria of acculturation scales is their correlation with respondents' generational status (Marín & Marín, 1991). In this study its correlation with generational status was equal to .68, which was significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). The reliability value of the scale in this study was found to be .96 (•).

Three other subscales were written by the researcher of this study and have no published reliability data, so the reliability values for the scales in this study are reported below.

Satisfaction of Latino parents was measured by 3 items on the parent questionnaire, items 11 through 13 (Appendix B). On the Spanish version of the questionnaire, the labels of two values of the Likert scale on item 11 were inadvertently switched in translation (values 2 and 3, "Very Satisfied" and "Satisfied," were labeled backward). In order to use this item, values 2 and 3 were both scored as 2.5 on both the

English and Spanish questionnaires, making the item essentially a 4-point scale ranging from 1 to 5. Item 12 was the 5-point Likert scale, and item 13 was a yes or no question, with "yes" scored as a "1" and "no" scored as a "5."

A correlation analysis revealed that item 13 correlated with item 12 significantly, but barely (.10, p<.05). It did not correlate significantly with item 11. In contrast, items 11 and 12 correlated at .55 (p<.01). For this reason, just items 11 and 12 were used as the satisfaction subscale.

Three other new subscales were included in the questionnaire. The first included 2 items measuring the **cultural competence of staff**, items 14 and 15 in Appendix B. The inter-correlation of these two items was also significant (.63, p < .01).

The other two subscales each included 3 items and were included to measure the experience *personalismo* or inter-personal warmth of the program, both the **warmth (*personalismo*) of program staff** (items 20 through 22) and **other parent participants** (items 17 through 19). The inter-item correlation values for warmth of program staff are

Table 2. Inter-item correlations of the Warmth (*Personalismo*) of Staff subscale.

	Item 20	Item 21	Item 22
Item 20	1.000		
Item 21	.650*	1.000	
Item 22	.635*	.590*	1.000

* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

in Table 2; inter-item correlations for warmth of other parents in the program are in Table

3. All of the inter-item correlations were significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). Both

scales were found to be reliable as well (• = .83 and .82, respectively).

Table 3. Inter-item correlations of the Warmth (*Personalismo*) of Other Parents subscale.

	Item 17	Item 18	Item 19
Item 17	1.000		
Item 18	.604*	1.000	
Item 19	.579*	.643*	1.000

* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Aggregation of program level variables

      Three variables: cultural competence of staff, warmth of program staff, and

warmth of other parents in programs (the last two being components of the *personalismo*

construct), were calculated by averaging the parent values in each program to get one

average score for each program. Because this variable was measured at the individual-

level and we have aggregrated it to the program level for analysis, it is necessary to

justify the aggregation by first demonstrating that there is reasonable within group

agreement.

      These three variables are really measures of how parents perceive these qualities

of their program, how adept the program is at relating to their culture, as well as the

warmth they experience at the program. Because these are perception measurements, in

multilevel research these variables are representative of what Hofmann (2000) calls

shared constructs, or constructs that are valid only when individuals within the group

share similar perceptions. It is therefore necessary to investigate the degree to which these perceptions are shared within each program.

Multilevel researchers disagree as to the best method of justifying this aggregation, or verifying shared perceptions. For this reason, Hofmann (2002) advises researchers to use a variety of the most respected procedures. If these procedures yield the same conclusion, this lends greater confidence to the aggregation.

Two of the respected procedures in the field were used for this analysis, and they are called ICC(1) and ICC(2) (see formulas in Appendix F). The values for ICC(1) and ICC(2), as shown in Table 4, are reasonable for both variables, similar to values used by Hofmann and Stetzer to justify aggregation in their 1996 article. This indicates that there is adequate within group agreement to justify aggregation of these three variables.

Table 4. Viability of program level variables.

	ICC(1)	ICC(2)
Cultural competence of staff	.063	.44
Personalismo or warmth of program staff	.13	.64
Personalismo or warmth of other parents in program	.097	.56

Hypothesis 1: Culturally appropriate content, bilingual staff, culturally competent staff, in-home programming, and experienced *personalismo* will increase satisfaction of Latino parents in parenting education programs, and increased satisfaction leads to higher retention rates.

A linear regression analysis was done to determine the effects of the program variable predictors on parent satisfaction. The only two significant predictors of parent satisfaction were perceived *personalismo* of the program staff (p < .01) and whether or not "differing roles of adults and children in the family" were discussed "in a way that [addressed] the traditional emphasis on respeto and strict dominance of elders in Latino culture," (p<.05). This is question 10a on the program administrator questionnaire (see Appendix A), and it was significantly related to satisfaction in a negative direction.

A linear regression analysis was also done to determine the effects of these program predictors, as well as parent satisfaction, on program retention rates as a dependent variable. Satisfaction was not a significant predictor of program retention, although bilingual staff, in-home programming, cultural competence of staff, and *personalismo* of program staff and others in the program, were all significant predictors. Bilingual staff, in-home programming, and *personalismo* of others in the program were related positively to parent retention; cultural competence of staff and *personalismo* of program staff were actually predictive of retention in a negative direction (see Table 5). The value of R square in this model was .43.

Therefore, the hypothesis was partially supported and partially unsupported. *Personalismo* of staff was indeed predictive of satisfaction, but the other program

Table 5. Parent retention regression results.

Model	Standardized Beta Coefficients*	t-values	Significance values
(Constant)		-2.58	.010
Bilingual staff	.53	11.02	.000
In-home programming	.30	5.44	.000
Content: adapting to US culture part of curriculum	.041	.85	.40
Content: adapting to U.S., amount of time spent discussing	-.057	-.94	.35
Content: roles of men and women discussed in culture specific manner	-.068	-1.02	.31
Content: roles of adults and children discussed in culturally specific manner	-.11	-1.41	.16
Cultural competence of staff**	**.17**	**2.09**	**.038**
***Personalismo* of others in program**	**-.12**	**-2.23**	**.026**
***Personalismo* of program staff**	**.27**	**2.90**	**.004**
Parent Satisfaction	**.031**	**.70**	**.48**

* Dependent variable: retention
Variables in **bold are negatively scored, relative to retention.

characteristics were not and one program content variable was predictive in the opposite

direction. Additionally, satisfaction did not mediate a relationship between program

characteristics and retention (satisfaction did not predict retention). Bilingual staff, in-

home programming and *personalismo* of others in the program predicted parent retention

in a positive direction, but others (staff cultural competence and *personalismo* of staff)

were predictive in a negative direction.

Hypothesis 2: Acculturation will moderate the relationships between the five

program characteristics (between culturally appropriate content, bilingual staff,

culturally competent staff, in-home programming, and experienced *personalismo*)

and parent satisfaction, and specifically, higher levels of acculturation will decrease

the effect of program characteristics on satisfaction.

Linear regression was used with each program characteristic individually, and then including interaction terms, to determine if acculturation changed the relationship between each characteristic and parent satisfaction. Acculturation only moderated one effect, and that was the effect of bilingual staff on parent satisfaction. The moderation effect was in the opposite direction of the one hypothesized. For parents at higher acculturation levels, bilingual staff appeared to be more important to parent satisfaction. Therefore, the second hypothesis was not supported by these findings; acculturation did not moderate any effects but one, and it moderated that in the opposite direction than hypothesized.

One other serendipitous finding of these analyses relates to the aggregation of variables. The first time running the interaction tests above, the individual level variables of three program characteristics: *personalismo* of staff, of others, and staff cultural competence, were used instead of the aggregated variables. While *personalismo* of others and staff cultural competence were not predictive of parent satisfaction in the original regression using aggregated (program level) variables, they both predicted satisfaction at the individual level, as was found in these regression analyses (p<.01).

When the regression and interaction analysis was run again with the aggregated variables, *personalismo* of others in the program was not a significant predictor, matching the original regression analysis of Hypothesis 1 including that variable; however, this time the aggregated variable for cultural competence of staff DID predict satisfaction (p<.01), although it had not when it was included with all the other variables in the original analysis.

Discussion

Predictors of satisfaction

Of the five program characteristics expected to predicted parent satisfaction

(bilingual staff, culturally competent staff, in-home programming, program content, and

experienced *personalismo*), the experienced *personalismo* of program staff is the one that

actually did predict increased satisfaction. This suggests that the warmth of staff is more

important to Latino parents than even other staff characteristics, such as bilingual ability

or cultural awareness.

The one other significant effect in this analysis was from one of the measures of

program content, specifically whether or not "differing roles of adults and children in the

family" were discussed "in a way that [addressed] the traditional emphasis on respeto and

strict dominance of elders in Latino culture," as opposed to addressing it in a "general

way" (p<.05). This is question 10a on the program administrator questionnaire (see

Appendix A), and 47 out of 51 programs responded to this question. This response

significantly predicted satisfaction in a negative direction, meaning parents from

programs where this topic was addressed in a Latino culture-specific way reported being

LESS satisfied.

The reason for this is uncertain, but one explanation is that the programs including

this, a discussion of adult versus child roles in the context of traditional dominance of

elders in Latino culture, did not have culturally competent staff presenting or facilitating

this discussion, and that this had a negative effect on parents' experience. Responses to

question 10a were not correlated at all with cultural competence of staff. It is possible

that programs including this discussion do not discuss it in a culturally competent manner, regardless of whether they make the effort. This result may suggest that culture-specific program curriculum or content is not enough; moreover, it is possible that if it not facilitated by a culturally competent staff person, this discussion may decrease Latino parent satisfaction with a parent education program.

Predictors of retention

In this analysis, parent satisfaction was not a significant predictor of parent retention in program, thus the mediating hypothesis is not supported. At first glance it is difficult to explain why a retention rate would increase without the satisfaction increasing as well, but there are some possibilities. For example, in-home programming is one of the variables that did predict retention. It may be that if a program is taking place in home setting, it is more difficult for a parent to drop out of it. Perhaps a parent can more easily choose not to attend a class or support group, than tell a parent educator to stop coming to his or her home. This may be especially true if warm personal interactions are important to a parent, and this is traditionally an important value in Latino culture (Cuéllar, Arnold, & González, 1995).

In addition to in-home programming, bilingual staff and *personalismo* of others in the program were also predictors of parent retention. These could be additional reasons that parents may remain in programs even if they are not satisfied with the program itself. They may be less likely to leave even if they want to, because of the increased accountability that comes with closer personal relationship to the program, and closer relationships are likely facilitated by bilingual staff and warmth of other parents. Or it could also be the case that it is relationships that attract some Latino parents to programs,

or keep them satisfied with them, but perhaps the quality of relationships is not reflected in their satisfaction scores, as the satisfaction questions in this study asked about the programming in general. More research should be done to determine the effect that quality of interpersonal relationships within a program might have upon Latino parents' satisfaction with different aspects of that program.

The above explanations presuppose that satisfaction is in some way related to people wanting to leave programs, but either the satisfaction measure in this study did not capture the entire construct, or that parents wanted to leave but found it difficult. Another explanation altogether has to do with the fact that Latino parents may have some underlying mistrust of social programs related to past experience, which may affect their satisfaction scores in this study.

Historically, health and social programs such as mental health programs have been inappropriate and led to dissatisfaction as a result of not being culture-specific with regard to Latino individuals (Dana, 1998b). Some parents may come to parent education programs not knowing what to expect, or even expecting poor treatment. For this reason, it may take a long time for a Latino parent to feel good about a program. Even if they have good initial experiences, they may be suspicious of what may happen in the future. Therefore, they may stay in programs because they have not yet had a bad experience, but they may still not feel satisfied by the program or they may be fearful of what is to come.

Two program variables, *personalismo* of staff members and cultural competence of staff, significantly predicted parent retention in programs, but in a negative direction. This means that warmth of staff members and cultural competence of staff predicted

lower levels of retention in programs. This does not support Hypothesis 1. Explanations for this are uncertain, but one thing it seems to solidify is that satisfaction and retention are not related in a simple positive correlation, at least not as they are measured in this study. The complexity of this relationship has been alluded to in previous paragraphs, but given that *personalismo* of staff significantly predicts satisfaction in a positive direction and retention in a negative direction, it is clear that there is something going on that we have not predicted. More research is needed to pull apart the complexity of these constructs.

It is worth noting that the only program characteristic found to have no effect on either satisfaction or retention was the program content. According to this study, the degree to which culture-specific topics are addressed in the program content is not a significant predictor of Latino parents remaining in a parent education program.

<u>Acculturation effects</u>

Acculturation did not have the effects that were hypothesized, but it did moderate the effect of bilingual staff on parent satisfaction. Unexpectedly, however, the amount of bilingual staff seemed to be more important to more highly acculturated parents than to parents at lower acculturation levels. One reason for this might be the aforementioned skepticism that may be associated with having more experience with the system. Perhaps Latino parents newer to the U.S. are more naïve about what they might experience in such programs, while parents who have been in the U.S. for a longer time have less patience for those who do not speak their own language or understand and respect their culture because they have had more negative experiences in the past. Further study in this matter is needed.

It is interesting that none of the other program variables were affected by acculturation. Cuéllar, Arnold, and González (1995) have demonstrated that acculturation is related to change in various cognitive beliefs, but Cuéllar, Arnold, and Maldonado (1995), call it a "faulty assumption (...) that there has to be corresponding reduction in one of two cultures for a person to acculturate (p. 277)." Perhaps, although cognitive beliefs may change as individuals acculturate, these beliefs do not affect the tendency of Latino parents to appreciate certain aspects of a program. Perhaps those tendencies and preferences are at an even deeper level than cognitive beliefs. This is an area requiring more research to pull apart the complexities of this phenomenal process and its effects.

Finally, this study revealed some different results when the analysis was run with individual level variables. These alternate findings suggest that the way in which the analysis is run can affect the results in dramatic ways. While the findings reported in this study reflect the analyses that were deemed most appropriate for this study, the results could be affected by conducting an analysis at the individual level, et cetera.

Limitations

There were two significant limitations to the methodology of this study. First, the sample size was much lower than power analysis indicated it should be, 51 in comparison to 93. This may be the greatest reason that so few effects were detected.

Second, straight translation is not the optimal method of translation. It is possible that the meaning of the questions answered on the measures will be less clear in the Spanish versions than in the English. In the future, preferable methods such as back translation should be used to improve the preciseness of the meaning of parent responses (Marín & Marín, 1991). Most of the parent questionnaires, 450 of 606, were completed in

Spanish. This was really not an important factor on the program administrator

questionnaires; only one program administrator questionnaire out of 51 was completed in

Spanish.

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Conclusions

In conclusion, this study includes important findings and suggests even more future questions for study. *Personalismo* of program staff predicts satisfaction; and *personalismo* of others in the program, in-home programming, and bilingual staff predict retention of parents in the program. However, most program characteristics did not predict satisfaction, and some program variables predicted satisfaction and retention in a negative direction.

These surprising findings suggest that we do not entirely understand the reasons Latino parents are satisfied with programs, the reasons Latino parents stay in programs, or how satisfaction and retention are related. New studies should be conducted asking parents directly what they like about programs and why they continue to come. Qualitative data on this topic may yield insight into why program characteristics that increases in parent satisfaction are not necessarily instrumental in predicting retention in programs.

APPENDIX A

Program Administrator Questionnaire

1. How many staff members do you have that provide direct parent education services?

_____

2. How many of the staff members noted in Question 1 are fluent in:
   Spanish and English _____
   English only   _____
   Spanish only   _____
   Other   _____ Specify: _____

3. How many participants are served by your parent education programs? _____

4. What percentage of participants are of Latino origin?
   Less than 10   _____
   11 to 25   _____
   26 to 50   _____
   51 to 75   _____
   76 to 90   _____
   91 to 100   _____

5. What percentage of the Latino parent participants are legally mandated to be in the program?
   Less than 10   _____
   11 to 25   _____
   26 to 50   _____
   51 to 75   _____
   76 to 90   _____
   91 to 100   _____

6a. How many Latino participants came at least once to your service program since the beginning of the year 2000? _____

6b. Of this number, how many...

   _____   A. ...completed the program they entered (or have completed it so far?)

Considering both the participants who have completed the program in the year 2000 and those who are currently in the program, how many would you say...

   _____ B. ...have shown signs of significant parenting change?

_____ C. ...have shown signs of small parenting adjustments?
_____ D. ...have shown no signs of change, but show differences in their
attitude toward parenting or toward their children?
_____ E. ...have shown no signs of change and do not show differences in
attitude?

(The numbers in B through E should total to the number given in 6a)

7. What percentage of your programming takes place in the homes of program
participants?
Less than 10 _____
11 to 25 _____
26 to 50 _____
51 to 75 _____
76 to 90 _____
91 to 100 _____

8. In what ways are issues of adapting to U.S. culture discussed in your parenting
program? (Check all that apply.)
Topic is raised only if parent(s) brings it up in discussion _____
Topic is raised by parent educator but is not part
of curriculum _____
Topic is intentionally addressed in the curriculum _____

a. Check the number of hours addressing topic of adapting to U.S. culture:
Less than one hour _____
Between one and two hours _____
Between two and three hours _____
Between three and four hours _____
More than four hours _____

9. Are the differing roles of men and women in the family discussed in your program?
___ Yes   ___ No

**If you answered yes, go to question (a) below. If you answered no, skip to
question 10.**

a. Is the topic discussed in a general way or in a way that addresses the
traditional dominance of males in Latino culture? (Check all that apply.)

___ General
___ Addresses traditional Latino culture

If you answered "addresses traditional Latino culture" answer questions (b) and (c) below related to how much you talk about that Latino topic. Otherwise, skip to question 10.

b. In what way(s) is the topic addressed? (Check all that apply.)
Topic is raised only if parent(s) brings it up in discussion   _____
Topic is raised by parent educator but is not part
of curriculum   _____
Topic is intentionally addressed in the curriculum   _____

c. Check the number of hours addressing topic of male/female family roles:
Less than one hour   _____
Between one and two hours   _____
Between two and three hours   _____
Between three and four hours   _____
More than four hours   _____

10. Are the differing roles of adults and children in the family discussed in your program?
____ Yes   ____ No

If you answered yes, go to question (a) below. If you answered no, skip to question 11.

a. Is the topic discussed in a general way or in a way that addresses the traditional emphasis on respeto and strict dominance of elders in Latino culture? (Check all that apply.)

____ General
____ Addresses traditional Latino culture

If you answered "addresses traditional Latino culture" answer questions (b) and (c) below related to how much you talk about that Latino topic. Otherwise, skip to question 11.

b. In what way(s) is the topic addressed? (Check all that apply.)
Topic is raised only if parent(s) brings it up in discussion   _____
Topic is raised by parent educator but is not part
of curriculum   _____
Topic is intentionally addressed in the curriculum   _____

c. Check the number of hours addressing topic of adult/child family roles:
Less than one hour   _____
Between one and two hours   _____
Between two and three hours   _____
Between three and four hours   _____
More than four hours   _____

11. What are the most important ways your program is culturally relevant to the Latino parents you serve?

APPENDIX B

Program Participant Questionnaire

Please do not put your name on this questionnaire.

Demographics
1. What is your age?
    __ 18 to 21
    __ 22 to 25
    __ 26 to 30
    __ 31 to 40
    __ 41 or older

2. What is your gender?
    __ Male
    __ Female

3. What is your national heritage? (Check all that apply)
    __ Central American (specify) _____
    __ Cuban
    __ Mexican American
    __ Puerto Rican
    __ South American (specify) _____
    __ Other (specify) _____

4. (a) Last grade you completed in school:
    __ Elementary-6
    __ 7-8
    __ 9-12
    __ 1-2 years of college
    __ 3-4 years of college
    __ College graduate or higher

    (b) In what country? _____

5. What is your household's annual income?
    __ Less than $10,000
    __ $10,000 to 14,999
    __ $15,000 to 19,999
    __ $20,000 to 24,999
    __ $25,000 to 29,999
    __ $30,000 to 34,999
    __ $35,000 to 39,999

___ $40,000 or greater

6. Circle the generation that best applies to <u>you</u>. Circle only one.

A. First generation = You were born in other country.
B. Second generation = You were born in USA; either parent born in other country.
C. Third generation = You were born in USA, both parents born in USA and all grandparents born in other country.
D. Fourth generation = You and your parents born in USA and at least one grandparent born in other country with remainder born in USA.
E. Fifth generation = You and your parents born in the USA and all grandparents born in the USA.

For questions 7 through 10, fill the appropriate number in the blank on the left.

1 = Only Spanish
2 = Spanish better than English
3 = Both equally
4 = English better than Spanish
5 = Only English

____ 7. In general, what language do you read and speak?
____ 8. What language do you usually speak at home?
____ 9. In which language do you usually think?
____ 10. What language do you usually speak with your friends?

<u>Program experience</u>
For the following questions, circle the number that most closely corresponds to the correct answer.

11. Overall, how satisfied are you with your parent education program?

Extremely satisfied	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Not satisfied at all
1	2	3	4	5

12. Overall, how helpful is the program for your parenting or your relationship(s) with your child(ren)?

Extremely helpful	Very helpful	Helpful	Somewhat helpful	Not helpful at all
1	2	3	4	5

13. Would you recommend the program to other parents you know?

___ Yes   ___ No

14. Overall, how well do you feel that agency staff members understand your family relationships?

Extremely good understanding	Very good understanding	Good understanding	Some understanding	No understanding at all
1	2	3	4	5

15. Overall, how well do you feel that agency staff members understand what it's like to live in the U.S. as a Latino?

Extremely good understanding	Very good understanding	Good understanding	Some understanding	No understanding at all
1	2	3	4	5

16. Is your only contact with this agency through a home visit program?
____ Yes   ____ No

If you answered yes to question 16, please skip to question 20. If you answered no, please continue with question 17.

[17. How friendly are the other parents who use the agency?]

Extremely friendly	Very friendly	Friendly	Somewhat friendly	Not friendly at all
1	2	3	4	5

[18. Overall, how much do you think the other parents who use the agency enjoy being with people?]

Enjoy it very much	Enjoy it quite a bit	Enjoy it	Enjoy it somewhat	Do not enjoy it at all
1	2	3	4	5

[19. Overall, how much do you trust the other parents who use the program?]

Trust them very much	Trust them quite a bit	Trust them	Trust them somewhat	Do not trust them at all
1	2	3	4	5

20. How friendly are the staff members at the agency?

Extremely	Very		Somewhat	Not friendly

friendly	friendly	Friendly	friendly	at all
1	2	3	4	5

21. Overall, how much do you think the agency staff members enjoy being with people?

Enjoy it very much	Enjoy it quite a bit	Enjoy it	Enjoy it somewhat	Do not enjoy it at all
1	2	3	4	5

22. Overall, how much do you trust the agency staff members?

Trust them very much	Trust them quite a bit	Trust them	Trust them somewhat	Do not trust them at all
1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX C

Letter to Parent Education Programs

April 20, 2000

ATTN: Parent Education Program Director

RE: Latino parent participants

Dear Program Director:

My name is Stephanie Jacobson, and I am a graduate student at Michigan State University. I am working with the National Alliance of Children's Trust and Prevention Funds to study the provision of preventive parent education programming to Latino parents.

In order to assure that there are a sufficient number of programs serving Latinos to make the survey worthwhile, I am sending out a preliminary postcard questionnaire. It has two questions, and will take approximately two minutes to complete.

Please check the appropriate boxes and return the self-addressed stamped postcard by May 17. Thank you for your cooperation!

Sincerely,

Stephanie Jacobson, Ph.D. Candidate
Department of Psychology
Michigan State University
Psychology Research Building
East Lansing, MI 48824-1117
Phone: (517) 353-6617
Fax: (517) 432-2022
Email: jacobs48@msu.edu

Letter to State Trust Funds

April 12, 2000

Director, Children's Trust Fund

RE: Programs serving Latino parents

Dear Trust Fund Director:

The National Alliance of Children's Trust and Prevention Funds and researchers in the Psychology department at Michigan State University are planning to study the provision of preventive parent education programming offered to Latino parents.

In order to assure that there are a sufficient number of programs serving a sufficient number of Latinos to make the research worthwhile and valid, we are contacting programs to find out how many Latino parents they serve.

We need your help to identify programs that serve Latinos. Enclosed are five letters with self-addressed, stamped postcards to be returned to us. We would greatly appreciate it if you would distribute these to programs within your state that you know serve a significant number of Latino parents.

If you are aware of more than five programs that could be included in this research and are interested in receiving more letters, please contact Stephanie Jacobson in one of the ways offered below. Thank you very much for your assistance.

Sincerely,

David Mills, **Executive Director**   *Stephanie Jacobson*
National Alliance of Children's   Phone: (517) 353-6617
Trust and Prevention Funds   Fax: (517) 432-2022
Phone: (517) 432-5096   Email: jacobs48@msu.edu.
Fax: (517) 432-2476
Email: millsda@msu.edu

Department of Psychology
Michigan State University
East Lansing, MI 48824-1117

APPENDIX E

Postcard Questionnaire

Our parent education programming serves the following number of
Latino parents at the current time:

   ___<10   ___ 11-15   ___ 16-20   ___ 21-25   ___ 26+

Other minority populations we serve in significant numbers:

     African American   _____ (Number)

     _____   _____

     _____   _____

Program Name _____

Agency Name _____

Address _____

_____

Phone _____   Fax _____

Contact Person _____

APPENDIX F

Formulas for Justifying Aggregation

ICC(1)

$$\frac{MSB-MSW}{\{MSB + [(k-1)MSW]\}}$$

MSB = between-group mean square

MSW = within-group mean square

k = average group size

ICC(2)

$$\frac{(MSB-MSW)}{MSB}$$

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