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This study sought to expand the field's understanding of the educational involvement of Latino parents whose children were English Learners and attended Catholic schools. Specifically, we attempted to identify factors that facilitate as well as prohibit involvement in two home-based types of educational involvement and two specific school-based types of educational involvement. In our sample of 329 Latino immigrant parents, their responses yielded a pattern of predictors that appear to be related to both home- and school-based participation. Namely, feeling that teachers are invested in one's child and feeling overwhelmed by other obligations appear as statistically significant predictors of each type of involvement. Perceived language barriers were also significant predictors of parent involvement in two instances. Implications for efforts to support parental educational involvement of Latino immigrant parents are discussed.

Keywords: Parent involvement, Latinos, educational involvement, English Learners

Parental educational involvement has been widely studied as one of the most important predictors of school success for all students (Jeynes, 2003, 2007, 2011; Niehaus & Adelson, 2014). Regardless of age, children with more involved parents tend to have higher attendance, achievement levels, and more positive attitudes toward school than children whose parents are less involved (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). While this finding has been replicated in many studies using United States samples (Jeynes, 2003, 2007), it has also been supported in studies using international samples (Davies, 1993; Smit & Driessen, 2007). Given the changing demographics of students in U.S.

schools, recent attention has been paid to patterns of parental educational involvement by factors including cultural background and native language.

Recent statistics reveal that over 5 million school-aged children are categorized as English Learners (ELs), comprising 10% of the students in U.S. schools (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2016). ELs have been defined as children who are still in the process of developing proficiency in English, as measured by standardized tests of speaking, listening, reading, and writing (Linquanti & Cook, 2013). This large and growing student subgroup contains ample diversity, with more than 300 languages spoken by children and their families (NCES, 2016). Nonetheless, Latinos from Spanish-speaking households are the majority, with 76.5% of ELs indicating a home language of Spanish (NCES, 2016). Across the country, whether in public, private, or parochial schools in urban, suburban, or rural settings, both sub-groups of Latinos and ELs are on the rise, with Latinos increasing from 13.5% to 25.9% of the U.S. student population from 1995 to 2015 (NCES, 2016).

With this study, we investigate parental involvement within the large and growing sub-group of Latino ELs, specifically in the context of Catholic schools in a large urban area. While all schools toil with how to best serve this student population, Catholic school settings have both unique opportunities and challenges. The large majority of Latinos are Catholic, which provides opportunities for Catholic schools to increase enrollment and positively influence Latino children and families through Catholic education (Alliance for Catholic Education [ACE], 2009). In addition to the historical trend of Catholic schools attracting students from immigrant families, more and more recent immigrants from Spanish-speaking countries are looking for parochial options to public schools (Louie & Holdaway, 2009; Ospino & Weitzel-O'Neill, 2016). With regard to ELs, Catholic schools face challenges, particularly in identifying and labeling students without federal guidelines, procedures, and funding afforded to public schools. In this way, whereas Latinos are a common demographic sub-group receiving growing attention in Catholic education circles, ELs are less scrutinized (ACE, 2009; Ospino & Weitzel-O'Neill, 2016). In this paper, we examine the predictors of educational involvement of Latino parents of ELs in Catholic schools. Findings have implications for how schools can design and implement parent outreach programs that promote educational involvement.

Literature Review

English Learners and Their Parents

Although there are many differences among children who fall into the homogenous EL category, researchers have identified several commonalities that have implications for educational achievement (Heineke, Coleman, Ferrell, & Kersemeier, 2012; Herrera, 2010; Howard, Paéz, August, Barr, Kenyon, & Malabonga, 2014; Leung & Uchikoshi, 2012; Wrigley, 2000). Specifically, ELs are more likely to have parents with lower formal education levels than their non-EL counterparts (Capps, Fix, Murray, Ost, Passel, & Hewantoro, 2005) and to come from low-income, immigrant families (Garcia & Cuellar, 2006). While there are many examples of ELs who are able to succeed academically, even in under-resourced, urban schools (Concha, 2006), these students also tend to experience discrimination and culturally-related stressors that create unique challenges for this population (Rosenbloom & Way, 2004). These unique factors, in combination with school environments that often do not meet their needs, often lead to lower levels of academic achievement in ELs (Fry, 2008; Jensen, 2008). Hence, finding ways to improve the educational achievement of these children is an important priority for many school systems.

Since parental involvement has been found to be important to the educational successes of children regardless of their cultural backgrounds (Smit & Driessen, 2007), more recent research has examined how schools can maximize the educational involvement of parents of ELs (Hong, 2012; Wink, 2005). Parents of ELs often face unique barriers to being more actively involved in their children's academic lives. This is particularly relevant when considering school-based involvement such as attending parent-teacher conferences, volunteering in the classroom or for field trips, and participating in events such as family literacy nights. Parents of ELs may be less likely to exhibit school-based educational involvement for a variety of reasons, including (a) negative attitudes from staff as well as other parents (Hill & Torres, 2010), (b) a lack of English proficiency (Quezada, Diaz, & Sanchez, 2003), and (c) logistical barriers such as childcare and work responsibilities making it difficult to attend school functions (Valdes, 1996).

On the other hand, other types of educational engagement, specifically home-based involvement, may be more common for parents of ELs. Examples of home-based involvement include talking to one's child about the importance of education or what happened at school, monitoring homework, or providing structure in the home that facilitates educational success (e.g.,

having appropriate bed times, space for studying in the home). Research by Jeynes (2011) suggests that parental expectations and communication about the value of school are more powerful influences than are more overt types of parental involvement (e.g., checking homework) or even school-based types of involvement. Hence, it is important to understand the factors that impact different types of parental involvement rather than making generalizations about general "involvement," and to understand that different barriers and facilitating factors may be related to home- vs. school-based educational involvement of parents of ELs.

There is an emerging literature that has examined what types of school involvement are most and least often exhibited by parents of ELs (e.g., Ingram, Wolfe, & Lieberman, 2007), which has revealed that in-home types of educational involvement such as monitoring homework and asking children about their school day were the most frequently reported types of involvement. Previous studies, such as Vera, Israel, Coyle, Mull, Lynn-Knight, and Goldberger (2012), not only replicated the findings that monitoring homework and asking children about their school day were most commonly reported by ethnically diverse parents of ELs, but that parents cited language barriers, a lack of familiarity with the U.S. educational system, and a desire not to interfere with teachers' work as reasons they were not as active in school-based activities. These barriers have also been reported in other studies that have examined the unique challenges that parents of ELs face that impact their educational involvement (Ariza, 2010; De Gaetano, 2007).

Latino Parental Involvement

Within the literature on educational involvement of parents of ELs, there is great interest in understanding the experiences of Latino parents due to the increasingly large number of Latino students attending schools. Existing scholarship on Latino parent involvement emphasizes the combined socioeconomic and cultural factors that impact Latino students' academic performance as well as the involvement of their parents in educational activities (Gallimore & Goldenberg 2001; Meece & Kurtz-Costes, 2001; Suarez-Orozco, Suarez-Orozco, & Todorova, 2008). Regarding cultural influences, Hill and Torres (2010) note that in many Latino communities, parents believe that they are responsible for teaching children to become moral, responsible individuals, but that teachers are in charge of the academic development. Latino parents, therefore, are often unaccustomed to the notion of being equal partners with teachers on the academic aspects of education, exacerbated by the fact that they hold the profession of teaching and teachers in high esteem

(Jones, 2003; Yan & Lin, 2005). Due to these potential differences in beliefs about their roles, Latino parents might feel less comfortable with the expectations schools have for them, in particular if teachers expect them to engage in activities that impact their home life (Ramirez, 2003). In other words, in the same way that parents respect teachers' roles in the educational arena, they also expect teachers to respect parents' roles in the home arena (Hill & Torres, 2010).

Hill (2009) also notes that teachers underestimate the cultural assumptions from which the schools operate. Many Latino parents, in particular first generation Latinos, were not educated in U.S. schools; due to their lack of familiarity with the educational system, they may not know if or how to participate or even what questions to ask to become more knowledgeable (Gandara & Contreras, 2009; Jones, 2003; Ramirez, 2003; Yan & Lin, 2005). For example, Latino parents often do not know that the more "active" parents, as defined by school involvement, are often given greater influence on school matters through participation on parent-teacher organizations or local school councils.

Home- versus school-expectations for children may also be inconsistent for Latino families. Hill and Torres (2010) discovered that many Latino children have significant responsibilities in the home that may deter from their roles as students, such as taking care of siblings or cooking meals. Thus, children's developing orientation toward family responsibilities may be seen as competing with commitments to schooling, since teachers often expect them to spend a great deal of time outside of school focusing on academic responsibilities (Lopez, 2001). However, some schools have found ways to support the multiple roles and duties that Latino students and their parents have, including tapping into these assets as funds of knowledge for learning (Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005). This may be particularly true of schools where Latino children are statistically well-represented, which is often the case in majority-minority school districts (Cohen & Clewell, 2007). Thus, school context and demographics must be considered as potential variables impacting educational involvement of parents of EL students.

Finally, scholars have also noted that classism is often a major barrier to the involvement of parents of EL and ethnic minority students in that they are undervalued as partners by school personnel (Lareau, 2011). Thus, Latino parents of EL students may have beliefs and values that can be mistaken by school personnel for a lack of interest in being involved, but there are equal contributions from the school environment that may result in them feeling less valued even when they do participate in school events. Since parents'

social capital is as much as function of social class as it is ethnicity and/or language use (Horvat, Weininger, & Lareau, 2003), parents of EL students who are ethnic minority, low-income, and whose primary language is not English may be at considerable risk for being marginalized and devalued by school personnel.

School Context: Catholic vs. Public Differences in Parent Involvement

In addition to identifying factors that facilitate and impede parental involvement of particular cultural groups, it is important to study these phenomena in a variety of school contexts. As mentioned above, some schools where ELs are well represented may adjust their expectations of parental involvement to facilitate participation (e.g., by providing translators at parent-teacher conferences, having report card pick up on the weekends), a finding supported by recent literature (Niehaus & Adelson, 2014). Additionally, not all schools may provide a variety of events to which parents are invited, sometimes due to a lack of resources.

An emerging body of empirical evidence suggests that schools of choice (e.g. Catholic schools, charter schools) have higher levels of parental involvement than public, non-magnet schools (Goldring & Phillips, 2008). In a recent federal analysis of trends in educational involvement of parents, researchers found that a larger percentage of private school students had parents who were involved in school activities compared with students enrolled in public schools (Grady & Bielick, 2010). In this analysis, more private school parents had attended a general school meeting (98% vs. 88%), attended a school event (88% vs. 72%), and volunteered or served on a committee (69% vs. 37%). Furthermore, in comparison to parents whose children attend public schools, studies have found that parents whose children attend private schools perceive that parent involvement and parent communication are more easily facilitated and valued in private school settings (Goldring & Phillips, 2008), perhaps because private schools tend to be smaller with stronger sense of community. This sense of community is further enhanced within a religious context that intentionally fosters the interweaving of a spiritual mission within the home, the school, and the community (Boyle, 2010; Ozar & Weitzel-O'Neill, 2013).

Based on existing literature, it may be reasonable to assume that private schools represent a context more conducive to higher levels of educational involvement by parents. Nonetheless, few studies examining this trend have specifically focused on parents of ELs or Latino parents of ELs, particularly in Catholic schools. Due to cultural ties to Catholicism, Latino parents may

be attracted to parochial schools due to the direct connection to their local churches (Scanlan & Zehrbach, 2013). Given what is known about the higher rates of parent involvement of private school parents as a group, this particular group of parents' experiences might help shed light on the factors related to maximizing parents of ELs' educational involvement.

The Current Study

The current study seeks to expand the field's understanding of the involvement of Latino parents with children labeled as ELs, specifically focused on factors that facilitate and prohibit involvement in Catholic schools. We examine two specific home-based types of educational involvement (i.e., talking with children about their education and providing structures/routines in the home which promote educational success) and two specific school-based types of educational involvement (i.e., talking with the teachers about their children and volunteering in the classroom or at school events). In the current investigation, we examine the following research question: What are most important predictors of home-based involvement vs. school-based involvement for Latino parents of ELs who send their children to Catholic schools?

Method

Context and Participants

Participants in this study were 329 parents of children classified as ELs who attended one of 13 private, Catholic schools in a large Midwestern, urban environment. In this metropolis, almost 1.5 million individuals speak Spanish at home, including approximately 80% of labeled ELs in P-12 schools (Shin & Kominski, 2010). These 13 schools made up on one regional vicariate, an organizational structure within the larger diocese, which served predominantly Latino students and families. Initially, 1,851 surveys were sent out, yielding an 18% response rate. In terms of gender, 87% of participants were female and 13% male. In terms of households, the number of children living with participants ranged from 1 to 9, with the mean being 2.25 (SD= 1.1). Other respondent details can be found in Table 1.

In order to determine our statistical power to detect relations among the home-based and school-based involvement outcomes and our three categories of predictor variables, we conducted a power analysis. Using equations that had 9 separate predictors and a power level of .90, it was determined that we would need 245 participants to detect small effects (i.e., .10). Our sample size met this requirement.

Table 1

*Participants' Country of Origin, Marital Status,
Education Level,
and Work Status*

Variable	%
Country of Origin	
Mexico	48.6
United States	24.0
Other Latin America	27.4
Marital Status	
Married, living together	66.0
Single	15.8
Married, living apart	3.7
Divorced	8.1
Separated	5.3
Widow/Widower	1.0
Education	
High School Diploma	30.1
Attended college	18.0
College degree	15.8
Associates degree	11.2
Elementary school	11.2
Graduate degree	10.9
Work Status	
Full-time	65.7
Unemployed	18.7
Part-time	13.1
Temporary	2.5

Procedure

School administrators participating in this project contacted individual schools to identify all students who were labeled as ELs. Parents of eligible children were sent surveys with self-addressed stamped envelopes addressed to the researchers, as well as cover letters explaining the purpose of the survey, anonymity of the process, and other pertinent consent information. The surveys and accompanying letters were sent in Spanish and English for parents to choose the language in which they would respond. The survey contained questions aimed at understanding the opinions, experiences, and interests of parents of ELs. Participants were informed that the data would be used both for exploratory research purposes and to identify topics in which parent workshops would be created and delivered by the university partners.

Instrument

A survey was created by adapting relevant items from the Family Involvement Questionnaire (Fantuzzo, Tighe, & Childs, 2000). Specifically, we retained 12 of the original items that assessed traditional types of parent involvement in the home and at school, as conceptualized by the authors of the scale (e.g., home-school conferencing, monitoring homework, limiting television viewing). In addition to assessing involvement, we wanted to assess factors that promote involvement (e.g., teachers encouraging involvement), parents' educational aspirations for their children, and reasons that parents might not be involved based on the literature on immigrant parents. We accomplished this by adding 19 new items designed to measure potential barriers affecting parental involvement in schools and factors that promote involvement and then ran alpha coefficient analyses on the scores from all the items by category to check the inter-item consistency reliability (included below.) The types of involvement included within the original survey follow the typology of Epstein (1995) with the exception of decision making involvement and collaboration with the community. The survey was previously utilized by Vera et al. (2012). Each of the items was accompanied by a five-point Likert scale in which parents indicated their level of agreement. Higher scores indicated stronger agreement with an item.

The predictor factors were measured by subscales including: educational expectations for one's child measured by 3 items (α =.98; e.g., expecting one's child to graduate, attend college); encouragement of parental involvement by school staff, measured by five items (α = .88; e.g., I feel encouraged to participate by teachers, staff have welcomed my presence, teachers have explained the importance of involvement); feeling that teachers are invested in one's

child, measured by 2 items (α = .75; e.g., I feel teachers are invested in the success of my child, I feel my child is getting the best experience he/she can from teachers), having negative experiences with school personnel, measured by 2 items (α = .70; e.g., I have felt unwelcome in the school, I have felt disrespected by staff), logistical barriers to involvement, measured by 3 items (α = .60; e.g., events are held at inconvenient times, transportation issues, other time demands) and several factors measured by single items: not participating due to language barriers, not wanting to interfere with how teachers do their job, lack of knowledge about the educational system, and being overwhelmed by stress from other responsibilities. These individual items, which were added by the authors and not a part of Fantuzzo et al.'s (2000) original scale, were intended to measure culturally-specific barriers relevant to the current sample. The decision to add single items (versus subscales) was made out of a desire to keep the survey length manageable. Since reliability cannot be assessed on single item measures, we did not include α values for these factors.

Subscales also measured the four types of involvement outcomes: Providing structure in the home in terms of routines and monitoring of homework, measured by 4 items (α = .62); communicating with child about school experiences, measured by 2 items (α = .76), talking with teachers through conferences and informally, measured by 2 items (α = .64); and a one item scale, volunteering at the school. While reliability estimates between .70 and .60 are generally considered to be "questionable" (Lowenthal, 2004), it is more commonplace when scales have few items, which was the case in several instances on this survey. Alpha levels lower than .50 are generally considered "unacceptable" (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011).

Data Analysis

To examine interrelationships among the types of parental educational involvement, home vs. school based, and barriers to and facilitators of participation, Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated on the main variables of interest: our home and school-based involvement, factors that promote involvement, and factors that may impede involvement. To determine what factors would significantly predict involvement types, hierarchical multiple regression was used. Hierarchical regression was used in order for similar predictors to be grouped (i.e., factors that promote involvement such as parents' educational attitudes, teacher's level of investment in the child, encouragement from the teachers to be involved) and their relation to the outcome variable could be examined uniquely (by looking at the change in R^2). Specifically, four equations were calculated using the following factors:

predictor variables included three blocks of factors: (a) Facilitators of involvement including: Educational expectations for child, Perception that Teachers are Invested in Child, and Encouragement to be involved by teachers/staff; (b) Individual Barriers to participation including: language barriers, not wishing to interfere with how teachers do their jobs, being unfamiliar with the U.S. Educational system, not having formal education; and for the final block (c) School barriers including logistical conflicts and having negative experiences with school personnel. For each equation, one outcome was examined: Home-Based Educational Involvements: (a) providing structure in the home and (b) talking to child about education; and School-Based Educational Involvements: (c) talking to teachers about child (d) volunteering at school.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Means, standard deviations, and potential range of the variables of interest and two demographic characteristics of participants, years in the United States and number of children residing with the family are reported in Table 2. By examining the means in comparison to the potential maximum scores, most of the means are positively skewed, indicating that parents in general had positive experiences with their children's schools and that their levels of both home-based and school-based participation were relatively high.

Inferential Statistics

Table 3 contains a Pearson correlational matrix for the predictor variables and our 4 involvement outcomes of interest (i.e., talking with child, talking with teacher, providing home structure, and volunteering at the school). Talking with one's child about school was significantly related to three involvement-promoting factors (being encouraged to be involved by teachers, feeling teachers were invested in one's child, having high educational expectations) and two barriers (language barriers, feeling overwhelmed by stressors). Talking with the teacher and providing home structure were both significantly related to two promoting factors (being encouraged to be involved, feeling teachers are invested in one's child) and two barriers (feeling overwhelmed by stressors, logistical problems). Volunteering in the school was significantly related to being encouraged to be involved and feeling overwhelmed by stressors. To determine how much variance in the outcome variables would be explained by these factors as a group, we then calculated hierarchical regression equations.

Table 2

Means, standard deviations, & potential ranges on main variables and demographics

Item	Mean	SD	Range
Number of kids living with you	2.25	1.11	0-9
Years living in the United States	26.95	11.72	0-50
Expectations for child's success	14.88	1.04	3-15
Belief in school's investment in child	9.13	1.28	2-10
Encouragement to be involved	21.97	3.93	5-25
Language barriers	2.04	1.49	1-5
Don't want to interfere	2.22	1.49	1-5
Unfamiliar with U.S. education system	1.94	1.22	1-5
Negative experiences with school	2.60	1.31	2-10
Logistical barriers to participation	5.59	2.34	3-15
Structure home environment	17.30	2.35	4-20
Talks with child about education	9.55	0.95	2-10
Talks/conferences with teacher	8.27	1.61	2-10
Volunteers at school	2.65	1.36	1-5

Table 3

Correlations of Parent Involvement Types, Facilitators and Barriers of Parental Involvement

Variable	Talk to Child	Home Structure	Talk to Teacher	Volunteer
Expectations	.22*	.01	.03	-.03
Investment	.25**	.23**	.21**	.03
Encouraged	.13*	.16**	.27**	.17**
Language	-.14*	-.10	-.01	-.07
Interfere	-.06	-.01	-.01	.01
Unfamiliar	-.10	-.07	-.08	-.05
Stress	-.17**	-.22**	-.16**	-.18**
Neg. Exp.	-.09	-.09	-.01	.01
Logistics	-.03	-.13*	-.19**	-.06

Note. * indicates a significance of $p<.05$ and ** indicates a significance of $p<.01$

   To determine whether multicolinearity would have a detrimental effect on our results from the regression analyses, we examined tolerance and VIF statistics on our four equations. We did not find any values that indicated serious multicolinearity problems (e.g., all VIF statistics were around 1.2 with the highest being 2.8). These statistics indicate that the power to detect significant relations between our predictors and outcome variables was not significantly affected by multicolinearity.

   Hierarchical regression equations were calculated using the three blocks of variables previously noted and the following results were found. In terms of predicting providing structure in the home, the variables as a group accounted for 10% of the variance, with feeling teachers are invested in one's child (β = .29, p<.05) and being overwhelmed by other responsibilities (β = -.15, p<.05) being the significant predictors. With respect to predicting talking to one's child about school, the variables as a group accounted for 13% of the variance, with having high expectations for one's child (β = .15, p<.05), feeling teachers are invested in one's child (β = .23, p<.05) , not being comfortable with English (β = -.16, p<.05), and being overwhelmed by other responsibilities (β = -.15, p<.05) being significant predictors. With respect to predicting talking to the teacher, the variables as a group predicted 9% of the variance and feeling encouraged to participate (β = .26, p<.05) was a significant predictor. Finally, with respect to predicting volunteering at the school, the variables as a group accounted for 9% of the variance with feeling encouraged to be involved (β = .34, p<.05), feeling teachers are invested in one's child (β = .22, p<.05), and being overwhelmed with other responsibilities (β = -.18, p<.05) being the significant predictors.

   Tables 4-7 contain a summary of the statistics from the regression equations. Taken together, these findings suggest that being encouraged to be involved and feeling that teachers are invested in one's child were significant predictors of at least two of the home- and school-based involvement outcomes. Being overwhelmed by stressors was a significant predictor of three of the four outcomes.

Table 4

Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Talking with Child on Parental Expectations,
Teacher Investment in Child, Teacher Encouragement, and Barriers to Involvement

Step and predictor variable	B	SE(B)	β	ΔR^2
Step 1				.08**
Expectations	.13	.06	.15*	
Investment	.18	.08	.23*	
Encouragement	-.04	.02	-.16	
Step 2				.044*
Language Barrier	-.11	.05	-.16*	
Interference	.03	.05	.04	
Stress	-.12	.05	-.15*	
Lack of familiarity	.01	.06	.01	
Step 3				.01
Negative experiences	-.04	.05	-.03	
Logistics	.04	.03	.09	

Note. Total $F(9, 263)$ for Step 3 = 4.17**, R^2 = .13, * $p<.05$ and ** $p<.01$

Table 5

Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Home Structure on Teacher Investment in Child,
Teacher Encouragement, and Barriers to Involvement

Step and predictor variable	B	SE(B)	β	ΔR^2
Step 1				.06**
Expectations	-.24	.14	-.12	
Investment	.52	.18	.29**	
Encouragement	-.05	.06	-.07	
Step 2				.04*
Language Barrier	-.19	.11	-.12	
Interference	.16	.12	.09	
Stress	-.28	.13	-.15*	
Lack of familiarity	.04	.14	.02	
Step 3				.01
Negative experiences	-.01	.12	-.01	
Logistics	-.03	.07	-.03	

Note. Total $F(9, 262)$ for Step 3 = 2.93**, Adjusted R^2 = .10, * $p<.05$ and **
$p<.01$

Table 6

Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Talking with Teacher on Teacher Investment in Child, Teacher Encouragement, and Barriers to Involvement

Step and predictor variable	B	SE(B)	β	ΔR^2
Step 1				.07**
Expectations	-.13	.10	-.09	
Investment	.04	.13	.03	
Encouragement	.11	.04	.26**	
Step 2				.01
Language Barrier	-.04	.08	-.03	
Interference	.06	.08	-.03	
Stress	-.04	.09	-.03	
Lack of familiarity	-.04	.11	-.03	
Step 3				.01
Negative experiences	.08	.09	.06	
Logistics	-.09	.05	-.12	

Note. Total $F(9, 265)$ for Step 3 = 2.79**, R^2 = .09, * $p<.05$ and ** $p<.01$

Table 7

Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Volunteering in School on Teacher Investment in Child, Teacher Encouragement, and Barriers to Involvement

Step and predictor variable	B	SE(B)	β	ΔR^2
Step 1				.05**
Expectations	-.08	.09	-.07	
Investment	-.23	.11	-.22*	
Encouragement	.12	.03	.34**	
Step 2				.03*
Language Barrier	-.04	.07	-.05	
Interference	.03	.07	.03	
Stress	-.20	.07	-.18**	
Lack of familiarity	-.07	.08	-.06	
Step 3				.01
Negative experiences	.08	.08	.07	
Logistics	.04	.04	.06	

Note. Total $F(9, 263)$ for Step 3 = 2.68**, R^2 = .09, * $p<.05$ and ** $p<.01$

Discussion

An emerging body of literature has begun to identify factors that facilitate educational involvement in parent communities that are often portrayed as under-involved, relative to mainstream, Anglo parents (e.g., Smit & Driessen, 2007). With a large and growing presence in both public and parochial schools across the United States, Latino parents of ELs are one such community. In this study, we examined the predictors of home- and school-based participation in a sample of Latino parents whose children attended Catholic schools, anticipating that such school contexts might be more conducive to parent involvement given their size, religious affiliation, and the fact that they are schools of choice. Results identify a pattern of predictors related to both home- and school-based participation. Namely, statistically significant predictors of at least two types of Latino parental involvement include: (a) feeling that teachers are invested in one's child, (b) feeling encouraged to be involved by teachers, and (c) feeling overwhelmed by other obligations.

Findings indicate the importance of the classroom teacher in the engagement of Latino parents of ELs, as two significant predictors rely largely on the role and agency of the teacher. Parents reported the centrality of teachers' investment in their children, as well as encouragement to take part in home and school practices associated with home-school engagement. Whereas the classroom teacher is typically characterized as the number one in-school factor supporting student achievement (Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2005), particularly with the oft marginalized and vulnerable sub-group of students labeled as ELs (Gandara & Maxwell-Jolly, 2006), findings demonstrate the central role of the teacher in connecting with the number one out-of-school factor supporting student achievement – parents and parental involvement (Smit & Driessen, 2007). This pertinent finding aligns with the literature on the importance of teachers' attitudes towards EL students and parents (Greenwood & Hickman, 1991; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005; Olsen & Fuller, 2008; Vera et al., 2012).

These results also have implications for teacher preparation for ELs, as the large majority of teachers lack the needed knowledge and skills for supporting students inside the classroom or for engaging parents and families inside and outside of the school (Cohen & Clewell, 2007). Findings indicate that Latino parental involvement may increase when teachers of ELs are well-prepared and equipped to hold students to high expectations, invest students in educational practices, support student achievement, and create learning environments that welcome and celebrate both students and families

as important members of the school community (Heineke et al., 2012; Herrera, 2010; Wrigley, 2000). A recent report noted that Catholic school principals who speak Spanish or have participated in intercultural competency training programs are more likely to ensure that their schools are welcoming environments for Latino families (Ospino & Weitzel-O'Neill, 2016). This is an important reminder that culturally competent leadership is vital to the creation and maintenance of culturally responsive schools (Lindsey, Roberts & Campbell; Jones, 2013; Miramontes, Nadeau, & Commins, 2011; Scanlan & Lopez, 2015).

In addition to the significant predictors related to classroom teachers' investment in students and encouragement of parents, an additional statistically significant predictor of Latino parental involvement was feeling overwhelmed by other obligations. With multiple demands placed on parents outside of schools, such as working at one or multiple jobs and taking care of other children, Latino parents of ELs often struggled to juggle the multiple obligations in order to take part in schools regularly. This finding related to parental stress and obligations aligns to previous literature (Hill & Torres, 2010; Vera et al., 2012) and may be a particularly relevant issue for low-income parents who live in urban settings, where stressors associated with daily living can be exacerbated. Significance of this finding relates to school-based actors' considerations of structures and systems to support parental involvement in spite of the multiple demands outside of their control, such as holding events in the evenings and providing childcare (Dallavis, 2014; Vera et al., 2012). One anecdotal example from a school that participated in this study was the move to hold report card pick up day after Sunday Mass, when most parents were in attendance.

To further interpret these findings, we examine factors that did not significantly predict involvement in this sample, but might have based on previous studies (e.g., Hill & Torres, 2010; Quezada, Diaz, & Sanchez, 2003). For example, not wanting to interfere with teachers' roles was not a significant predictor of any type of parent involvement, nor was being unfamiliar with the U.S. educational system. Given that these two factors are often identified as "cultural differences" that impact parental involvement in Latino parents (Hill & Torres, 2010; Quezada et al., 2003), is it possible that these parents did not hold such beliefs? To answer this question, it is important to reflect on the attitudes of immigrant parents in particular, which made up a large percentage of this study's sample on Latino parents of ELs. Parents' perceptions of school expectations could be influenced by personal experiences of

education, which for more recent immigrants may have occurred outside the United States. Or, attitudes could be shaped by the orientation and preparation that schools make available to parents when they enroll their children in school.

Although outside the scope of this study, it could be that the Catholic schools in this study did a good job of explaining the educational system and its expectations for both parent involvement and collaboration between parents and teachers. Given that Catholic schools often do more recruiting with parents to enhance their likelihood of enrolling their children, as opposed to public schools that do not depend on such recruiting, efforts to prepare, orient, and engage parents may be given a higher priority (ACE, 2009). Similarly, Catholic schools may be more effective at establishing partnerships with parents that communicate the importance of parent involvement and the level of investment that teachers have in their children's success, particularly due to their size, connection to community Parishes, and smaller teacher-student ratios (Ospino & Weitzel-O'Neill, 2016).

Implications for Promoting Parent Involvement

Results suggest that finding ways to facilitate the communication of teachers' investment in students' success is an important component in promoting Latino EL parents' home- and school-based educational involvement. While this communication is traditionally done through parent-teacher conferences and open houses, there are less formal and more parent-friendly ways that these messages can also be transmitted. For example, some schools involved in this study have used relationships with the community Parishes to reach out to parents. They sponsor social events at the school after masses on Sunday where teachers and parents can communicate and in some cases have moved their parent-teacher conferences to Sundays to make it easy for parents, who are already at church with their families, to get timely feedback about their children's academic performance. This type of flexibility can decrease the stress that comes from trying to be involved in children's educational lives while trying to juggle the demands of working, childcare, and other parent demands. This flexibility and outreach also sends a message to parents that their involvement and partnership with the school is valued, which is often a different message from what parents who miss events like report-card pick up day may receive.

These data also suggest that Latino parents, like many parents, are often challenged by the day-to-day struggles of being a parent who may work or

have other childcare obligations. Finding ways to provide structure and support for educational activities at home, much less finding the time to volunteer in the school, amidst all the stressors that come with being parents, may be something to which school staff can respond. Several recent scholars have addressed the idea of schools responding to the needs of parents as opposed to traditional practice where parents are expected to respond to the needs of the school (e.g., come to events, participate in parent-teacher association; Bolivar & Chrispeels, 2011; Horsford, Grosland & Gunn, 2011; Hong, 2012; Jeynes, 2011; Sobel & Kugler, 2007).

This philosophy of working in collaboration with parents as opposed to a more paternalistic approach where parents are told what "to do" is championed by Wink (2005) as well as a plethora of other scholars (Gunderson, D'Silva, & Odo, 2014; Henderson, Mapp, Johnson, & Davies, 2007; Mendez, 2005; Warren, Hong, Rubin, & Sychitkikhong Uy, 2009). For example, there may be opportunities for parents to come to schools not to serve the schools, but to meet with other parents, share resources, and deal with parental stressors, which indirectly facilitate greater educational involvement. In one school that participated in this study, parents organize pot-luck dinners and leisure events (e.g., game nights) for other parents, which occur at the school, and are simply meant to be social outlets. When parents feel that the schools are there to support the entire family, not just the academic success of their children, then they may be more likely to give back to the school and to feel a sense of connection to the school and its staff (Vera et al., 2012).

Yet for efforts like these to be successful, parents must be treated like the assets they are (Yosso, 2005). Scholars have argued that parents of ELs are less likely to be seen as and treated as peers by school personnel (Noguero, 2001; Valenzuela, 2005). Traditionally, parents of EL students may be marginalized due to their social class as well as ethnicity and language use (Horvat, Weininger, & Lareau, 2003). It should be noted that the parents who participated in our study may not be typical of other Latino parents or parents of EL children with respect to socio-economic status, even if language use and ethnicity were factors in their relationships with school personnel. Given that the parents in the current study were considerably more educated than may be the case with other immigrant parents, this may have contributed to the positive experiences they had in their children's schools. Thus, it is likely to be school-based and parent- based factors that influenced the responses of our participants.

It is also important to consider curricular approaches that increase parent involvement. With respect to Latino EL students who attend Catholic schools, two-way immersion (TWI) Catholic schools, in which entire classes are educated in two languages—English and Spanish—are making a remarkable difference in their engagement of Latino families and children. These schools score the highest in terms of bilingual and bicultural faculty, the highest engagement of Latino families, and the highest levels of incorporation of Latino cultural and religious traditions (Ospino & Weitzel-O'Neill, 2016). TWI programs empower students, regardless of their native language abilities, to become true partners in the educational goals of all students (Morales & Aldana, 2010; Escamilla et al., 2014). This can be a greater challenge for schools that rely on English as a Second Language (ESL) programs that require non-native English speakers to become competent in English to fully participate in the school community where communication and access require English fluency.

On this topic, the languages that are prioritized in Catholic schools also need to be inclusive. For example, efforts to reach out to Latino families and their children must authentically foster and translate into welcoming environments. According to Ospino & Weitzel-O'Neill(2016), only 21% of Catholic schools in their study displayed prominent school signage in Spanish and English; only 25% had ensured that school symbols were culturally diverse and inclusive; only 35% shared school prayers in Spanish and English; and only 36% incorporated Spanish in school liturgies (Ospino & Weitzel-O'Neill, 2016).

Limitations

There are factors that impact the comprehensiveness of this study. First, while we had an adequate sample size to answer our research questions, we did not have a 100% response rate. One might speculate that only parents who were already more involved in their children's education would take the time to respond to a survey, which implies that parents who were much less involved were not well represented in this sample. How the findings would change with better representation is impossible to know, but it is possible that additional factors would have been identified that relate to different types of involvement. To increase parent participation in studies like this one, researchers may wish to use multiple outreach methods such as texting and email, send reminder postcards, or resend the surveys multiple times to parents who may have forgotten to respond or lost the original mailing. Ad-

ditionally, having surveys given to parents at parent-teacher conferences or other events may increase participation. It is also possible that some parents were illiterate, so future studies may also utilize methods that can accommodate such parents (e.g., reading surveys to parents over the phone or in person).

Another limitation is that while we identified statistically significant predictors of our home- and school-based involvement outcomes, our R^2 values suggest that we only accounted for small amounts of variance with the variables we selected to examine as predictors. Thus, there are obviously other factors, and potential interactions of factors, that influence parent educational involvement that we did not capture in this study. Some of these variables may be less specifically relevant to immigrant parents per se, and more a reflection of family dynamics in general, such as the frequency of communication between parents and their children, the extent to which parents are at home to monitor and provide structure to their children, and overall knowledge about effective parenting strategies.

Another limitation that affects the generalizability of our findings is the reported educational levels of our participants. The majority of our participants were educated with at least a high school diploma. While we did not ask whether the participants' educational experiences were based in the U.S., it is reasonable to assume that these participants had a higher level of knowledge about expectations of parental involvement and jobs that might have allowed for greater levels of involvement than we would have found for parents who had less formal education.

In terms of our instrument, we had several subscales on which scores had inter-item reliability estimates that were less than .70. While this creates concerns about the overall reliability of these scores and suggests the need to revisit these items on the measure, the functional consequence of having less than optimal reliability levels is an underestimation of the strength of relations among the variables. This is a limitation that is most relevant to the findings involving predictors of home structure and talking with teachers, and perhaps one reason that we found so few significant predictors for these outcomes.

Finally, given that many of our means for the variables of interest were skewed in a positive direction, we likely encountered range restrictions as a reason we failed to find some statistically significant relationships in our study. For example, there was little variation in the scores that parents reported on subscales, such as talking with one's child or feeling encouragement

from school staff. This statistical problem may in fact reflect well on both the parents and schools that participated in this study. In other words, this sample appears to be comprised of parents who have good experiences with their children's schools and also are very involved parents. This may be an artifact of selecting our sample from Catholic schools, as indicated in previous research (Buckley, 2007; Goldring & Phillips, **2008**). In order to capture the experiences of less involved parents (or parents who were having a less positive experience), we may have had to increase our response rate and in particular, access parents who would be less interested in completing a survey.

Implications for Future Research

Future research should aim to understand a wider range of factors that impact educational involvement in parents of EL children. It is also important to examine additional types of parent involvement. For example, parent leadership involvement (e.g., school boards, parent-teacher associations, local school councils) has not been well explored within this specific population of Latino parents of ELs. It would likely be easier to examine this particular type of involvement in public schools since many Catholic schools do not have the same parent leadership structure that is often mandated in public schools by most states. Parent leadership predictors may be particularly important to study with populations of immigrant parents because parent leadership is an important way for Latino parents to have a voice and a sense of inclusion in helping to shape schools' missions, visions, and priorities (Losen, 2010).

Another direction for future research may be to examine within group differences in the population of parents of ELs. The sample in the current study was Latino, largely immigrant, Catholic, and mostly female. Additionally, the city in which this study took place is a majority-minority city where ethnic groups tend to be segregated geographically. Future research should examine the extent to which cultural homogeneity, the socio-economic diversity of the larger community, and other systemic factors may impact the experiences of parents of ELs. Such information is critical to schools around the United States given the increasing numbers of EL children in today's schools.

Future research should also attempt to capture the experiences of less satisfied parents, which might be more easily done by working with larger, public school districts, and by using more persistent methods of data collection. Given the historical marginalization of many immigrant parents within

school systems, it is precisely the parents who would be less likely to respond to a survey about the school who may have the most valuable things to tell education researchers about the reasons behind their lack of engagement and perhaps, lower educational involvement.

Conclusion

The current study sought to expand the field's understanding of the educational involvement of Latino parents whose children were ELs and attended Catholic schools. While the parents on the whole appeared to be fairly satisfied with the experiences they had with their schools and their levels of involvement were positively skewed, several factors did arise as statistically significant predictors of home- and school-based involvements. Namely, feeling that teachers are invested in one's child and feeling overwhelmed by other obligations appear as statistically significant predictors of each type of involvement. There are a variety of ways that schools can address factors that facilitate parental educational involvement that might be helpful in increasing the overall presence of these parents in the educational endeavors of their children. The positive potential of the Catholic school environment, in particular the intentional weaving of the Catholic mission in the school, home, and community for increasing parent involvement, as displayed by this study's sample, needs to be investigated further as a way to create culturally responsive and inclusive environments for learning.

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