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Social Capital and Determinants of Immigrant Family Educational Involvement

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Abstract

Family educational involvement has been identified as a particularly beneficial practice for the achievement and behavioral outcomes of all students, including ethnic-minority students from families who have low levels of income, education, and English language proficiency. However, despite the associated benefits not all families are involved in their child's education and the explanation for differing involvement patterns has not been fully explored.

This study examines precursors to parent educational involvement with an emphasis on immigrant families who may face more involvement barriers using the immigrant sample from the Child Development Supplement of the Panel Study of Income Dynamics ($N = 189$). Results provide limited support for the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler theoretical model for family involvement; self-efficacy and perceived opportunities for involvement predicted immigrant families' home-based involvement. No antecedents, however, predicted school-based involvement. In addition, results suggest expanding this model to include social capital, which significantly predicted immigrant families' home-based involvement activities.

Keywords

Immigrant; family involvement; self-efficacy; social capital

There has been an increasing recognition that families are a key resource for helping to promote children's educational success and that learning is optimized when families and schools collaborate. Meta-analyses of a large body of research support the notion that family educational involvement is positively associated with student outcomes (e.g., Fan & Chen, 2001; Jeynes, 2007). In general, children whose families are highly involved display better achievement than children whose families are less involved. Very little of this empirical work, however, has been conducted with the fastest growing segment of the K-12 population in the U.S., namely the children of immigrants.

The social and economic future of the United States depends increasingly on investments in the life chances of immigrant children (Hernandez, Denton, & Macartney, 2009). Although immigrant families want their children to excel in school, many face socio-cultural barriers to family educational involvement (Delgado-Gaitan, 2004; Peña, 2000; Ramirez, 2003). Yet,

among newcomer families, there is tremendous between-group *and* within-group variability with regard to their alignment with U.S. educational culture and child-rearing strategies (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 1995, 2001).

Social capital may help explain some of this variability. The relational and context-dependent nature of social capital emphasizes the strengths of immigrant families, such as close family and community ties, which may offer a means for overcoming the unique barriers to educational involvement that immigrant families face.

This study uses an ecological framework to investigate how social capital is related to the ways in which immigrant families are involved in their children's education. The goal of this study is to garner empirical support for a theoretically-based model that links social capital with involvement antecedents and family educational involvement (see Figure 1).

Family Educational Involvement

One of the primary goals of recent education reform policy is to increase family involvement (National Education Goals Panel, 1999). There is substantial evidence demonstrating a positive association between family involvement and student outcomes across ethnic groups (Fan & Chen, 2001; Jeynes, 2007). In addition, research findings suggests that subgroups with “at-risk” characteristics for academic under-achievement (e.g., children from families with low-income, low maternal education, or from homes in which English is not the first language) may benefit uniquely from involvement (Dearing, Kreider, Simpkins, & Weiss, 2006; Tang, Dearing, & Weiss, 2012).

These findings are particularly relevant for immigrant students, because they are more likely to come from families facing exceptional socio-economic risk. Recent estimates indicate that as many as one in two immigrant children live in low-income households; children whose parents are not fluent in English face the greatest risk of economic deprivation, with as many as 70 percent living in low-income households (Hernandez, Denton, Macartney, 2009). Indeed, there is some evidence suggesting that students from immigrant families are likely to benefit uniquely from family educational involvement. Extant research demonstrates that school involvement matters most for the literacy skills of students from low-income, Spanish-speaking families, particularly for those who had struggled early in literacy (Tang et al., 2012).

Despite the benefits for students from immigrant families, not all immigrant families are highly involved. Immigrant Asian and Latino families are less likely, on average, to volunteer in schools in comparison to immigrant and native-born Caucasian families (Turney & Kao, 2009). Some of these between-family differences in involvement may be due, in part, to between-family differences in ecological context, including family cultural background, working conditions, and economic situation. The extent to which families are involved in school-based activities, for example, may be a result of cultural differences regarding how parents perceive their roles and their schools' roles in education. In other words, families' investments in their children's education may take different forms based on complex interactions between family priorities, culture, and other aspects of ecological context.

Antecedents of involvement

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995, 1997) proposed three factors related to why and how families become involved in their children's education. The first factor, role construction, is one barrier that may be of particular importance for understanding the differences in involvement between immigrant and native-born parents because it is highly dependent on parents' cultural ethnotheories (Harkness & Super, 2001). In traditional Mexican-American families, for example, parents are responsible for their children's moral development while the school is responsible for their children's academic development. Parents perceive that asking teachers questions about their children's progress infringes upon the domain of the teacher, who is regarded as the expert of their children's academic education. Consequently, out of deference to and respect for the teacher, Mexican parents may be less likely to engage in traditional forms of family educational involvement (Delgado-Gaitan, 1992).

East Asian families also may be less likely to engage in school-based involvement activities because academic success is viewed as the child's responsibility not the parents', who are responsible for the financial and material resources necessary to support their children's education (Schneider & Lee, 1990). Findings such as these highlight the fact that cultural realities likely vary among immigrant groups, and that immigrant families, who retain and adhere to the values of their native country, are most likely to exhibit involvement patterns that differ from their native-born counterparts due to role construction.

The second factor, parents' feelings of self-efficacy, has been speculated to affect immigrant parents' level of involvement as well. Parents high in self-efficacy are more likely to actively engage in their children's academic development (Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli, 1996). However, since immigrant parents may be unfamiliar with the school system in the U.S. they may not feel confident in their abilities to direct their children's academic trajectory as it may be very different from their experiences in their home country (Peña, 2000). An equally important issue is the fact that many immigrant parents may feel that they lack the requisite English language proficiency to communicate effectively and confidently with their child's teacher (Peña, 2000; Ramirez, 2003).

The third factor impacting family educational involvement is related to whether parents perceive opportunities to become involved and whether parents feel that their help is welcomed and of value. If parents perceive that school-based activities are the only way that they can be involved in their children's activities, they may feel that there are not enough opportunities for them to become engaged in their children's education. This may be particularly true for low-income immigrant families whose adult members are more likely to experience long work days, unstable work schedules, and work places that are located far from their homes (Moles, 1993). Additionally, the type of involvement activity that families engage in is shaped by the value families place on those activities. There is some evidence to suggest that Asian parents are less likely to volunteer in schools, for example, because they do not view that type of involvement as directly beneficial to their child's educational success (Hwa-Froelich & Westby, 2003).

In sum, these three factors are important to consider when conducting research on family educational involvement because they are associated with the ways in which families

become involved. To date, few empirical studies have comprehensively tested this theoretical model and the findings are mixed among those that have taken a comprehensive approach. In a regional study, all three involvement antecedents were predictive of family involvement at home and school during elementary school even after taking into account family income and educational attainment (Green, Walker, Hoover-Dempsey, & Sandler, 2007). These findings were replicated among a nationally representative sample of adolescents, but only one facet of home-based involvement, homework involvement, was investigated (Park & Holloway, 2013). A study that investigated a more nuanced representation of home-based involvement in an urban region, however, found that role construction did not predict any type of involvement, and self-efficacy only predicted home-based involvement (Anderson & Minke, 2010).

Additionally, few studies have examined the precursors to educational involvement among immigrant families. To date, only one study has included immigrant families in their sample. Findings from this study suggest that the only involvement antecedent associated with whether parents engaged in their children's education are their perceptions of involvement opportunities; teachers' invitations for involvement were the most consistent indicator of families' engagement in their children's education at home and in school (Maríñez-Lora & Quintana, 2009). In this study, however, immigrant Latino families were investigated jointly with native-born Latino families, thus potentially confounding results.

Given the mixed empirical findings supporting Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler's theoretical model and the scant attention paid to involvement antecedents for immigrant families, there is need for empirical work that investigates this model comprehensively using a nationally-representative dataset. As children of immigrant families are the fastest growing segment of the population, it is necessary to understand how these factors may enhance or impede immigrant families' proclivities to engage in certain types of educational involvement activities. Beyond cultural-historical considerations, contemporary social contexts likely help shape immigrant families' role and efficacy beliefs as well as their opportunities to be involved in their children's education. As such, it may be necessary to expand the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model to include aspects of families' contemporary social contexts, for example by examining families' social capital.

Social Capital

Although social capital has been conceptualized in a variety of ways within the field of education, at its core social capital is associated with the ways in which individuals connect with one another to create networks that allow for efficient flow of information that benefits those within the relationship network (Dika & Singh, 2002). One method for understanding social capital is to consider its bonding and bridging dimensions (Putnam, 2000). Bonding social capital or the quality of social ties is often generated in contexts, such as ethnic enclaves, where individuals have similar demographic or socioeconomic characteristics, and can provide each other with emotional and psychological support (Putnam, 2000). In contrast, bridging social capital or the quantity of social ties connects individuals from diverse economic and social ecologies, and can confer benefits to its members just by association with the organization. That is, even "weak ties," which may be low in emotional

support and intimate confiding, are capable of linking individuals with resourceful people from disparate social milieus to create a more diverse and extensive social network that can provide access to a wider stockpile of information and services (Granovetter, 1973; Lin & Dumin, 1986). Thus, to adequately examine the wide reaching benefits of social capital for immigrant families and their children, it is necessary to consider both the social support that individuals receive through their interactions with others as well as the number of community ties they have with organizations in their proximal ecologies.

Study Objectives

Guided by both general ecological theories of development and specific theory on how and why families become involved in their children's education, this study will seek to determine whether 1) there is empirical support for Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's (1995, 1997) theoretical model of parent involvement antecedents among immigrant families, and 2) whether the theoretical model of immigrant family educational involvement should be expanded to include social capital.

Methods

Data for this study were drawn from the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID), a nationally representative, multi-method analysis of socioeconomics and health across multiple generations. Specifically, data from the Child Development Supplement (CDS), which collected information on a range of developmental outcomes for a subset of PSID children, were used in this study. Indicators of family educational involvement, family psychological factors, and social capital were included as core measures in the PSID-CDS.

The main interview portion of the PSID collected data from the head of household annually between the years 1968 and 1997, and biennially thereafter. To reflect the new wave of immigrants entering the United States, an immigrant refresher sample was added to the PSID in 1997 to maintain a nationally-representative dataset. Recent immigrants were included in the refresher sample if they immigrated to the U.S. after 1968 and if they were not married to a person who had been in the country since 1968.

PSID families, including families from the immigrant refresher sample, were selected to participate in the CDS in 1997 if they lived in the continental U.S. and had at least 1 child between the ages of 0 and 12. The CDS, which collected additional data relating to a wide range of children's developmental outcomes, reassessed these families and their children every five years as long as the child remained under age 18. To date, the CDS has three waves of data (1997, 2002/2003, and 2007/2008).

The analytic sample for this study consisted of all school-age children from families added to the PSID in the immigrant refresher sample ($N = 189$) with data in the first wave (1997) of the CDS as it was the only wave with data collected on all the variables of interest. Primary caregivers reported on their school involvement and family activities at home for the focal child in a home interview. In a household survey mailed to CDS participants, primary caregivers reported on their role construction around education, self-efficacy, barriers to educational involvement, and social networks. Response rates ranged from 63 to

100 percent with household surveys having the lowest response rates (see Hofferth, Davis-Kean, Davis, & Finkelstein, 1997).

Measures

Social capital—Two composite variables were created from items drawn from the household survey to represent the dual dimensions of social capital.

Community ties: The bridging dimension of social capital, community ties, was represented by a count variable indicating the number of community activities (e.g., church, parenting support group, athletic team, community center, neighborhood watch) in which the primary and other caregiver in the household participate. These items were drawn from the McArthur Study of Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods. Primary caregivers reported on a total of 8-items for themselves and the other caregiver. Each item was recoded to a binary variable (i.e., 1 = engaged in an activity) so that a summary variable could be created. Given that there was considerable overlap in the responses for the primary and other caregiver, a composite variable was created to represent the highest number of community ties within a primary/other caregiver dyad. The resultant variable representing community ties indicated convergent validity as it was positively correlated with social support ($r = .23$).

Social support: The bonding dimension of social capital, social support, was assessed using a set of items measuring the primary caregiver's support network with items replicated from the National Study of Families and Households. Primary caregivers were asked whether they received or provided any practical or emotional help from the other caregiver and other family members (e.g., "In the past month have you received any help with things like child care, transportation, repairs to your home or car, or other kinds of work around the house? Please indicate yes or no.") A total of four items were averaged to represent social support ($\alpha = .69$).

Antecedents of involvement

Role construction: Role construction around education was assessed using two items from the Parental Modernity Scale ($r = .40$; Schaefer & Edgerton, 1985) in the household survey, which measures parents' educational attitudes and beliefs. Despite the moderately low bivariate correlation, the resultant variable representing role construction indicated convergent validity as it was positively associated with parent educational attainment ($r = .36$) and discriminant validity as it was negatively associated with being Latino ($r = -.41$). Additionally, the parental modernity scale has been demonstrated to have high internal consistency, re-test reliability, and criterion validity (Schaefer & Edgerton, 1981). On a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = *strongly agree* to 5 = *strongly disagree*, parents were asked to rate the following two items: 1) "Since most parents lack special training in education, they should not question the teacher's methods," and 2) "Children should always obey the teacher." Higher scores indicate a role construction around education that is more in alignment with mainstream U.S. culture of education.

Self-efficacy: Although the CDS does not include a measure of families' self-efficacy that is focused exclusively on educational involvement, families' general self-efficacy was

measured using items from the Pearlin Mastery Scale ($\alpha = .78$; Pearlin, Lieberman, Menaghan, & Mullan, 1981) in the household survey, which evaluates the extent to which individuals believe themselves to be in control of significant events that impact their lives (e.g., “I have little control over the things that happen to me”). This scale has been shown to have reasonable internal reliability and good construct validity (Pearlin et al., 1981). Primary caregivers reported on a total of four items which were rated on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 4 = *strongly agree*, summed for a possible score ranging from 4 to 16 where higher scores indicate higher levels of self-efficacy.

Opportunities: The third factor, opportunities for involvement, was represented by a variable indicating the total number of barriers to family educational involvement (e.g., work schedule, lack of information from school, difficulty understanding assignment) reported by the primary caregiver in the home interview. A total of nine items were recoded to a binary variable (i.e., 1 = posed a problem) so that a summary variable could be created to represent the total number of unique barriers the primary caregiver experienced over the course of the school year. A sample item asks, “How often has your work schedule made it difficult for you to be involved? Would you say not in the current school year, once, or more than once?” This summary variable was reverse-coded so that higher values represented fewer barriers and more opportunities for involvement. The resultant variable representing opportunities for involvement indicated convergent validity as it was positively associated with parent educational attainment ($r = .19$) and having a child born in the U.S. ($r = .21$).

Family educational involvement—Two types of educational involvement were assessed using primary caregiver reports.

School-based involvement: Items used to assess school-based involvement were modeled after items in the National Education Longitudinal Survey of 1988 (NELS: 88). In the home interview, primary caregivers reported whether they engaged in certain school-based activities within the last 12 months. Sample items include volunteering at school, attending parent-teacher conferences, school events, and meetings with the school counselor. Each item was recoded to a binary variable (i.e., 1 = engaged in an activity) so that a summary variable could be created to represent the total number of unique school-based involvement activities the primary caregiver engaged in over the course of the school year. Out of 10 possible involvement activities, families participated in an average of four activities, with the majority of families (~96%) reporting participation in at least one activity. The summary variable representing school-based involvement indicated convergent validity as it was positively associated with home-based involvement ($r = .29$).

Home-based involvement: A factor score representing home-based educational involvement activities was created using three different measures drawn from the home interview. The first measure was a mean of three items drawn from the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 that asked primary caregivers to report on their communication about school with their child (e.g., “In the past 12 months, how often have you discussed child's experiences in school?”; $\alpha = .87$). The second measure was drawn from items that were replicated from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth and National Longitudinal

Surveys to indicate the number of unique activities the primary caregiver engaged in with the child in the home ($\alpha = .73$; e.g., “In the past month, how often did you and the child do arts and crafts together?”); similar to school-based involvement activities, each item was recoded into a binary variable (i.e., 1 = engaged in an activity) prior to summation. Out of seven possible home-based involvement activities, families reported engaging in an average of four activities with the vast majority of families (~98%) engaging in at least one activity. The third measure represented cognitive stimulation in the home as assessed by items from the cognitive stimulation subscale of Caldwell and Bradley's (1984) Home Observation for Measurement of the Environment-Short Form (HOME-SF). Individual items were coded in a binary fashion and then summed by PSID researchers to create a total score of cognitive activities in the home. All three measures loaded highly onto one factor with loadings ranging from .69 to .77; the resulting home-based involvement factor accounted for 51% of the variance in items. Thus, a composite indicator of home involvement was created based on the factor score generated from the principal-component factor method with promax rotation. The resulting factor score was weighted according to factor loadings.

Child and family covariates—To adjust for potential selection effects that may bias estimates of the importance of social capital and family involvement antecedents on family educational involvement, a set of child and family covariates were included in the present study. Child covariates included age, gender (1 = boy), and a dichotomous variable indicating whether the child was born in the United States (1 = U.S. born). Race was represented by a set of dichotomous variables, White, Asian, Latino (reference group), and Black/Other, based on the head of household's race¹. Additional family covariates included average family educational attainment and household income.

Analytic Approach

Within the analytic sample, there was a moderate to high amount of data missing across variables (range 0% to 54% for individual variables) with the highest percentage of missing evident in data drawn from the household survey. As a result, missing data were imputed using multiple imputation by chained equations procedures in Stata 11 to create five complete data sets. Ordinary least squares regression analysis was used to investigate associations among immigrant families' social capital, involvement antecedents (i.e., perceptions and attributes), and educational involvement in school and at home. All analyses incorporated normalized probability weights to adjust for the sampling framework and differential response so that inferences could be made to the population of interest, which includes school children of immigrant families in grades K through 8.

Results

Table 1 displays summary statistics for the variables of interest. Students in the sample ranged from kindergarten through 8th grade; the majority of the students in the sample were in elementary school (78%). Forty-six percent of the students were male. The majority of

¹A diverse group of ethnicities (e.g., Western and Eastern European, Middle Eastern, East Asian, South and Southeast Asian, Pacific Islander, Central American, Caribbean, South American, and African) were represented by the families in this study. Due to the small number of participants in each group, however, it was not possible to analyze each ethnic group separately.

students was born in the United States (66%) and came from immigrant families with Latino roots (68%). Parents' average level of education was ninth grade, and families had relatively low incomes with an average household income around \$19,000.

Preliminary Analysis

Table 2 displays weighted inter-correlations between the main variables of interest and child and family covariates. Patterns provided initial support of links between the main areas of interest, although the magnitude of those associations was relatively small. Social support was significantly ($p < .05$) correlated with two of the three involvement antecedents, self-efficacy ($r = .26$) and opportunities for involvement ($r = .29$), and home-based involvement ($r = .22$). Similarly, two of the three involvement antecedents, role construction and self-efficacy, were positively correlated with home-based involvement ($r = .22$ and $r = .24$, respectively). Home-based involvement was significantly associated with school-based involvement ($r = .29$). Besides its association with home-based involvement, however, school-based involvement was not associated with any other variable in the study.

Child and family covariates demonstrated significant correlations with the primary variables of interest. Families' average level of educational attainment was positively correlated with two involvement antecedents, role construction ($r = .36$) and opportunities for involvement ($r = .19$). In addition, several covariates were significantly correlated with home-based educational involvement: families were more likely to participate in home-based educational involvement activities when their child was female ($r = -.19$) and young ($r = -.25$), and when families had higher levels of education ($r = .48$). Families with low levels of income were more likely to engage in home-based involvement activities ($r = -.26$) as well.

No significant correlations were evident between race and either measure of social capital. In contrast, two of the three involvement antecedents were significantly associated with race: White and Asian families were likely to have a role construction around education in alignment with the dominant U.S. culture ($r = .25$ and $r = .27$, respectively) while Latino families were likely to report role construction values dissimilar to dominant U.S. culture ($r = -.41$). Additionally, Latino families were likely to report fewer opportunities for involvement ($r = -.22$) while Asian families were likely to report more opportunities ($r = .23$). White families were more likely to engage in home-based involvement activities ($r = .25$), while Latino families were less likely to do so ($r = -.31$).

Ordinary Least Squares Regression

A series of ordinary least squares regression² models were estimated with a full set of child and family covariates (i.e., race, child gender, child age, whether child born in the U.S., families' average level of education, household income). In model 1, school- and home-based involvement was regressed on all three involvement antecedents (i.e., role construction, self-efficacy, and involvement opportunities) outlined in Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's model with all child and family covariates. In model 2, social capital (i.e.,

²Initially, path analyses were used to analyze the data. Due to the complexity of the proposed model and amount of data missing in relation to the relatively small sample size, the model would not converge once covariates were added to the model. However, results from path analyses run without covariates were similar to results from regression analyses with covariates for model 1.

community ties and social support) was added to the model to investigate whether the model should be expanded for immigrant families. Table 3 presents the corresponding output.

Original HDS model—None of the involvement antecedents or social capital variables predicted school-based involvement. Although model 1 accounted for a significant amount of variance in school-based involvement, the amount of variance explained by the model was relatively small ($R^2 = .06$ to $.12$)³. In contrast, the amount of variance in home-based involvement explained by model 1 was much larger ($R^2 = .38$ to $.52$) as two of the three involvement antecedents, self-efficacy and opportunities for involvement, from the HDS model were significant predictors of home-based involvement. Higher levels of self-efficacy predicted higher levels of home-based involvement ($b = .43, p = .01$), while higher levels of opportunities for involvement predicted lower levels of home-based involvement ($b = -.01, p = .01$). In addition, several child and family covariates were significant predictors of involvement at home as well. Families exhibited higher levels of home-based involvement if they were White ($b = .50, p = .01$), had higher levels of family educational attainment ($b = .00, p = .001$), and if their child was young ($b = -.01, p = .01$) and female ($b = -.40, p = .001$).

Expansion of HDS model—When social capital was added to the model, the amount of variance in school involvement accounted for by the model increased slightly ($R^2 = .09$ to $.13$), but none of the social capital variables, involvement antecedents, child or family covariates significantly predicted immigrant families' school-based educational involvement activities. When social capital was added to the model predicting home-based involvement, the amount of variance explained by the model also increased ($R^2 = .44$ to $.53$), and social capital, namely community ties, was a significant predictor of home-based involvement. Specifically, families with more community ties engaged in more educational involvement activities in the home ($b = .34, p = .05$). Self-efficacy ($b = .38, p = .05$) and opportunities for involvement ($b = -.01, p = .01$) remained significant predictors of home-based involvement. Adding social capital to the model marginally reduced the magnitude of the child and family covariates, although they remained significant predictors of home-based educational involvement. That is, families exhibited higher levels of home-based involvement if they were White ($b = .47, p = .05$), had higher levels of education ($b = .00, p = .001$), and if their child was young ($b = -.01, p = .01$) and female ($b = -.37, p = .01$).

Discussion

Limited Empirical Support for HDS Model

Despite prior empirical evidence linking involvement antecedents to family educational involvement (Green, Walker, Hoover-Dempsey, & Sandler, 2007; Park & Holloway, 2013), results from the present study with immigrant families provided limited empirical support for Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's theoretical model. Similar to extant findings with native-born families (Anderson & Minke, 2010; Green et al., 2007; Park & Holloway, 2013), families' self-efficacy was positively associated with home-based involvement. In contrast to extant research, however, involvement opportunities were associated negatively with

³An R^2 from each multiply imputed data set is reported.

home-based involvement, and school-based involvement was not associated with any involvement antecedent.

One possible explanation for the lack of association between self-efficacy and school-based involvement may be due to the fact that families' general self-efficacy was assessed in this study rather than education-related self-efficacy. According to Bandura (1989), families may refrain from engaging in certain domains if they feel that they are not equipped to bring about positive results. Thus, families may have high overall self-efficacy (e.g., as parents), but their confidence in relation to their ability to help their child succeed educationally through participation in school-based activities may be low due to factors such as low English proficiency or unfamiliarity with the culture of schools in the U.S.

This reasoning may also help explain why self-efficacy was positively and most strongly associated with home-based involvement. Immigrant families are likely to feel more comfortable and confident about engaging in a variety of activities with their child in the home than in the school because home-based activities do not necessarily require knowledge of unfamiliar cultural scripts or strong English language skills, which would likely be the case for school-based involvement. Although some families may encounter difficulties engaging in home-based involvement activities (e.g., difficulty in understanding the child's homework), they are more likely to continue expending effort and persisting in those activities in face of adversity because the home is considered the domain of the family and their belief that they can engender positive child outcomes is likely to be higher for activities within the home than at school (Bandura, 1989; Delgado-Gaitan, 1992).

An alternative explanation for why self-efficacy was related to home-based rather than school-based involvement may be attributable to immigrant families' beliefs about the value of participation in certain activities. Some scholars found that immigrant families were less likely than native-born White families to engage in certain school-based activities, such as attending a PTA meeting, because they did not perceive the activity to be directly related to their child's educational success or as a means to create a better relationship with teachers (Hill & Torres, 2010; Weiss & Edwards, 1992). However, they were just as likely if not more likely to attend parent-teacher conferences (Turney & Kao, 2009). As such, when immigrant families have high levels of self-efficacy, they may be more inclined to engage in more home-based involvement activities (e.g., book reading, helping with homework) because they not only believe they have the ability to enact positive educational outcomes but also because they may view home-based activities as more pertinent to their children's educational success than the opportunities for school-based involvement that are provided to them.

In contrast to expectations from theory and extant literature, when immigrant families perceived more opportunities for involvement, they engaged in fewer involvement activities at home, albeit the magnitude of the association was weak. This finding contradicts prior work with Latino parents, some of whom were immigrants, which found that parents engaged in more home-based activities when they received teacher invitations for involvement (Maríñez-Lora & Quintana, 2009). Alternatively, due to the operationalization of the variable in the present study where opportunities for involvement was represented by

a lack of barriers to involvement, the findings may also suggest a compensatory model where immigrant families increased their home involvement in response to facing more barriers. At present, it is unclear whether the relationship between opportunities and home involvement is a result of sample or operationalization differences. Future work should seek to investigate this further among immigrant families.

Also contrary to theory and prior empirical work, none of the involvement antecedents were associated with school-based involvement among immigrant families. Given the null findings between opportunities for involvement and school-based involvement, it seems that practical factors (i.e., work schedules, transportation) are not the primary deterrent. Rather, what may be explaining the lack of association between involvement antecedents and immigrant families' participation in schools may be due to more relational-based factors, such as school climate and the reception of immigrant families by school staff. That is, the consequences of school-based involvement may be moderated by the family-school fit, which may be less than optimal for many immigrant families. Namely, the value of school-based involvement may be moderated by how welcoming the school is in emotional and practical ways (e.g., language of the teacher; Tang et al., 2012).

Many low-income and ethnic-minority immigrant families, in fact, find the school climate to be intimidating and unwelcoming. Families have reported feeling uncomfortable and disrespected due to teachers' judgmental attitudes and style of communication (i.e., they often feel that teachers talk down to them; Peña, 2000). This type of disrespect creates an unwelcoming school climate that gives families little motivation to participate in activities at school (Trueba, 1998). Moreover, given research indicating that maintenance of cultural ties is important for children's educational and behavioral well-being and the current negative sociopolitical sentiments around immigrants, it is important for schools to cultivate families' participation in school activities and integrate their cultural perspectives to help children to feel connected to and proud of their cultural origins.

Extension of HDS Model

One unique aspect of this study was the emphasis on differentiating between two features of social capital and their relationship with factors theorized to influence families' proclivity for educational involvement. Results suggest that the bridging and bonding components of social capital have divergent relations with immigrant families' role construction around education, level of self-efficacy, and perception of opportunities for involvement.

Contrary to expectations, the bonding aspect of social capital was unrelated to any of the three involvement antecedents for immigrant families. These findings are inconsistent with theory suggesting that social support may be particularly beneficial for low-income families because it can buffer the negative effects of economic hardship (McLoyd, 1998). Extant literature suggests that parents are better equipped to deal with negative stressors when they have friends and family who can provide practical and emotional support; they feel more confident about their parenting abilities and have more time and energy (i.e., opportunities) to engage in educational involvement activities. However, having a strong social support network may not necessarily lead to positive outcomes, particularly if the close relationship with others imparts stress and time demands that are burdensome and outweigh any potential

advantages garnered from the relationship (Lincoln, 2000). Some families, for example have reported worrying about the reciprocity of the relationships and having to repay debts (Antonucci & Jackson, 1990). Given that social support is generally fostered among people who share similar demographic characteristics and that immigrants tend to be poor and to live in high-poverty, low-resource communities (Portes & Zhou, 1993; Jargowsky, 2006), it is possible that their social support did not confer many benefits, but rather created more stress that outweighed the potential benefits of social support.

The bridging dimension of social capital, community ties, on the other hand, was positively related to home-based educational involvement among immigrant families, which was in accordance with the expectation that social network ties may help build families' human capital (Coleman, 1988; Granovetter, 1973; Yoshikawa, 2011). The present analyses suggest that immigrant families benefit from having a large social network because of access to more information and services. Although immigrant families in this study, on average, had a relatively low number of community ties, their connection to neighborhood organizations and community groups were still able to confer benefits to them perhaps through provision of information in their native language or in a culturally-relevant way. These findings highlight the important role of neighborhood and community resources in the lives of immigrant families, and suggest a potential area to target to promote immigrant families' involvement in their children's education.

Limitations

Although this study provides an initial window into factors that may influence immigrant families' educational involvement and children's outcomes, it is important to consider these findings in light of the study's limitations. First, due to the cross-sectional nature of the analytic sample, the direction of associations could not be determined and reciprocal relations between variables were a persistent concern. From the present analysis, for example, it is unclear whether high levels of self-efficacy led to more home-based involvement or vice versa. Future research should investigate the proposed chain of associations in a longitudinal dataset that has multiple waves of data on the variables of interest so that directionality of associations can be investigated.

Second, future studies should seek to incorporate more nuanced measures of each construct. The lack of a relationship between role construction and educational involvement and social capital, for example, may be explained in part by the limited nature of the role construction measure in this analysis. In this study role construction is based on a two-item measure that attempts to capture a complex and nuanced phenomenon related to immigrant families' cultural orientations and values. It is likely that this variable does not adequately capture families' role beliefs about education. Similarly, this study only investigated the quantity of school-based involvement activities. Given that quantity is not equivalent to quality and outcomes can vary depending on the quality of interactions, it is possible that the null results are a result of measurement error. The inclusion of a quality measure of school-based involvement may reveal significant associations between involvement antecedents and school-based involvement.

Along similar lines, it should be noted that the relatively small correlations in the present analyses may be a result of attenuation due to the moderately low reliabilities of some of the measures found within this study. As such, the lack of association among certain variables may disappear with better construct measures, and in turn, may provide stronger evidence in support of the proposed theory. Thus, future studies with access to data on, for example, the quality of educational involvement and more reliable measures of role construction may be able to provide a better understanding of the processes underlying immigrant parents' motivation to be involved in their children's education.

Finally, since immigrant family educational involvement is embedded within the environmental contexts in which they live, future studies should seek to include variables on school climate and neighborhood characteristics for a more comprehensive understanding of factors that may influence families' educational involvement.

Despite these limitations, this study adds to the extant literature on immigrant families in three important ways. First, the present study is unique from prior studies on family educational involvement because it is a within-group analysis of immigrant families, most of whom are minorities. Currently, there is a dearth of studies on the normative development of minority children (Garcia-Coll, et al., 1996). Given that most studies favor examining between-group comparisons with an emphasis on outcome differences, this study meets the call for more studies on intra-group variability and the processes that drive normative development among children from minority, immigrant groups.

Second, although Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's (1995, 1997) theoretical model on family involvement has been widely used to inform that field of educational involvement, few studies have empirically evaluated this model in sum. Thus, results from this study provide some initial empirical support for their model among immigrant families.

Finally, few studies have used a strength-based, ecological system approach to understand what affects why immigrant families decide to become involved in their children's education. Many studies, for example, neglect to take other more distal variables into account when analyzing immigrant family involvement; they ignore the differences in cultural values between the host and home country, families' psychological characteristics, and social capital. That is, in order to help immigrant children at-risk for academic underachievement and poor behavior outcomes realize their academic potential, it is important to understand how these processes operate with immigrant families so that strategies and policies can be tailored toward effectively increasing family involvement.

Conclusion

As the social and economic future of the United States depends increasingly on investments in the life chances of immigrant children (Hernandez et al., 2009), it is imperative to understand how best to promote their educational success and socio-emotional well-being. Results from the present study provided some initial empirical evidence for Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's theoretical model. However, as evident from the null findings with school-based involvement, results also suggest that family educational involvement processes may occur differently for immigrant families than for their native-born

counterparts. Consequently, these results bring the concept of equifinality to the forefront and further underscore the importance of conducting more within-group research to understand how best to help immigrant families chart a route to educational success and socio-emotional well-being for their children.

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Figure 1.
Hypothesized model of associations between immigrant families' social capital, involvement antecedents, and educational involvement

Table 1

Means, Standard Deviations, and Range of the Weighted Variables (N =189)

Variable	<i>M(SD)/%</i>	Min	Max
Social Capital			
Community Ties ^a	2.15 (1.38)	0	6
Social Support ^a	0.41 (0.36)	0	1
Involvement Antecedents			
Role Construction ^a	2.21 (0.82)	1	5
Self-Efficacy	2.95 (0.69)	1	4
Opportunities ^a	7.64 (1.56)	1	9
Family Educational Involvement			
School-based Involvement	4.29 (2.09)	0	10
Home-based Involvement ^b	-0.01 (0.94)	-2.92	1.95
Child and Family Covariates			
White	8%	0	1
Black/Other	6%	0	1
Asian	18%	0	1
Latino	68%	0	1
Male Child	46%	0	1
Child Age in Months	112.28 (28.70)	58.90	158
Grade Level	3.56 (2.32)	0	8
Child Born in U.S.	66%	0	1
Family Educational Attainment ^a	9.10 (4.39)	0	17
Household Income ^a	18,967 (4,360)	11,063	34,845

^aThe mean and *SD* presented are of the raw score, but the transformed variable was used in the analyses.

^bThe mean and *SD* presented are of the factor score.

Table 2

Population Weighted Bivariate Correlations for Variables of Interest (N=189)

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.	14.	15.	16.
1. Community Ties	-															
2. Social Support	0.23 [*]	-														
3. Role Construction	0.08	0.19	-													
4. Self-Efficacy	0.13	0.26 [*]	0.33 [*]	-												
5. Opportunities	0.00	0.29 [*]	0.08	0.19	-											
6. School Involvement	-0.11	0.16	-0.09	-0.02	-0.06	-										
7. Home Involvement	0.21	0.22 [*]	0.22 [*]	0.24 [*]	0.00	0.29 [*]	-									
8. White	0.10	0.16	0.25 [*]	0.01	0.16	0.09	0.25 [*]	-								
9. Black/Other	0.01	-0.11	0.05	0.01	-0.12	-0.01	0.07	-0.07	-							
10. Asian	-0.15	0.03	0.27 [*]	0.08	0.23 [*]	-0.08	0.15	-0.14	-0.12	-						
11. Latino	0.05	-0.11	-0.41 [*]	-0.08	-0.22 [*]	0.02	-0.31 [*]	-0.43 [*]	-0.37 [*]	-0.68 [*]	-					
12. Male Child	-0.08	0.10	0.09	0.14	-0.10	0.06	-0.19 [*]	-0.06	-0.06	0.00	0.07	-				
13. Child Age	0.17	-0.11	0.01	-0.07	-0.16	0.02	-0.25 [*]	-0.01	-0.21 [*]	-0.06	0.15	0.06	-			
14. Child Born in U.S.	0.17	-0.07	0.11	0.23 [*]	0.21 [*]	-0.10	0.05	-0.07	0.06	0.07	-0.05	0.04	-0.11	-		
15. Parent Education	-0.05	0.17	0.36 [*]	0.15	0.19 [*]	0.05	0.48 [*]	0.29 [*]	0.18 [*]	0.35 [*]	-0.55 [*]	0.05	0.00	-0.05	-	
16. Income	0.08	-0.10	-0.34 [*]	-0.29 [*]	-0.02	-0.07	-0.26 [*]	-0.25 [*]	-0.20 [*]	0.12	0.15	0.02	0.06	0.05	-0.48 [*]	-

^{*} denotes significant correlations ($p < 0.05$)

Table 3

Weighted OLS Regression Models Predicting Educational Involvement (N = 189)

	School-based Involvement		Home-based Involvement	
	Model 1 <i>b</i> (SE)	Model 2 <i>b</i> (SE)	Model 1 <i>b</i> (SE)	Model 2 <i>b</i> (SE)
Social Capital				
Ties		−0.50 (0.43)		0.34* (0.13)
Support		0.36 (0.50)		0.09 (0.34)
Inv Antecedents				
Role	−1.12 (0.77)	−1.00 (0.90)	−0.12 (0.27)	−0.16 (0.25)
Self-Efficacy	0.24 (0.35)	0.26 (0.36)	0.43** (0.13)	0.38* (0.16)
Opportunities	−0.01 (0.01)	−0.01 (0.01)	−0.01** (0.00)	−0.01** (0.00)
Covariates				
Black/Other	−0.25 (0.82)	−0.19 (0.8)	0.09 (0.33)	0.10 (0.30)
White	0.52 (0.67)	0.48 (0.73)	0.50** (0.18)	0.47* (0.21)
Asian	−0.25 (0.54)	−0.36 (0.55)	0.04 (0.20)	0.13 (0.19)
Male Child	0.25 (0.36)	0.16 (0.35)	−0.40*** (0.12)	−0.37** (0.12)
Child Age	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	−0.01** (0.00)	−0.01** (0.00)
Child U.S. Born	−0.21 (0.39)	−0.18 (0.38)	0.14 (0.14)	0.12 (0.14)
Fam Edu Attain	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00*** (0.00)	0.00*** (0.00)
Income	−0.46 (1.15)	−0.4 (1.06)	0.07 (0.39)	−0.05 (0.40)
<i>R</i> ²	0.06 - 0.12	0.09 - 0.13	0.38 - 0.52	0.44 - 0.53

Note. An R^2 from each multiply imputed data set is reported.

p .001

**
p .01

*
p .05