

Mexican Adolescents' Perceptions of Parental Behaviors and Authority as Predictors of Their Self-Esteem and Sense of Familism

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Abstract:

The influences of adolescents' perceptions of parental behaviors and authority on the development of their self-esteem and sense of familism were examined among 534 youth living in Mexico. Results of hierarchical regression analyses suggest that boys' perceptions of their mothers and fathers were similar in relation to their development of self-esteem and familism. Males tended to have higher self-esteem when they perceived their parents as monitoring their behavior, granting behavioral autonomy, and having the right to exercise influence over them. For boys' sense of familism, parental influences tended to be less direct, with maternal and paternal education serving as negative predictors, while perceptions that mothers and fathers served as legitimate sources of guidance and advice were positive predictors of familism. For girls, significant predictors of familism and self-esteem varied in relation to mothers and fathers. Girls experienced higher levels of self-esteem when they perceived their mothers and fathers as facilitating connection, monitoring their behaviors, and as having the right to influence their behaviors and feelings. In addition, girls' perceptions of their fathers' expert authority also functioned as a significant predictor of their self-esteem. Mexican girls who perceived their mothers and fathers as having legitimate authority and as facilitating connection reported higher levels of familism. Additionally, age of adolescent, maternal education, and paternal education were significant predictors of familism for both boys and girls.

Keywords: Adolescent perceptions, familism, Mexican, parent authority, parent behaviors, self-esteem

Article:

INTRODUCTION

Across cultures, the family serves as a primary socialization agent in fostering socially competent outcomes in children and adolescents. There are mixed findings, however, regarding the universality of parental socialization processes and parental influence on developmental outcomes in the young for various cultural groups. Although some studies have found that parental support and control attempts are significant influences on psychosocial outcomes with few consistent differences across ethnicity or SES (e.g., Amato & Fowler, 2002), other studies suggest that these same relationships differ by cultural group (Chao, 1994; Lamborn, Mounts, Steinberg, & Dornbusch, 1991).

Several limitations are evident in the body of literature on parental influence on adolescent psychosocial competence. First, studies considering cultural variation have focused on comparisons of ethnic minority groups within the U.S., whereas few studies have considered parental socialization in Mexico (and other countries) in which families are believed to possess cultural orientations that are collectivistic in nature (Bronstein, 1994; Triandis, 1995). Collectivism is defined as a social orientation emphasizing behaviors, interactions, and values that put the good of the group (e.g., society, family) above the interest of the individual. From this perspective, individuals living in families endorsing a high degree of collectivism are often thought to value a familistic orientation (e.g., Shkodriani & Gibbons, 1995; Triandis, 1995). Moreover, a cultural orientation favoring collectivistic values may alter the nature of parental influence on adolescent development.

Secondly, despite the recognition by researchers that the inclusion of fathers in studies of parental socialization is important, most studies have only examined maternal influences (Amato & Fowler, 2002; Ruiz, Roosa, & Gonzales, 2002). This point is especially relevant in studies among families living in Mexico in which fathers are likely to be seen as the primary authority figures within families (Bronstien, 1994; Tallman, Marotoz-Baden, & Pindas, 1983).

A third limitation is that, although three main dimensions of parental behavior have been identified in the literature (e.g., parental support/connection, parental monitoring, and coercive parenting), the particular parenting influences selected for examination often vary across studies making it difficult to compare and generalize these results. Researchers call for the inclusion of other potential parental influences on adolescent development such as parental induction (i.e., reasoning), autonomy granting and authority to more accurately assess the potential universality of parental socialization processes (Amato & Fowler, 2002; Bush, Peterson, Cobas, & Supple, 2002; Peterson, Bush, & Supple, 1999). In reference to the potential importance of parental authority, research suggests that adolescents who perceive their parents as possessing a high degree of legitimate and expert authority report higher levels of social competence (Peterson, Bush, & Supple, 1999; Henry, Wilson, & Peterson, 1989). Considering the hierarchical nature of parent-child relationships among Mexican families (Frias-Armenta & McCloskey, 1998; Tallman et al., 1983), maternal and paternal authority may play a role in shaping adolescent development.

Lastly, most studies have focused on a single outcome, ignoring possible variation in relationships across adolescent outcomes (Ruiz et al., 2002). An examination of multiple adolescent outcomes with maternal and paternal influences in the same study will allow for a more complete examination of parental socialization. As a means to address the above limitations, this study examined the influence of parental behaviors and parental authority on the self-esteem and familism among Mexican adolescents. Although a few studies have examined the influence of parenting behaviors on the development of self-esteem among Mexican and Mexican American youth, the influence of parenting authority on self-esteem development has not been examined. Moreover, despite the importance of the family to Mexicans (Bronstein, 1994; Frias-Armenta & McCloskey, 1998), few studies have examined how Mexican parents foster a positive sense of familism, and no studies to date have examined parenting behaviors and parental authority as possible predictors of familism among Mexican adolescents.

Parenting Behavior and Adolescent Self-Esteem

Self-esteem is a central component to adolescent development (Gecas & Schwalbe, 1986; Harter, 1993; Owens & Stryker, 2001). Research conducted among samples of white, middle-class adolescents in the U.S. have suggested that youth with lower self-esteem are more susceptible to psychopathology, social problems, dropping out of school, and poor school performance, possibly because adolescents with low self-esteem have an increased vulnerability to negative influences (e.g., Mecca, Smelser, & Vasconcellos, 1989). In contrast, youth with high self-esteem are more likely to excel in school and are less vulnerable for delinquent involvements and psychopathology. The few studies that have examined correlates of self-esteem among youth of Mexican origin report similar findings. For example, self-esteem has been found to be positively correlated with social-emotional adjustment among adolescents in Mexico (Benjet & Hernandez-Guzman, 2001), while studies among Mexican American youth indicate that self-esteem is correlated with academic achievement (Powers & Sanchez, 1982), anxiety, and an internal locus of control (Emmite & Diaz-Guerrero, 1983).

Research using European American, middle-class samples has consistently found that positive connection with parents (i.e., warm, supportive and inductive parenting that facilitates close connected relationships), autonomy-granting, and low levels of coercive or harsh parenting are associated with higher levels of adolescent self-esteem (Amato & Fowler, 2002; Bartle, Anderson, & Sabatelli, 1989; Gecas & Schwalbe, 1986). In a recent study examining gender differences in the psychological well-being of early adolescents in Mexico, Benjet and Hernandez-Guzman (2001) reported that positive maternal and paternal affect were predictors of higher self-esteem among female Mexican adolescents, while harsh paternal control was a negative predictor. For Mexican adolescent boys, positive paternal affect was a positive predictor of self-esteem while harsh maternal control

was a marginally significant negative predictor. Results from this study suggest that gender of adolescents and gender of parents are important moderators of the relationships between parental socialization and adolescent self-esteem among Mexican families. These results are consistent with a study by Ruiz, Roosa and Gonzales (2002) reporting that European and Mexican American children (8-14 years of age) perceived maternal acceptance (positive relationship), inconsistent discipline (negative relationship) and maternal rejection (negative relationship) as significant predictors of their self-esteem. This study did reveal, however, that the relationship between maternal acceptance and children's self-esteem was stronger among the European Americans than Mexican Americans. These results suggest that both culture and gender likely interact with the relationships between maternal parenting practices and children's self-esteem.

Amato and Fowler (2002), using a nationally representative sample of adolescents in the U.S., found that parental support, monitoring, and harsh discipline were related to child and adolescent outcomes in expected directions with few consistent differences across ethnic, socioeconomic, family structure, or gender (i.e., of adolescent and parent) groups. For example, parental support was a significant positive predictor of adolescent self-esteem while parents' use of harsh discipline was negatively associated with self-esteem (parental monitoring was unrelated to adolescent self-esteem) and these associations were similar for European American, African American and Mexican American adolescents.

Overall, few studies have examined the parental socialization practices of Mexican parents residing either in Mexico or the U.S. The scholarship that does exist characterizes parenting among families of Mexican origin as firm and demanding, with particular emphasis being placed on concern and conformity (Baca Zinn, 2000; Buriel, 1993; Frias-Armenta & McCloskey, 1998). In reference to the influence of parenting on adolescent self-esteem, only one study has examined parental monitoring as a potential predictor of self-esteem among adolescents of Mexican origin (i.e., Mexican Americans) and found monitoring to be unrelated (Amato & Fowler, 2002). However, other empirical and theoretical work suggests that parental support and control may be perceived differently across cultural groups (Chao, 1994; Hill, Bush, & Roosa, 2003). For example, Hill et al. (2003) reported that maternal hostile control attempts and maternal acceptance were positively correlated among Spanish-speaking Mexican American mothers, but negatively correlated among European American mothers. This finding suggests that control and concern may be conveyed simultaneously among families of Mexican origin, at least among less acculturated Mexican American families. This is consistent with recent conceptualizations of parenting among Chinese families where strict parenting is often considered to be synonymous with parental care and concern (e.g., Chao, 1994). Following this perspective, as parents ask about their activities and behaviors, youth of Mexican descent may perceive this (i.e., parental monitoring) as indications of care, concern, and support, thus facilitating positive self-evaluations.

Similarly, although researchers have not directly examined the relationship between parental autonomy-granting and self-esteem among Mexican adolescents, previous theoretical work and studies of other cultural groups suggest that Mexican adolescents who perceive their parents as granting autonomy will experience positive self-esteem. Adolescents expect more behavioral autonomy as they age, and parents who grant adolescents autonomy will be perceived as conveying that the adolescent has met desired role expectations (Peterson et al., 1999), resulting in more positive self-evaluations by adolescents. Moreover, previous research among U.S. (e.g., Bartle et al., 1989) and Chinese samples (e.g., Bush et al., 2002) has found autonomy from parents to be a positive predictor of adolescent self-esteem. Based on the above reviewed literature it is hypothesized that connection with parents, parental monitoring, and parental autonomy-granting will be positive predictors of Mexican adolescents' self-esteem. In contrast, it is hypothesized that coercive parenting will be a negative predictor of self-esteem among Mexican adolescents. This study is exploratory in nature because few studies have examined these relationships among Mexican families; therefore, no specific hypotheses will be made regarding gender differences between parenting behaviors and adolescent self-esteem.

Parenting Behavior and Adolescent Familism

Familism is considered to be a defining feature of social and personal relationships for individuals of Mexican origin (Baca Zinn, 2000; Buriel, 1993; Buriel & Rivera, 1980). Baca Zinn (2000) defines normative familism as the value that one places on family unity and solidarity. Marotz-Baden (1984) and Tallman et al. (1983) define familism in a context of commitment to social relationships over and against a competing commitment to material rewards. Certainly then, familism is a complex and multidimensional construct involving the extent to which adolescents possess a strong family orientation and assign priority to family interests over personal interests. Few studies have examined the direct connection between parenting influences and the development of a sense of familism. In an experimental study among families in Mexico and the U.S., Tallman et al. (1983) and Marotz-Baden (1984) concluded that Mexican parents tended to focus on the societal requisites for material advancement that would be required of their children, rather than focusing directly on the social affiliations incumbent in familism. Relatively affluent U.S. parents, on the other hand, were reported to focus on the development of social affiliation (e.g., familism). The findings from this study contradict the stereotypical views of U.S. families emphasizing individual goals and outcomes at the expense of family relationships and Mexican families as sacrificing individual interests for family-related goals. However, as Marotz-Baden (1984) points out, these results underscore the importance of family values in both the U.S. and Mexico. The findings of Tallman and colleagues also highlight the importance of examining outcomes that are typically considered to be differentially relevant across cultural contexts. Following this perspective, it is important to examine if and how parents in Mexico might socialize self-esteem, an outcome considered more salient to “individualistic” cultures, while examining parental socialization of familistic attitudes, a more collectivistic trait. This focus on both a collectivistic and individualistic outcome during adolescence allows a more comprehensive view of the diverse socialization strategies and goals in Mexican families.

Most comparative studies have found individuals living in Mexico to report significantly higher levels of familism and collectivist values than European Americans (e.g., Shkodriani & Gibbons, 1995). Similarly, studies have also reported that Mexican Americans tend to have more familistic and collectivist values in comparison to European Americans (Buriel & Rivera, 1980; Freeberg & Stein, 1996). Furthermore, in a recent study examining felt obligation toward parents, familism and collectivistic attitudes were related to felt obligation to parents for Mexican Americans, but not for European Americans (Freeberg & Stein, 1996). Examination of previous research findings also suggest that familism may serve as a protective factor, shielding adolescents from engaging in delinquent behaviors and substance abuse (Unger, Ritt-Olson, Teran, Huang, Hoffman, & Palmer, 2002), similar to the role self-esteem is perceived to have among U.S. middle class adolescents.

Although previous research has not specifically examined the relationship between connection in the parent-adolescent relationship and Mexican adolescents’ familism, theoretical and empirical work suggests that supportive and inductive (e.g., positive reasoning) parenting will provide Mexican adolescents with close and positive connection in the parent-adolescent relationships, thus fostering a sense of familism. Research on families in the U.S. suggests that parental support and positive induction (i.e., the use of reasoning to shape behavior) are positive predictors of adolescent conformity to parental expectations and the most successful means by which parents can shape desirable behaviors from adolescents (Peterson & Hann, 1999). Moreover, research with families in Mexico has found parental warmth and support to be positively related to children’s development of positive feelings towards parents and the family (Bronstein, 1994). Moreover, as previously discussed, parents of Mexican origin may convey support and control simultaneously (Hill et al., 2003), with parental monitoring being perceived by adolescents as an indication of parental care, concern, and support. Through consistent interaction and organization, parental monitoring provides adolescents with clear role expectations (Peterson & Hann, 1999). Therefore, despite the lack of direct research examining the relationship between parental monitoring and adolescent familism, it is likely that parental monitoring will convey parental caring and concern to Mexican adolescents, thus facilitating positive attitudes toward the family.

As adolescents age they expect more behavioral autonomy (Peterson et al., 1999). Moreover, Mexican American adolescents have been reported to expect behavioral autonomy at similar levels to European

American adolescents (Fuligni, 1998). Following this, parents who grant autonomy to their adolescent are likely to foster positive feelings toward the family, as adolescents will perceive the granting of autonomy as positive. In previous studies, autonomy from parents has been found to be a positive predictor of prosocial adolescent outcomes in samples of European American (Bartle et al., 1989) and Chinese adolescents (Bush et al., 2002). In contrast, coercive parental behaviors toward the young person can convey rejection and a lack of respect and, thus, likely foster negative attitudes toward parents and the family. Previous research among Mexican American (Amato & Fowler, 2002) and Mexican (Benjet & Hernandez-Guzman, 2001) samples has found coercive parenting to be a negative predictor of positive adolescent outcomes. Considering the lack of empirical and theoretical literature on the socialization of familism among Mexican families, we present exploratory hypotheses. It is hypothesized that connection with parents, parental monitoring, and parental autonomy-granting will be positive predictors of Mexican adolescents' sense of familism. In contrast, it is hypothesized that coercive parenting will be a negative predictor of familism among Mexican adolescents.

Parental Authority and Adolescent Self-Esteem and Familism

For the purposes of the present study, parental authority is defined as adolescents' perceptions of parental abilities or resources to influence them (cf. Peterson Rollins, & Thomas, 1985; Smith, 1986). As adolescents and parents interact over time, social bases of perceived authority (i.e., expert, referent, legitimate, reward, and coercive power; French & Raven, 1959) are established (Peterson et al., 1985). Parental authority, then, refers to what adolescents believe mothers and fathers have the ability to do, not perceptions of parents' actual behaviors. Parenting among families in Mexico has been characterized as emphasizing conformity, obedience, respect, and parental authority (e.g., Frias-Armenta & McCloskey, 1998). Consequently, considering the importance of the family and parental authority in Mexican origin families, variables emphasizing the perceived abilities of parents should be related to adolescent development (e.g., self-esteem and familism). However, few studies have examined parental authority among Mexican families, and no studies to date have examined parental authority as predictors of adolescent self-esteem or familism. Based on recent conceptualizations of parental power and authority in studies of parent-adolescent relationships (e.g., Peterson et al., 1985) and factor analyses of the present data, three constructs of parental authority were examined in the present study (i.e., legitimate, expert, and coercive authority).

Legitimate parental authority is based in normative conceptions of credibility and refers to adolescents' perceptions that mothers and fathers have the "right" to exercise influence over them (Henry et al., 1989; Peterson et al., 1985). Expert parental authority refers to the extent to which adolescents perceive their parents as knowledgeable and reliable sources of information. Coercive authority represents adolescents' feelings of their parents' ability to bring about negative or adverse consequences as a means to influence the adolescents' behavior. Previous studies have found that adolescent perceptions of legitimate and expert authority are positive predictors of conformity and autonomy among European American adolescents (Henry et al., 1989; Peterson et al., 1985). Coercive authority, on the other hand, has been found to be positively related to adolescent conformity, but negatively related to adolescent autonomy. Researchers have argued that parents who are perceived by adolescents as being legitimate influences and reliable sources of information are likely to convey clear role expectations (Peterson et al., 1985), thus fostering positive self-evaluations, as adolescents trust and evaluate themselves against their parents' appraisals and positive feelings toward the family. Coercive authority, on the other hand, is less likely to foster positive self-esteem and familism among adolescents. Given the lack of research examining the relationships between parental authority and adolescent self-esteem and familism, the following exploratory hypotheses are proposed. Parental legitimate authority and parental expert authority will be positive predictors of Mexican adolescents' self-esteem and familism, whereas coercive parental authority will be a negative predictor of self-esteem and familism.

METHODS

Sample

Six hundred project questionnaires were distributed to students in six state-funded secondary schools in Hermosillo, Mexico, of which 543 were completed and included in the present study. Participants ranged in age

from 10 to 16 with a mean age of 13.35. The sample consisted of 235 males and 299 females. In reference to socioeconomic status, the participants ranged from those whose parents had less than a grade school education to those having a college or graduate education (mean parental education was completion of high school). Although a nonprobability sampling strategy was employed, the respondents varied sufficiently across sociodemographic characteristics to be considered reasonably representative of adolescents in this area of Mexico.

Measurement

The data examined in the present study are part of a larger cross-national study of adolescent social competence including data from samples of adolescents in the U.S., China, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, India, Kenya, Russia, South Korea, and The Czech Republic (e.g., Bush et al., 2002; Peterson et al., 1999). The questionnaire for the larger study consisted of items assessing characteristics of the participating adolescents, their parents, parent-adolescent relationships, and developmental outcomes related to adolescent social competence (i.e., self-esteem, self-efficacy, academic achievement, conformity to parents).

Sociodemographic control variables were included to control for possible confounding effects related to the age of adolescent, gender of adolescent, and parental education (in reference to both mothers and fathers). With the exception of the demographic variables, adolescents responded to each item in the questionnaire using a four-point Likert scale ranging from “Strongly Agree” (4 points) to “Strongly Disagree” (1 point). As a means of maximizing the comparability of item meanings across language, the questionnaire was translated using a back translation technique. Additionally, the questionnaire was also examined by two native Spanish speakers (a school psychologist and a college student from this area of Mexico) to address possible differences in dialect.

In the current study we relied upon adolescent self-reports of their own level of familism, self-esteem and their perceptions of each of their parents’ behaviors and authority. The adolescent self-report strategy is justified based on previous research suggesting that youthful perceptions of parental behavior are more strongly predictive of the adolescents’ own self-perceptions than are parents’ reports of their own child-rearing behavior (Gecas & Schwalbe, 1986). Moreover, a distinct advantage to adolescent reports of parental behavior and authority is that the assessment of parental behaviors directly from parents raises the potential for response bias from parents who may attempt to conceal certain behaviors (that the parents may perceive as being socially unacceptable) and to maximize their reports of more “socially desirable” parenting behaviors (Gecas & Schwalbe, 1986; Peterson & Hann, 1999). A reasonable assumption, therefore, is that aspects of adolescents’ perceptions of their self-esteem and familism would be more likely to be influenced by their own constructions of reality (i.e., their perceptions of parental behavior and authority) than would their parents’ conceptions of the same phenomenon (Gecas & Schwalbe, 1986).

Familism. The Bardis Familism Scale (Bardis, 1959) was used to assess to the extent to which the young person has a strong orientation toward the family as evidenced by family interests taking precedence over personal interests related to career, residence, and friendships. Five items were used to tap into adolescent familism and included items asking, “Family responsibility should be more important than my career plans in the future.” This scale demonstrated adequate reliability based on a Cronbach’s alpha of .63 for girls and .61 for boys.

Self-Esteem. Adolescent self-esteem was assessed using 7 items taken from the 10-item Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1979). These items were selected based on previous factor analytic studies (e.g., Peterson et al., 1985) and research using the same items in a study of Mainland Chinese adolescents (Bush et al., 2002). Five items provided positive assessments of self-issues (“I feel I have a number of good qualities”), whereas two items were derogatory in nature (“I certainly feel useless at times”) and were reverse coded so that higher scores indicated higher levels of self-esteem. In this sample of Mexican adolescents the self-esteem composite measure demonstrated a Cronbach’s alpha of .68 for females and .64 for male adolescents.

Parental behaviors. Measures of parental behaviors were assessed with the Parent Behavior Measure (PBM), a 34-item self-report instrument assessing adolescent perceptions of several dimensions of parenting (Peterson et

al., 1985; cf. Bush et al., 2002, for a more detailed description of the PBM). Adolescents responded to items in reference to each parent.

For the present study, scale scores for parental behavior measures were constructed based on the results of two separate factor analyses (i.e., adolescents' perceptions of paternal behavior and adolescents' perceptions of maternal behaviors). In the original PBM measure, items are included to tap into unique dimensions of parental support and positive induction. Results from the factor analyses, however, suggested that these items represent a single higher order construct that we refer to as connection. In addition, the original conceptualizations of the PBM included separate dimensions for parental punitiveness (use of threats, punishments) and love withdrawal (psychological coercion). Our analyses suggested that these items should be combined into a single factor, which we have labeled as coercive parenting. For parental monitoring, factor analyses suggested that all items purported to measure parental monitoring loaded onto a distinct factor. A one-factor structure was also obtained for parental autonomy-granting, after items tapping into educational and occupational plans were removed from the analyses (these latter items tended to load on their own factor).

Parental connection was measured with eight items concerning the degree that mothers and fathers were perceived by adolescents as explaining to adolescents how their behavior affects others, and as being accepting, warm, and nurturant, thus facilitating positive connection within the parent-adolescent relationship. A sampled item included, "This parent tells me how much he/she loves me."

Six items were used to tap into youthful perceptions of parental monitoring or the extent to which adolescents felt that their mothers and fathers possess knowledge regarding their free-time activities, friends, and how the young spend their money. A sample item from the monitoring composite score was, "This parent knows where I am after school."

Coercive parenting was assessed with 12 items and assessed the extent to which adolescents perceive their mothers and fathers as using verbal and physical behaviors in a coercive, threatening, and punitive manner. A sample item for coercive parenting is: "This parent will not talk to me when I displease him/her." Cronbach's alphas for these composite parenting scores were above acceptable levels and ranged from .72 to .88 and were similar for adolescent males and females.

Autonomy-granting behavior by mothers and fathers was measured with 10 items originally derived from studies focused on the development of adolescent self-direction (Peterson et al., 1999). These items measure adolescent perceptions regarding the extent to which parents trust the adolescent's decision-making, and provide sufficient freedom in day-to-day activities. A sample item from this scale is: "This parent allows me to choose my own friends without interfering too much." The Cronbach's alpha for this scale ranged from .67 to .75 in reference to fathers and mothers, for boys and girls.

Parental authority. Adolescents responded to items assessing perceptions of coercive, legitimate, and expert parental authority in reference to each parent. These measurement strategies demonstrated good reliability with Cronbach's alpha statistics ranging from .73 to .83 for both adolescent males and females.

Coercive authority is represented by six items that assess adolescents' perceptions of their parents' abilities to deliver negative experiences to influence adolescent behavior. A sample item included, "If I did not follow this parent's advice about my classroom behavior, I would really suffer the consequences."

Legitimate parental authority was measured with 4 items tapping into adolescent perceptions of parents' right to guide or influence adolescent decision-making. A sample item from this composite measure includes the statement, "This parent has a right to give me counsel and advice about selecting an occupation."

Expert parental authority refers to adolescents' perceptions of parents as being knowledgeable and reliable sources of information. A sample item for this measure includes, "This parent knows how to help me with my school work."

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Hierarchical multiple regression analyses were employed to assess the magnitude and direction of relationships between the predictor variables and each criterion variable. Previous studies (e.g., Chiñas, 1993) have suggested that Mexican parents are more controlling of adolescent-aged females and provide more freedom to adolescent males. Moreover, a recent study examining the influence of parental harsh control and parental positive affect on Mexican adolescent outcomes found variations in effects by gender of parent and by gender of child (Benjet & Hernandez-Guzman, 2001). Consequently, we analyzed models separately by gender of parent and gender of adolescent to examine potential differences in the manner in which the measures of parental behavior and authority influence adolescent familism and self-esteem.

Each regression model involved a nested regression procedure with three steps in the variable-entry process. The first step in the analyses involved the entry of the sociodemographic control variables (adolescent age and parental education). Subsequently, the four parent behavior measures (connection, monitoring, autonomy-granting, and coerciveness) were entered into the model as a block. In the third step, parental authority measures (legitimate, expert, and coercive) were introduced into the model.

Descriptive statistics for the predictor, criterion, and sociodemographic control variables are presented in Table 1 for the entire sample by gender of adolescent. There were few significant gender differences in mean levels of reported parental behaviors and authority or the outcome variables. We did find, however, that adolescent females in this sample reported greater monitoring by mothers and that boys reported greater coerciveness by both fathers and mothers (see Table 1). Correlations for the paternal and maternal models are presented in Tables 2 and 3, respectively. Results of the multiple regression analyses are presented in Tables 4 and 5 for adolescents' perceptions of fathers and Tables 6 and 7 for perceptions of mothers.

In models using maternal behaviors and measures of authority, maternal educational attainment is included, whereas, for paternal models, fathers' level of education is included. The results suggested that while neither adolescent age nor parental education (either mother's or father's) were associated with adolescent self-esteem, both age and parental education (mother and father models) were negative predictors of familism. Specifically, with familism as the dependent variable, adolescent age was a negative predictor for boys ($\beta = -.32, p < .001$) and girls ($\beta = -.25, p < .001$). Moreover, paternal education was negatively associated with boys' ($\beta = -.22, p < .01$) and girls' ($\beta = -.15, p < .01$) scores on the familism scale. Similar results were obtained in reference to maternal education ($\beta = -.15, p < .10$ for boys; $\beta = -.19, p < .01$ for girls; see Table 7). In analyses with self-esteem as the outcome variable, however, results suggested that neither age nor parental education was related to adolescent self-esteem.

In reference to the parenting behavior measures, the results provided mixed support for expectations regarding the positive influence of connection on both adolescent self-esteem and familism. In reference to models including measures of father behavior, connection was not found to be significantly associated with self-esteem for boys, but did demonstrate a positive association for girls ($\beta = .21, p < .01$; see Table 4).

TABLE 1. Descriptive Statistics of the Total Sample and Sample by Gender

	Total Sample	Male	Female
Familism	15.04 (2.89)	15.18 (3.0)	14.94 (2.8)
Self-esteem	15.92 (2.64)	16.18 (2.66)	15.74 (2.6)
Age	13.43 (1.31)	13.48 (1.37)	13.39 (1.3)
Father education	6.61 (3.49)	--	--
Mother education	5.60 (2.99)	--	--
Paternal connection	3.23 (.59)	3.18 (.61)	3.26 (.59)
Maternal connection	3.30 (.59)	3.28 (.61)	3.33 (.57)
Paternal monitoring	2.99 (.65)	2.96 (.69)	2.99 (.63)
Maternal monitoring	3.11 (.60)	3.02 (.64)	3.18* (.56)
Paternal autonomy-granting	3.07 (.54)	3.11 (.53)	3.04 (.55)
Maternal autonomy-granting	3.17 (.47)	3.17 (.42)	3.16 (.50)
Paternal coerciveness	2.21 (.63)	2.30 (.63)	2.14* (.63)
Maternal coerciveness	2.25 (.63)	2.33 (.60)	2.18* (.64)
Paternal coercive authority	2.80 (.79)	2.86 (.75)	2.76 (.82)
Maternal coercive authority	2.82 (.79)	2.86 (.74)	2.79 (.82)
Paternal expert authority	3.24 (.65)	3.23 (.57)	3.26 (.65)
Maternal expert authority	3.14 (.60)	3.15 (.61)	3.14 (.59)
Paternal legitimate authority	3.46 (.56)	3.44 (.58)	3.48 (.54)
Maternal legitimate authority	3.44 (.58)	3.39 (.63)	3.48 (.53)

Note. * $p < .05$ indicates a significant male-female difference. Standard deviations in parentheses.

We found similar results when considering adolescent reports of familism, as paternal connection was found to be a positive predictor for girls ($\beta = .28, p < .01$; see Table 5), but was not significantly associated with familism among boys.

Results regarding connection in reference to mothers were similar to those found for fathers, with connection being a positive predictor of adolescent self-esteem among girls ($\exists = .19, p < .01$) but not among boys (see Table 6). Moreover, with adolescent familism as the outcome variable, maternal connection was positively associated with familism among female ($\exists = .30, p < .001$) but not male adolescents (see Table 7).

Partial support was found for the expectation that parental monitoring would be a positive predictor of both adolescent self-esteem and familism. Specifically, monitoring by Mexican fathers was a positive

TABLE 2. Fathers' Behaviors Predicting Adolescent Self-Esteem and Familism: Correlations by Gender of Adolescent

Variable Name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Familism	1.00	.10	-.25*	-.14*	.30*	.17*	.08	.01	.33*	.21*	.19*
2. Self-esteem	.16*	1.00	-.04	.09	.36*	.39*	.23*	-.17*	.33*	.35*	.15*
3. Age of adolescent	-.29*	-.12	1.00	-.03	-.14*	-.08	-.05	-.01	-.22*	-.22*	-.04
4. Father education	-.15*	.10	-.25*	1.00	.12	.16*	.36*	.00	.19*	.41*	.05
5. Connection	.25*	.20*	-.27*	.10	1.00	.48*	.24*	-.13*	.35*	.33*	.32*
6. Monitoring	.30*	.32*	-.17*	.00	.48*	1.00	.28*	-.07	.27*	.28*	.21*
7. Autonomy-granting	.16*	.22*	-.15*	.02	.30*	.19*	1.00	-.26*	.13*	.29*	.23*
8. Coerciveness	.04	-.03	-.13	.00	.04	.12	-.12	1.00	.02	.05	.17*
9. Legitimate authority	.41*	.27*	-.26*	.15*	.25*	.27*	.23*	-.11	1.00	.51*	.37*
10. Expert authority	.27*	.19*	-.23*	.27*	.30*	.34*	.19*	.11	.52*	1.00	.35*
11. Coercive authority	.14*	.02	-.11	.20*	.11	.10	.13	.26*	.34*	.35*	1.00

Note. * $p < .05$; Correlations for boys are under the diagonal; correlations for girls are above the diagonal.

TABLE 3. Mothers' Behaviors Predicting Adolescent Self-Esteem and Familism: Correlations by Gender of Adolescent

Variable Name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Familism	1.00	.10	-.25*	-.16*	.33*	.09	.10	.02	.35*	.23*	.21*
2. Self-esteem	.16*	1.00	-.04	.05	.38*	.42*	.37*	-.15*	.30*	.34*	.12
3. Age of adolescent	-.29*	-.12	1.00	-.05	-.17*	-.07	.00	-.06	-.16*	-.24*	.00
4. Mother education	-.07	.06	-.25*	1.00	-.03	.15*	.16*	-.02	.00	.21*	-.06
5. Connection	.23*	.19*	-.21*	.09	1.00	.39*	.46*	-.17*	.44*	.40*	.29*
6. Monitoring	.27*	.34*	-.17*	.06	.47*	1.00	.39*	-.15*	.28*	.27*	.15*
7. Autonomy-granting	.15*	.38*	-.12*	.04	.36*	.33*	1.00	-.22*	.38*	.39*	.22*
8. Coerciveness	.07	-.11	-.16*	-.06	.02	.10	-.13	1.00	-.05	.00	.16*
9. Legitimate authority	.36*	.36*	-.20*	.02	.29*	.32*	.34*	-.03	1.00	.37*	.41*
10. Expert authority	.20*	.18*	-.25*	.34*	.34*	.27*	.33*	.01	.45*	1.00	.26*
11. Coercive authority	.13*	.04	-.14	.00	.18*	.14	.13	.30*	.34*	.26*	1.00

Note. *p < .05; Correlations for boys are under the diagonal; correlations for girls are above the diagonal.

TABLE 4. Paternal Model: Fathers' Behaviors Predicting Adolescent Self-Esteem by Gender

	Boys						Girls					
	I		II		III		I		II		III	
	B	∃	B	∃	B	∃	B	∃	B	∃	B	∃
<i>Demographic Controls</i>												
Age of adolescent	-.23	-.12	-.11	-.06	-.04	-.02	-.01	-.01	.13	.06	.23	.11+
Father education	.03	.06	.02	.03	.03	.04	.04	.06	-.04	-.05	-.09	-.13+
<i>Parental Behaviors</i>												
Connection			.01	.00	.00	.00			.96	.21**	.70	.15*
Monitoring			1.11	.28**	.96	.25**			1.28	.30***	1.15	.27***
Autonomy-granting			.84	.18*	.81	.17*			.42	.08	.26	.05
Coerciveness			-.25	-.06	-.03	-.01			-.33	-.08	-.42	-.10
<i>Parental Authority</i>												
Legitimate					.78	.18+					.77	.15*
Expert					-.04	-.01					.95	.22**
Coercive					-.37	-.10					-.26	-.08
R ²		.02		.15		.17		.00		.23		.30

Note. + p < .10, *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

TABLE 5. Paternal Model: Fathers' Behaviors Predicting Adolescent Familism by Gender: Unstandardized and Standardized Regression Coefficients

	Boys						Girls					
	I		II		III		I		II		III	
	B	β	B	β	B	β	B	β	B	β	B	β
<i>Demographic Controls</i>												
Age of adolescent	-.74	-.32***	-.64	-.27***	-.47	.20**	-.57	-.25***	-.44	-.20**	-.37	-.17**
Father education	-.20	-.22**	-.20	-.22**	-.25	-.27***	-.13	-.15**	-.18	-.22**	-.21	-.26***
<i>Parental Behaviors</i>												
Connection			.22	.04	.08	.02			1.35	.28***	1.05	.22**
Monitoring			.96	.21*	.56	.12			.25	.06	.11	.02
Autonomy-granting			.19	.03	-.08	-.01			.44	.08	.30	.06
Coerciveness			-.08	-.02	.09	.02			.31	.07	.17	.04
<i>Parental Authority</i>												
Expert					.47	.09					.35	.08
Coercive					.12	.03					.06	.02
R ²		.12		.18		.29		.09		.19		.23

Note. + p < .10, *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

TABLE 6. Maternal Model: Mothers' Behaviors Predicting Adolescent Self-Esteem by Gender: Unstandardized and Standardized Regression Coefficients

	Boys						Girls					
	I		II		III		I		II		III	
	B	β	B	β	B	β	B	β	B	β	B	β
<i>Demographic Controls</i>												
Age of adolescent	-.26	-.14+	-.20	-.10	-.16	-.09	-.07	-.04	.02	.01	.11	.05
Mother education	.03	.05	.02	.02	.03	.05	.04	.05	.04	.05	-.03	-.04
<i>Parental Behaviors</i>												
Connection			-.33	-.08	-.37	-.09			.88	.19**	.63	.14*
Monitoring			1.01	.25**	.93	.28**			1.26	.27***	1.21	.26***
Autonomy-granting			2.00	.37***	1.83	.31***			.86	.17**	.60	.11+
Coerciveness			-.54	-.13+	-.49	-.12			-.16	-.04	-.19	-.05
<i>Parental Authority</i>												
Legitimate					.70	.17*					.45	.09
Expert					-.19	-.04					.79	.17**
Coercive					.00	.00					-.19	-.06
R ²		.02		.25		.27		.00		.25		.28

Note. + p < .10, *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

TABLE 7. Maternal Model: Mothers' Behaviors Predicting Adolescent Familism by Gender: Unstandardized and Standardized Regression Coefficients

	Boys						Girls					
	I		II		III		I		II		III	
	B	β	B	β	B	β	B	β	B	β	B	β
<i>Demographic Controls</i>												
Age of adolescent	-.65	-.28***	-.55	-.24**	-.47	.20**	-.53	-.24***	-.40	-.18**	-.34	-.16*
Mother education	-.14	-.15+	-.15	-.16*	-.14	-.15	-.19	-.19**	-.17	-.18**	-.18	-.18**
<i>Parental Behaviors</i>												
Connection			.55	.10	.39	.07			1.51	.30***	1.07	.21**
Monitoring			.75	.15+	.55	.11			.02	.01	-.11	-.02
Autonomy-granting			.38	.05	-.11	-.02			.11	.02	-.28	-.05
Coerciveness			.12	.03	.25	.05			.28	.06	.14	.03
<i>Parental Authority</i>												
Legitimate					1.35	.27**					.92	.17*
Expert					.25	.05					.50	.10
Coercive					-.14	-.03					.16	.05
R ²		.08		.13		.20		.09		.18		.22

Note. + $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

predictor of self-esteem for adolescent males ($\beta = .28$; $p < .001$) and females ($\beta = .30$, $p < .001$). Consistent positive associations between maternal monitoring and adolescent self-esteem among boys ($\beta = .25$, $p < .01$) and girls ($\beta = .27$, $p < .001$) were also found. When considering models with familism as the outcome of interest we found few significant associations between parental monitoring and the outcome variables for both boys and girls. Specifically, monitoring by fathers was a positive predictor of familism for adolescent boys; however, this effect was reduced to nonsignificance after the inclusion of the authority variables (see Table 5). Moreover, paternal monitoring was not found to significantly predict familism among the adolescent girls in this sample. We found a similar pattern of results when considering monitoring by Mexican mothers. Maternal monitoring was not significantly associated with familism among the boys in this sample after including the authority measures, nor did maternal monitoring predict familism among the girls (see Table 7).

Equivocal support was found for our expectation regarding the influence of parental autonomy-granting on Mexican adolescents' self-esteem and familial orientations. Autonomy-granting behaviors by fathers demonstrated a significant positive relationship with boys' self-esteem ($\beta = .18$, $p < .05$); however, no comparable association for girls was found. Autonomy-granting by mothers, on the other hand, was positively associated with adolescent self-esteem for both boys ($\beta = .37$, $p < .001$) and girls ($\beta = .17$, $p < .01$), although the effect for girls was reduced to marginal significance once the parental authority variables were included in the regression model. In reference to adolescent familism, results suggested that autonomy-granting either by fathers or mothers was not significantly related to adolescent familism (see Tables 5 and 7).

Contrary to previous research and our hypotheses, parental coerciveness did not predict adolescent self-esteem or familism, regardless of gender. That is, examination of the regression results suggest that both paternal and maternal coercive parenting were unrelated to either adolescent self-esteem (see Tables 4 and 6) or familism (see Tables 5 and 7).

Among the parental authority variables, the most consistent predictor of adolescent outcomes was legitimate authority. Legitimate authority from fathers was found to be a positive predictor of adolescent self-esteem for girls ($\beta = .15$, $p < .05$) and was consistently associated with higher familism among both boys ($\beta = .32$, $p < .001$) and girls ($\beta = .18$, $p < .05$). Adolescent perceptions of maternal legitimate authority, however, was only found to positively predict self-esteem for boys ($\beta = .17$, $p < .05$) but was significantly associated with greater familism for both boys ($\beta = .27$, $p < .01$) and girls ($\beta = .17$, $p < .05$).

Results in reference to adolescent perceptions of parental expert authority demonstrated few significant associations with the adolescent outcomes. Paternal expert authority was positively related to girls' self-esteem ($\beta = .22, p < .01$); however, no comparable association was found between paternal legitimate authority and boys' self-esteem, or for familism among boys and girls. In reference to maternal expert authority, significant associations were not found between this aspect of parenting and levels of adolescent familism or self-esteem, with the exception of a positive association between maternal expert authority and self-esteem among the Mexican girls ($\beta = .17, p < .01$). In all models, coercive authority did not demonstrate any significant associations with either adolescent familism or self-esteem, thus none of our expectations regarding the influence of coercive authority were supported.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of adolescent perceptions of parental behaviors and parental authority on adolescent familism and self-esteem in a sample of adolescents in Mexico. Limitations of previous studies were addressed by examining parental socialization influence on adolescents living in a relatively collectivistic culture, including adolescent reports of father behaviors, multiple adolescent outcomes, and by also considering more intangible aspects of parental influence (e.g., adolescents' perceptions of parental authority). We hypothesized that paternal and maternal connection, monitoring and autonomy-granting would be positive predictors of adolescent familism and self-esteem, while adolescent perceptions of coercive parenting behaviors by fathers and mothers would be negative predictors. In reference to adolescent perceptions of parental authority, we hypothesized that paternal and maternal legitimate and expert authority would be positive predictors of both adolescent familism and self-esteem, while coercive authority would be a negative predictor.

Familism

In reference to adolescent familism, few of our hypotheses were supported. Adolescent familism was not associated with monitoring, autonomy-granting, coercive parenting, or expert or coercive authority. In contrast, perceptions of parents as legitimate sources of guidance and influence (i.e., legitimate authority), age of adolescent, and parental education level were significant predictors of familism across all gender dyads. Interestingly, although there were differences across mothers and fathers, significant predictors of adolescent familism were identical for each parent in reference to boys and girls (e.g., for father models, legitimate authority, adolescent age, and paternal education were significant predictors for both boys and girls). Additionally, regression analyses indicated differences in the predictors of familism by gender of adolescent, with paternal and maternal connection predicting familism for girls, but not for boys.

Several nonsignificant findings from the regression models were also noteworthy. While the results of regression models suggested that there were few significant relationships between the measures of parenting behaviors, parental authority and adolescent familism, examination of the correlation analyses indicated greater support for the hypotheses (see Tables 2 and 3). That is, although the effects were reduced to nonsignificance in the full regression models, parental monitoring (except for girls' maternal model), parental coercive authority, and parental connection were all significant positive correlates of familism. These results stress the importance of examining multiple predictors of adolescent outcomes (i.e., as guided by theory and previous research) so that the covariance among the predictor variables can be considered. Otherwise, conclusions drawn from the data will be not be based on a complete model, and, therefore, less accurate and possibly leading to inaccurate inferences. For example, it appears that connection with parents influences the development of familism for boys, but to a lesser extent compared to their perceptions that mothers and fathers have the right to exercise influence on them (i.e., once the other predictor variables are considered). For girls, in contrast, parenting that encourages connection to parents and the establishment of parents as legitimate sources of influence were of similar importance in facilitating a sense of family obligation.

In addition to parental legitimate authority, the most consistent predictors of adolescent familism across gender dyads were age of the adolescent and parental education. The significant relationships between these sociodemographic variables and adolescent familism suggest that Mexican adolescents who are younger and

have less educated parents have a greater orientation toward their families. Considering the few studies that have examined these specific relationships (e.g., parental education and familism), besides variation in the conceptualization and operationalization of familism, these findings are difficult to explain. For example, Valenzuela and Dornbusch (1994) found familistic attitudes (similar to the operationalization of familism in the present study) to be to have a weak but significant negative correlation with parental education level among a large sample of European and Mexican American adolescents. However, this relationship was no longer significant when the ethnic groups were examined separately. In contrast, findings from a cross-national study of families in Mexico and the U.S. conducted by Tallman et al. (1983) suggest that familism is more pronounced among more affluent groups, especially in the U.S. However, the definition and operationalization of familism was different and more complex, focusing on the context of commitment to social relationships over and against a competing commitment to material rewards, and measured through responses to simulated indicators of familism. Taken together, these findings underscore the importance of avoiding simplistic interpretations of the relationships between these sociodemographic variables and familism. In reality, the relationships between familism and its correlates are complex and difficult to disentangle. For example, Valenzuela and Dornbusch (1994) found that neither familistic attitudes nor parental education were significant predictors of academic achievement among Mexican American adolescents; rather, the interaction between familism and parental education served to facilitate achievement. Future research is needed to further examine, simultaneously, both the causes and consequences of adolescent familism.

The size and cross-sectional nature of the present sample prevents further exploration of potential development differences among the predictor variables and adolescents' degree of affinity with familism. However, the wide age range did allow for the detection of possible age differences in the development of a sense of familism, suggesting that youth's sense of familism may decrease with age. This negative relationship between age and familism is consistent with the increasing importance of the peer group during adolescence, and recent research highlighting the importance of autonomy among Mexican American adolescents (Fulgini, 1998).

Self-Esteem

Results from the regression analyses provided mixed support for hypotheses predicting adolescent self-esteem as connection, monitoring, autonomy-granting, legitimate authority and expert authority were all positively associated with self-esteem in at least one of the gender dyad models. Neither coercive parenting nor adolescent perceptions of coercive authority, however, were significantly related to self-esteem.

These results highlight important and intriguing gender differences in the nature of parental influence on adolescent self-esteem. For example, while monitoring by mothers and fathers was positively associated with self-esteem for both boys and girls, connection and autonomy-granting demonstrated gender-of-adolescent differences in the identified association with youthful self-esteem. Specifically, connection to fathers and mothers was associated with self-esteem for the female adolescents in this study but not for the males. Autonomy-granting, on the other hand, was found to be a positive predictor of the self-esteem of boys but not for girls. Such results suggest that for Mexican girls, supportive and inductive behaviors (i.e., connection) by parents influence positive feelings toward the self, whereas for boys, increased behavioral freedom and decreased parental interference influences self-esteem.

Parental monitoring was the only consistent predictor of self-esteem across all gender-of-parent and gender-of-adolescent dyads. These results suggest that when adolescents perceive parents as having knowledge about their adolescents' activities, there is a benefit to self-esteem, regardless of gender. That is, the extent to which boys and girls perceived their mothers and fathers as keeping track of them served as an important predictor of self-esteem. From a symbolic interactionist perspective, parental monitoring serves as a method through which parents convey clear role expectations and standards in reference to which they can evaluate themselves (Bush et al., 2002; Gecas & Schwalbe, 1986). Having clear expectations provides a better basis for positive self-esteem development in contrast to circumstances in which a person's expectations are ambiguous.

Adolescents' perception of fathers' legitimate parental authority was a positive predictor of self-esteem for both adolescent girls and boys (although marginally significant for boys), whereas maternal legitimate authority was a predictor of self-esteem in boys, but not for girls. Adolescents' perception of maternal and paternal expert authority was related to self-esteem, but only for girls. It appears, then, that self-esteem among adolescent girls in Mexico is promoted when the young female perceives her father as possessing a right to influence her life and her mother as being a reliable source of knowledge. For adolescent males, perceptions of legitimacy for both fathers and mothers were predictive of positive feelings about the self.

CONCLUSIONS

Unique patterns of parental influence were found across gender dyads and adolescent outcomes, highlighting the importance of testing for gender differences across cultures. Results in reference to parental authority indicated that adolescents' perceptions of parents' legitimate right to influence them was particularly important in fostering familistic attitudes and adolescent self-esteem (especially for boys). Moreover, perceptions of the parent as a reliable source of knowledge also positively influenced self-esteem among the girls in this sample. Autonomy-granting was of particular importance for boys' self-esteem, whereas connection was found to be an important predictor of self-esteem and familism among adolescent girls.

Taken together, the results from the present study suggest there are gender differences in the manner by which parenting practices influence developmental outcomes in adolescents from Mexico. Given arguments that boys and girls are differentially socialized in Mexican families (Benjet & Hernandez-Guzman, 2001; Chiñas, 1993), these results are not surprising. Moreover, ethnographic studies of Mexican families illuminate cultural differences in gendered expectations related to adolescent development. While Mexican adolescent boys are typically allowed more freedom from parents, adolescent girls spend more time at home in interaction with parents and are more strictly controlled (Chiñas, 1993). As a result, adolescent boys may perceive that the normative developmental trajectory during adolescence involves increased freedom from parental control and when the adolescent male experiences these behaviors from parents, there is a positive influence on self-esteem. Among Mexican adolescent girls, on the other hand, there are likely fewer expectations regarding autonomy from parents and the relatively higher amount of time they spend with parents may increase the salience of a warm and supportive connection with parents. These results are also somewhat consistent with a study by Benjet and Hernandez-Guzman (2001) in which parental positive affect (similar to parental support) by both fathers and mothers was found to predict adolescent self-esteem in Mexican females, but that among Mexican males, only affect by fathers was a positive predictor.

Our results also add to the literature on parental influence on adolescent outcomes by including measures of parental authority. Overall, adolescent perceptions of paternal and maternal legitimate authority were the most consistent predictor of both boys' and girls' self-esteem and familistic orientation. For both boys and girls, feelings that parental authority is legitimate positively predicted familism. Legitimate authority by mothers also was a positive predictor of self-esteem among the boys in this sample, but legitimate authority of fathers was only related to boys' self-esteem at the trend level. In reference to adolescent girls, legitimate and expert authority by fathers was a positive predictor of self-esteem. In general, expert and coercive authority were unrelated to self-esteem and familism, when all variables were included in the models.

In reference to understanding parental socialization of self-esteem and attitudes toward familism, therefore, these results suggest that parental authority is an important variable to consider, especially for familism and among boys. Moreover, while perceptions of legitimate authority from either mothers or fathers is associated with feelings of familism for both Mexican boys and girls, the female adolescents in this sample seemed to be influenced more (in terms of their self-esteem) by authority attributed to their fathers rather than mothers. These results point to the importance of considering adolescents' perceptions of parental authority, in addition to traditional measures of parental behaviors. In fact, legitimate parental authority, by both mothers and fathers, demonstrated the strongest positive association with male adolescents' sense of familism. These findings lend empirical support for previous suggestions of the importance of parental authority to families of Mexican origin. Moreover, they are consistent with arguments that adolescent-aged children reared in families with more

collectivistic orientations (regarding individualism in families) may be more influenced by parenting strategies that are nonbehavioral and that are rooted in traditional definitions of respect for parents and families (Gorman, 1998).

Limitations

Specific limitations of this study should be considered when interpreting these findings. First, the sample for this study was drawn using a nonprobability strategy from a restricted geographic area of Mexico, limiting generalizability to the entire population of Mexican adolescents, especially those residing in rural areas. Second, the data are cross-sectional and, consequently, the implied direction of influence (e.g., that parents influence adolescents) is posed for heuristic reasons only. It is equally plausible, for instance, that adolescents who have positive feelings about themselves may elicit warmth from parents (as in the case of females) or may be given more freedom by parents (for males).

The measures employed in the current study have been derived through the study of primarily white, two-parent samples of adolescents and their parents. Although the measurement items and summary variables seem to demonstrate adequate reliability and validity in a quantitative/empirical sense, we cannot be certain that the interpretation by Mexican adolescents accurately reflect the original intent of the items. Moreover, we likely are omitting from the analyses important elements of parenting in Mexican culture that are related to the development of self-esteem and familism.

Future studies on family process in Mexican families should include random samples from both urban and rural population, instruments tested on Mexicans, and should consider more culturally relevant and indigenous aspects of parenting. Future studies should also incorporate longitudinal models to examine bi-directional influences between parenting and adolescent outcomes with samples from Mexico.

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