

Puerto Rican Parenting: A Culturally Competent Analysis of Parenting
Values and Practices

by

SONOMA FREDERICK

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Approved: Shannon Peake, Research Assistant Professor
Primary Thesis Advisor

Parental involvement is a significant parenting practice characterized by the ongoing communication and the active participation of a parent or caregiver in a child’s social, emotional, and academic development (Burke, 2015). Parenting practices are highly influenced by cultural values and traditions. Given that parental involvement transcends cultural bounds, it is an effective construct for measuring parenting practices and values across cultural groups. Little scholarship has researched the cultural differences that exist within the broad “Latino” category. Puerto Rican (PR) families have a set of cultural tenets—*familismo*, *respeto*, *personalismo*, and *simpatía*— that when paired with PR pride foster unique parenting practices. The current study uses a comparative literature review and analysis to assess differences in parental involvement across three cultural groups: Puerto Rican families, White American families, and a group representing all Latin American families. The study findings support the claim that levels of parental involvement differ across cultural groups. Puerto Rican parents report the highest levels of involvement, which may be a product of PR cultural tenets. This current study offers noteworthy observations that should be considered for future research on parenting theories.

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Introduction

Parenting practices and values are essential foundations for children's developmental outcomes (Domenech Rodríguez et al., 2013). Much of the existing research on parenting practices is an extension of parenting theory, which was developed to describe patterns of parent-child interactions in White American families. However, cultural differences exist making parenting theory less applicable to many non-White American families. An alternative approach to parenting theory would seek to understand specific parenting practices and their relationship to cultural values and traditions. The current study will compare existing scholarship from previously published studies to assess differences in parenting across three cultural groups: Puerto Rican families, White American families, and a group representing all Latin American families.

Parenting Theory

Decades of research have been devoted to comprehending parenting styles and their relationship to children's developmental outcomes. In the 1960s, clinical psychologist Diana Baumrind developed a schema to cluster parenting behaviors. Theoretically, Baumrind's parenting styles code, cluster, and analyze everyday parental practices to suggest a "gold standard" for parenting (Baumrind, 1991). Each cluster of parenting behaviors generalizes child-caregiver interactions based on levels of emotional connection, autonomy granting, and control. The clusters include: authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive. A fourth cluster, neglectful parenting, was added after the initial development of Baumrind's parenting styles (Vora, 2015). Generally, the authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful styles are associated with inadequate parenting practice (Kooraneh & Amirsardari, 2015). The final parenting style, authoritative parenting, is considered to be the most effective, with consistently involved and supportive

parenting behaviors. Authoritative parenting is positively correlated with adaptive function and social-emotional competence (Vora, 2015).

Baumrind's parenting framework has since been used to inform "preferred" parenting methods and subsequent outcomes for children. This framework is applied to early parenting interventions and parenting measures. Early parenting interventions exemplify how informative and transformational parenting frameworks have been in the field of developmental sciences. Early parenting interventions explore the parent-child relationship while also intending to promote and foster enriching opportunities for children's growth and development. Intervening during the key years of development combats child adverse experiences, and promotes cognitive, emotional, and psychological development (Bick et al., 2019). However, parenting interventions intended for White American families should not be applied across cultural groups without culturally competent adaptations (Parra-Cardona et al., 2023).

Interventions provide training based on empirical evidence and focus on how parent-child interactions can support healthy socialization which is the primary mechanism by which children are integrated into society (Wang, 2023). During the first years of life, children have the greatest capacity for socialization (Kooraneh & Amirsardari, 2015). Parents and parental involvement are the dominant socializing agents in infancy and into early childhood (Wang, 2023).

Culture permeates routine parent-child interactions (Wang, 2023). Whether an interaction occurs during mealtime or playtime, children process and encode contextual cues associated with their social environment and cultural belief system (Mandalaywala & Legaspi, 2023). Through modeling, teaching, and reinforcement, children learn how to navigate their heritage culture and are guided toward socially and culturally desirable behaviors. (Donovick & Domenech Rodríguez, 2008; Harwood et al., 1999).

Baumrind's study of parenting styles offers much insight into how various approaches to parenting can impact a child's developmental outcomes (Vora, 2015). Despite the importance of Baumrind's parenting theory, the framework has its flaws. There is no validated measure associated with the theory and Baumrind's parenting styles have cultural constraints. An alternative method to studying parenting across cultures is by looking at specific parenting practices, like parental involvement.

Because socially and culturally desirable behaviors are not universal, neither is "effective" parenting. "Effective" parenting is measured by optimal child outcomes, which cannot be universally operationalized. Optimal parenting and subsequent child outcomes are determined by what is considered desirable in a respective culture (Sorkhabi, 2005). We cannot assume that parenting interventions will yield the same results across cultural groups. Failure to address these cultural differences risks alienating families or may even result in suboptimal outcomes (Parra-Cardona et al., 2023).

Most parenting interventions were developed in an individualistic culture, like the United States. Individualistic cultures emphasize children's autonomy, while collectivist/interdependent cultures emphasize intimate connections that persist throughout one's life (Harwood et al., 1999). In a collectivist culture, being perceived as an autonomous individual is disadvantageous. Parenting interventions for collectivist cultures are scarce. Latin American families in particular do not have relevant interventions and the existing interventions often lack cultural competence (Parra-Cardona et al., 2023). By examining the origins of cultural labels, we can evaluate how significant parenting practices differ across cultures.

The Origins of Cultural Labels

Latin American cultures are broadly perceived as collectivist (Davis et al., 2023). While generally true, not all “Latinos” are uniformly collectivist. Latin American cultures have historically and inaccurately been grouped into one cultural identity, erasing diverse experiences across groups.

The “Latino” or “Hispanic” category is one that was created as a blanket term to reaffirm a racial hierarchy in the United States. In the 1970s, the United States government began using the term “Hispanic” to describe any person from a Spanish-speaking country. Whether a person was of Mexican, Puerto Rican, or Guatemalan descent was disregarded; all “Hispanics” or “Latinos” were equated (Bigler, 2011). The pan-ethnic term may have advantages for creating a group identity but can be harmful in terms of human-centered research. The pan-ethnic “Latino” identity is largely responsible for the gap in research when studying cultural differences within the “Latino” group. Consequently, overgeneralization disregards the nuanced belief systems, traditions, and linguistic diversity of Latin American peoples. The people of Latin America represent a variety of physical, social, and cultural characteristics that have evolved from various blends of Indian, African, and European roots (Bigler, 2011). The “common culture” created a catch-all category to racialize any person who appeared non-white (Almaguer, 2012). As a result, today the United States homes several “Latinos” who struggle to identify with this category (Almaguer, 2012).

Puerto Rican Parenting

Puerto Rican culture is just one of the many subgroups that fall under the “Latino” identity. Puerto Rico has a rich culture of diverse ethnic groups and a range of identities, from Taíno Indians, Spanish, Africans, Cubans, and Dominicans. This ethnic diversity contributes to

the unique Puerto Rican experience that should not be equated to the experience of other Latin American families or families on the mainland (Gannotti et al., 2001). Previous research on the Puerto Rican (PR) family structure has identified cultural themes that inform PR parenting. Although some of the cultural themes overlap with other Latin American cultures, many are specific to PR culture and/or the approach is uniquely guided by a strong sense of PR pride.

Familial relationships characterize Puerto Ricans collectivist tendencies (Triandis et al., 1984). Through extensive interviews with Puerto Rican fathers ($n=18$), Cristina Mogro-Wilson and colleagues (2016) established four fundamental themes that guide Puerto Rican parenting attitudes and values: *familismo*, *respeto*, *personalismo*, and *simpatía*. These themes were studied alongside PR pride and cultural expectations of the family structure. The first two themes, *familismo* and *respeto*, spotlight some of the more strict PR parenting practices, that are often mischaracterized as an authoritarian style of parenting. These differences in cultural values are important because although PR parents might be considered overbearing it is not detrimental to children's outcomes in the way that it might be for White American families.

Familismo inspires a high degree of emotional connection in the PR family structure (Colón, 2016). Each family member has an explicit role with responsibilities and obligations (Mogro-Wilson et al., 2016). Puerto Rican parents monitor and set more strict limits because children's behaviors reflect upon the entire family. High expectations of obedience ensure that families maintain respect in their community group (Mogro-Wilson et al., 2016). In Western culture, monitoring and demanding behaviors by parents have a negative connotation, while in collectivist cultures, these behaviors are often associated with increased parental involvement. Existing data suggests that parental monitoring is negatively correlated with externalizing scores for young children (Domenech Rodríguez et al., 2013). *Familismo* requires consistent

monitoring, parental involvement, and guidance for children to achieve success. PR parents are known to continue with this level of support throughout adulthood (Mogro-Wilson et al., 2016).

Respeto builds upon familismo. Parents have high expectations of their children in the public sphere (Mogro-Wilson et al., 2016). *Respeto* is a central theme in the PR family structure, but means nothing without reciprocity. Where parents expect obedience, deference and decorum, children expect support and guidance from their parents in return (Calzada, Fernández, & Cortés, 2010, as cited by Colón, 2016). Reciprocity fosters cohesive parent/child relationships, in which the children trust and follow the parents' lead. Constant support and communication is an essential ingredient of *respeto*. When children are punished, parents indicate that they provide support and effectively communicate what their child did wrong, and how they can learn from their mistakes. PR parents endorse explicit communication techniques over engaging in screaming/yelling or commanding “stop” (Domenech Rodríguez et al., 2013). For PR parents, *respeto* is a form of support and guidance.

The final constructs, *personalismo* and *simpatía*, are particularly relevant for understanding the initial applicability of Western parenting measures. *Personalismo* and *simpatía* do not identically correspond with White American values, but are the most consistent with parenting interventions in the United States (Bick et al., 2019).

Personalismo refers to active engagement and interpersonal relationships built on care, respect, and trust and is related to high levels of parental involvement throughout development. In a study reviewing culturally specific parenting, PR fathers emphasized the importance of hands-on quality time playing with their children (Mogro-Wilson et al., 2016). They differentiated active engagement (e.g. playing with dolls) from passive engagement (e.g. watching TV), that does not require high responsiveness (Mogro-Wilson et al., 2016).

Finally, *simpatía* refers to a warm and loving approach to parenting that fosters a harmonious relationship based on reciprocity (Triandis et al., 1984; Mogro-Wilson et al., 2016). While *personalismo* and *simpatía* share many qualities, *simpatía* functions differently based on gender. For boys, *simpatía* is about being a playmate and a father figure; for girls, *simpatía* is about physical love and affection (Mogro-Wilson et al., 2016).

Familismo, *repesto*, *personalismo*, and *simpatía* are values rooted in Puerto Rican culture and tradition and provide a unique context for child-rearing behaviors. Through a culturally competent lens, it becomes evident why PR families do not accurately fit parenting styles that were intended for White American families and why PR expression of *familismo*, *repesto*, *personalismo*, and *simpatía* is different even when compared to other Latin American families. A cultural analysis of the PR family attitudes suggests that PR parenting may look different than parenting in other Latin American cultures or White American families.

Parental Involvement

The current study examines parental involvement using existing measures with validated Spanish language adaptations. Parental involvement is characterized by the ongoing communication and the active participation of a parent or caregiver in a child's social, emotional, and academic development (Burke, 2015). The importance of parent involvement transcends cultural boundaries. Involvement does not measure "how" an individual parents, but rather whether there is an active parent figure in the child's life. Regardless of racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic background, parental involvement proves to be essential for normative development. Children gain more learning opportunities from a caregiver who engages in developmentally supportive interactions (Fisher et al., 2016).

Positive parental involvement consistently strengthens the emotional bond between a parent and child, reducing the risk of dysfunctional child outcomes (Parra Cardona et al., 2023). Everyday positive interactions alter physiological and psychological processes in the brain and body and suggest that high levels of caregiving are positively correlated with functioning glucocorticoid receptors, which regulate stress responses (Letourneau et al., 2014).

In contrast, neglect has lifelong negative implications on social, neurological, and psychological development (Fisher et al., 2016; Bick et al., 2019). Children with indifferent or neglectful parents tend to be psychologically maladjusted and display the following negative personality dispositions: hostility aggression, dependence, negative self-esteem, negative self-adequacy, emotional unresponsiveness, emotional instability, and a negative worldview (Khaleque, 2015).

Involved parents are a key mechanism through which children adjust and socialize. Parenting measures make inherent assumptions regarding “favorable” parenting behaviors, which typically cannot be generalized. However, a consistent measure of parental involvement is likely to retain reliability and validity without cultural adaptation because of its universal importance. Diverse empirical evidence suggests that all children benefit from high parental involvement. We know that across cultures and even species, an offspring is better adjusted with a present parental figure that provides consistent care (Letourneau et al., 2014).

Current Study

The current study examines parental involvement as a measure of parenting values and attitudes. Using a comparative literature review and analysis, the study compares parental involvement scores for PR families with those of Latin American families and White American

families. The study adopts a comparative literature review as a research methodology to leverage previous research that gathered survey responses from the populations of interest.

A comparative literature review integrates existing findings to address research questions that an individual study did not address. This method of research builds on existing knowledge and facilitates the development of theoretical frameworks and conceptual models (Snyder, 2019). Conducting a comparative literature review is particularly useful when evaluating whether an observed phenomenon exists across cultural contexts, and if the results are significantly different (Davis et al., 2014). The current study identifies patterns, disagreements, and relationships that appear across the three studies of interest.

The research investigates the following question: Does parental involvement for Puerto Rican families differ significantly from the other interest groups? Parental involvement is a multidimensional construct that predicts an abundance of parenting behaviors (Chen et al., 2024; Stattin & Kerr, 2000). Scores on parental involvement will then prompt further discussion on how cultural environment influences parenting behaviors and what PR parenting values predict regarding children's behavioral outcomes.

Hypotheses

It is hypothesized that PR parenting behaviors will be associated with significantly higher scores for parental involvement when compared with results for White American families and Latin American families. The study predicts that PR families will have higher scores for parental involvement because of collectivist tendencies, the prominent cultural tenets of Puerto Rican families (*familismo*, *respeto*, *personalismo*, and *simpatía*), and PR pride. High parental involvement will be negatively associated with suboptimal child behavioral outcomes, leading to lower reported externalizing scores for Puerto Rican families.

Methods

The current study will examine existing data sets for the following groups: Puerto Rican families, Latin American families, and White American families. The research will conduct a comparative analysis to identify trends and delineate variability in parental involvement and child outcomes across cultural groups.

Participants

Domenech Rodríguez et al. (2013) recruited 55 Puerto Rican families, primarily from the San Juan, Puerto Rico metropolitan area. The study gathered 55 self-report responses from mothers and 55 self-report responses from fathers ($n = 110$). All parents had children between the ages of 6 and 11 years ($M = 7.93$, $SD = 1.75$). Most parents and children were born in Puerto Rico ($n_{\text{mothers}} = 44$, 80.0%; $n_{\text{fathers}} = 47$, 85.5%; $n_{\text{children}} = 52$, 94.5%). The majority of families were two-parent household ($n = 45$, 81.8%), with one to three children ($n = 51$, 92.7%). And the majority of parents had an undergraduate degree ($n_{\text{mothers}} = 38$, 69.0%; $n_{\text{fathers}} = 29$, 52.7%) (Domenech Rodríguez et al., 2013).

Donovick and Domenech Rodríguez (2008) recruited 50 Spanish-speaking Latin American families, located in the western United States. Representation across all Latin American cultures was minimal. Most families were of Mexican descent (83%) and the remaining families were from other Latin American countries (e.g., Colombia, El Salvador; 17% total). The sample included 49 responses from mothers and 47 responses from fathers ($n = 96$). All families had children between 4 and 9 years of age ($M = 7$; SD was not reported). Most families had two-parents ($n = 44$, 88%), and most reported an annual income between \$19,000 - \$35,000 (96%), with a small number of families reporting yearly earnings over \$35,000 (4%). Despite living in the United States, the large majority indicated that they have retained their

cultural origins and were not integrated into mainstream American culture (80%) (Donovick & Domenech Rodríguez, 2008).

Finally, Shaffer et al. (2021) recruited 1570 families across all 50 U.S. states. Parents or guardians were recruited using an online survey. More than half of the participants were mothers ($n = 1000$, 63.7%). Most participants were White American families ($n = 1210$, 77.1%). Detailed demographics were not provided for each racial and ethnic group individually. All families had children between the ages of 5 and 12 years (M and SD were not provided) (Shaffer et al., 2021). For purposes of this study, only data from the White American families will be used.

Participant demographics for the three studies are different, which may contribute to limitations in the current study. It is reasonable to compare the three populations because the key characteristic, child age, is sufficiently similar across the studies. Differences in educational attainment and income may influence behavior or self-report data. Puerto Rican parents reported relatively high educational attainment. Latin American parents reported relatively low annual income.

Measures

Alabama Parenting Questionnaire

All three of the studies administered the Alabama Parenting Questionnaire (APQ) as a measure for parental involvement. The APQ is a validated measure that has been replicated, verified, and translated into five other languages, including Spanish. The questionnaire is a self-report measure consisting of 42 statements measured on a 5-point Likert scale, 1 (Never) to 5 (Always). Lower scores indicate lower levels of the APQ dimensions (e.g. lower scores on involvement reflect less parent involvement in their child's interests and activities). The APQ measures "effective" parenting by identifying five dimensions: "(1) positive involvement with

the child, (2) supervision and monitoring, (3) use of positive discipline techniques, (4) consistency in the use of such discipline and (5) use of corporal punishment” (Frick, 1991). The positive/parental involvement dimension consists of 10 items that ask about the frequency and type of parent-child interactions and the role of the parent in the dyadic relationship. Scores for all ten items are totaled resulting in a possible range of scores from 10 to 50. Example items for parental involvement include: “You have a friendly talk with your child” and “You play games or do other fun things with your child.”

The White American sample uses the original English version of the APQ (Shaffer et al., 2021). The PR and Latin American samples completed the Spanish version of the APQ (Donovick & Domenech Rodríguez, 2008; Domenech Rodríguez et al., 2013). The Spanish language adaptation was translated from the original APQ followed by a back translation and reviewed by a bilingual committee to retain equivalence (Donovick & Domenech Rodríguez, 2008). Examples of the translated items include: “You have a friendly talk with your child”/“Tiene una plática (conversación) amigable con su hijo” and “You play games or do other fun things with your child”/“Juega juegos divertidos o hace otras cosas divertidas con su hijo.”

The reliability for the parental involvement subscale was good for the White American families, Cronbach’s alpha = .79 (Shaffer et al., 2021). After language adaptation, the Spanish parental involvement subscale demonstrated good reliability for Latin American families, Cronbach's alpha = .77 and for Puerto Rican families, Cronbach’s alpha = .86 for mothers and .81 for fathers (Donovick & Domenech Rodríguez, 2008; Domenech Rodríguez et al., 2013).

Child Behavioral Checklist

Secondary data was extracted from the same studies to analyze child behavioral outcomes. The Child Behavioral Checklist (CBCL) was administered to Puerto Rican and Latin

American families to measure children's internalizing and externalizing behaviors. The CBCL is a 100-item self-report measure that uses a 3-point Likert scale, 0 (Never True) to 2 (Very True), to assess behavioral, emotional, and social functioning (Achenbach & Rescorla, 2000).

Responses indicate whether a behavior occurred in the last 6 months. A Spanish adaptation of the CBCL has been administered and replicated by numerous studies for construct, content, and criterion validity (Wild, Furtado, & Angalakuditi, 2012).

The current study examines scores on the externalizing child behaviors subscale of the CBCL. The externalizing construct is a subset of behaviors represented by the outward manifestation of problems. Some externalizing behaviors including acting out, engaging in aggression or exhibiting attention problems. Examples of CBCL externalizing items include: "Your child gets in many fights" and "Your child quickly shifts from one activity to another." Scores above 67, on a scale of 1 to 100, indicate clinically significant levels of externalizing disorders (Achenbach & Rescorla, 2000).

Analytic Strategies

The study applies a comparative analysis to identify trends and patterns between cultural groups. The first measure of analysis will compare mean scores for parental involvement across nominal groups using an independent samples *t*-test. Three independent samples *t*-tests will measure the variance between Puerto Rican vs. White America families, Puerto Rican vs. Latin American families, and Latin American vs. White American families. All tests report the level of significance, with a *p*-value set to 0.05 for the independent samples *t*-test (Sergeant, ESG, 2018).

Previous data reports on Pearson's *r* for PR and Latin American families. Using this data, the current study interprets the correlational relationship between involvement and child externalizing behaviors through the lens of this study.

Results

Parental Involvement

Across the three groups, Puerto Rican families had the highest scores on parental involvement, followed by White American families, then Latin American families. Mean parental involvement scores are presented in Table 1.

The first independent samples *t*-test compares the mean parental involvement scores reported by Puerto Rican and White American families. The observed difference is statistically significant, $t(1318) = 3.401, p < .001$, with a medium effect size ($d = .33, 95\% \text{ CI } [0.783, 2.917]$). Thus, the reported mean parental involvement scores for Puerto Rican families ($M = 41.25$, Table 1) are significantly higher than reported scores for White American families ($M = 39.40$). Puerto Rican parental involvement is also significantly higher than parental involvement score for other Latin American families ($M = 35.99$), $t(204) = 6.446, p < .001$, with a large effect size ($d = .90, 95\% \text{ CI } [3.651, 6.869]$). Finally, an independent samples *t*-test comparing White American and Latin American families yielded significantly higher parental involvement scores for White American families than Latin American families, $t(1304) = 5.849, p < .001$, with a medium effect size ($d = .59, 95\% \text{ CI } [2.266, 4.554]$).

	Puerto Rican ¹	White American ²	Latin American ³
	<i>n</i> = 110	<i>n</i> = 1210	<i>n</i> = 96
Parental Involvement	<i>M</i> = 41.25, <i>SD</i> = 5.60	<i>M</i> = 39.40, <i>SD</i> = 6.69	<i>M</i> = 35.99, <i>SD</i> = 6.11

Table 1: Mean scores for Parental Involvement.

1 Domenech Rodríguez et al., 2013

2 Shaffer et al., 2021

3

Donovick &

Domenech

Rodríguez, 2008

Figure 1

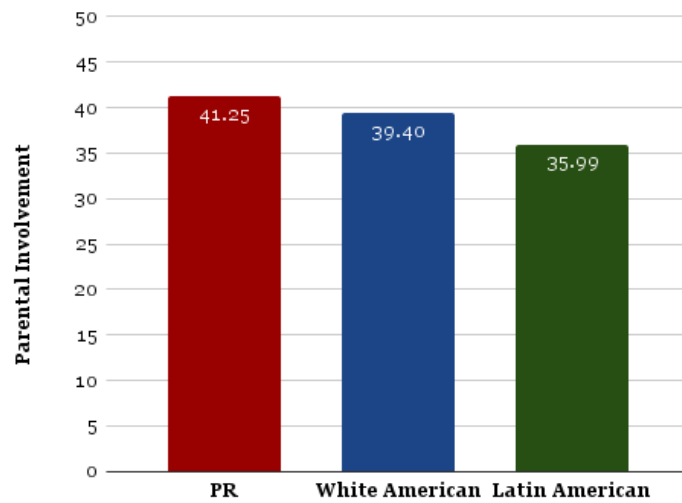


Figure 1: Mean scores for Parental Involvement for the three comparison groups.

Child Behavioral Outcomes

The mean externalizing scores for PR and Latin American parents did not reach clinically significant levels. PR parents reported slightly higher externalizing behaviors than Latin American families (see Table 2) (Donovick & Domenech Rodríguez, 2008; Domenech Rodríguez et al., 2013).

PR parents' self-reported parental involvement did not predict child externalizing behavior, $r = -.13, p = .19$ (Domenech Rodríguez et al., 2013). There was a negative relationship between PR parental involvement and self-reported externalizing behaviors, but the findings were not significant. Donovanick & Domenech Rodríguez (2008), reported separate r scores for Latin American mothers and fathers. Latin American fathers' parental involvement predicted lower child externalizing behaviors, $r = -.43, p < .01$, but Latin American mothers' parental involvement did not, $r = -.29, p > .05$ (Donovick & Domenech Rodríguez, 2008). As observed in PR parents, there was a negative relationship between involvement scores and externalizing scores, but this relationship was only significant for Latin American fathers.

	Puerto Rican ₁	Latin American ₂
	$n = 110$	$n = 96$
Externalizing	$M = 56.57, SD = 9.66$	$M = 54.14, SD = 9.77$

Table 2: Mean scores for Externalizing Behaviors.

1 Domenech Rodríguez et al., 2013

2 Donovanick & Domenech Rodríguez, 2008

Figure 2

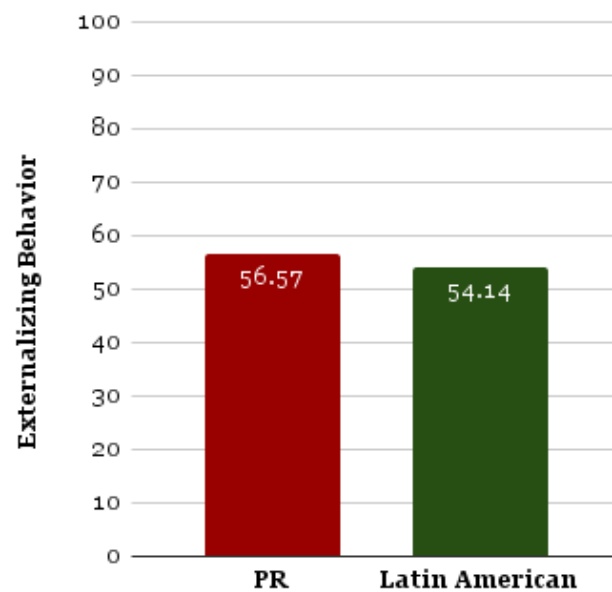


Figure 2: Mean scores for Child Externalizing Behaviors.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine variations in parenting behaviors and attitudes across cultural groups. The sample represents three cultural groups: Puerto Rican, White American, and Latin American families. All families had children between the ages of 5 and 12 years.

As hypothesized, Puerto Rican parents reported higher levels of parental involvement than White American parents. Based on this, it may seem that a collectivist outlook on the family structure would predict greater involvement.

In addition, Puerto Rican parents also reported significantly higher levels of involvement than other Latin American families. It was predicted that PR parents are more involved than their counterparts because of the PR family values that are shaped by PR pride and traditional belief systems. *Familismo*, *respeto*, *personalismo*, and *simpatía* influence child-rearing and subsequent child developmental outcomes. Although these values are not entirely unique to PR culture, the Puerto Rican sociopolitical history fosters strong PR pride, adding a unique layer to these cultural tenets. Puerto Rican culture is forever influenced by diverse groups that have inhabited the island, as well as its history of colonization, both at the hands of Spain and the United States. The attempted theft of culture and autonomy has only inspired greater pride for many Puerto Ricans, especially those who remain on the island. Puerto Ricans celebrate culture, familial connections, and connections to the land (Garcia-Preto, 1996).

PR parents might be more involved than other Latin American and White American families because of their commitment to creating a safe space that allows the culture to thrive. The cultural tenets mixed with PR pride, remain at the forefront of familial interactions and remind parents that to lead a successful family, they must always remain present with their

family. The observed difference between Puerto Rican and other Latin American families demonstrates the considerable diversity within the “Latino” cultural label.

Existing literature beyond the three studies examined here supports the finding that Puerto Rican parents generally report high parental involvement. Calzada and Eyberg (2002), reported a similar pattern, with over 85% of their sample of first-generation Puerto Rican mothers responding “always” for the APQ item stating, “I express affection by hugging and kissing my child” (“Le da abrazos o besos a su hijo cuando hace algo bien hecho”) (Frick, 1991). While Donovanick and Domenech Rodríguez (2008), reported a slightly lower endorsement of 80% for Latin American families. Once again, they generalized these results to cultural groups outside of the purview of their study. “It may be that positive parenting practices such as parental warmth may be related to Latin American cultural values common among first-generation Puerto Rican, Dominican, and Mexican parents” (Donovick & Domenech Rodríguez, 2008).

White American parental involvement was unexpectedly higher than Latin American parental involvement. These results are interesting because the literature suggests that collectivist cultures lead to more involved parenting behaviors. It was expected that the individualistic nature of White American families would result in less parental involvement and more child independence. It may be possible that demographics function as confounding variables distorting the observed effect. Socioeconomic status is a stressful contextual factor that is associated with adverse effects. Caregivers experiencing adversity are generally less perceptive and responsive (Fisher et al. 2016). Shaffer et al. (2021) did not report White American SES, therefore a cross study comparison in the samples could not be made. Alternatively, child independence and parental involvement might be two unique constructs. It is possible that White American parents can be involved in their child’s daily life, while also promoting independence. Parents may act as

a secure base for independent children to rely on in situations that require parental support and increased involvement. It is not inherent that APQ involvement items like, “Your mom/dad helps you with your homework,” infringe on a child’s independence.

The secondary goal of the study was to interpret the relationship between parental involvement and child behaviors. The parent-report scores for externalizing behaviors are different in a way that is unexpected. It was hypothesized that higher reports of parental involvement would be negatively associated with externalizing scores. The results did not support the second hypothesis. Parental involvement did not significantly predict rates of externalizing behaviors as expected. The correlation was only significant for Latin American fathers, but not Latin American mothers or Puerto Rican parents. The different correlation in Latin American fathers and mothers raises the question: Does parental involvement function differently for fathers than for mothers? And if so, would this same difference exist if separate results were provided for PR mothers and fathers? Despite the lack of statistically significant results, it is still worth mentioning that both PR and Latin families with higher parental involvement reported lower levels of externalizing behaviors in their children.

Even though Latin American parents reported lower levels of parental involvement, they also reported lower levels of externalizing behaviors than PR parent reports. The unexpected difference may be a result of confounding and/or mediating variables. Externalizing behaviors are not only influenced by parenting, but also socioeconomic status, neighborhood environment, and socializing agents outside of the family, like peers. Reported externalizing behaviors are based on parental perception, rather than clinical assessments. PR cultural constructs play an essential role in parental perceptions of child behaviors. PR values of *familismo* and *respeto* motivate parents to observe their children, which may result in greater critical reporting. Self-

report measure always have limitations in that perceptions of a behavior cannot be operationally defined. Puerto Rican mothers and father may consider one type of behavior highly “disobedient,” while the same behavior may not be perceived as “disobedient” amongst other Latin American families.

Parental involvement is a prominent construct when considering parenting-child interactions. Specific parenting behaviors like parental involvement, may be a more accurate universal representation of parenting than other, more culturally bound measures, like parenting styles. Thus, parental involvement can be compared across cultural groups, as done in this study. As hypothesized, Puerto Rican families reported significantly higher levels of parental involvement than their Latin American and White American counterparts. The literature conveys that this difference may be a result of cultural values.

In summary, this study offers an analysis of PR culture and parenting practices to evaluate the claim that cultural groups adopt widely different parenting styles, attitudes, and behaviors. There is not one correct form of parenting. Parenting practices are malleable and flexible to cultural traditions and desired outcomes, and can even shift over time. The variety of parenting strategies is a product of our social environment, largely influenced by our cultural values and traditions. Developmental science frequently falls into the trap of idealizing one form of parenting. This isolated perspective is harmful without a cultural lens because “desirable” child outcomes are not universal. In an individualistic culture, uniqueness is a most desirable trait. In a collectivist culture, this same trait might have a negative connotation. The variability in cultural traditions and parenting, in some instances, predicts child behavioral outcomes. However, many other cultural, environmental, and social factors contribute to children’s outcomes.

The limitations of the current study are of significance when considering the findings. While conducting a comparative review of existing scholarship provides new perspectives on the topic of interest, further analysis would have been possible with additional data. The study was limited to measuring variables whose measurements matched across the three studies. Further data would have offered more insight to understand the non-significant results for PR parental involvement and behavioral outcomes. Second, demographic differences could in part explain the results. The child age range across the three studies were similar, but not identical, and each study reports on different demographics. Third, the Spanish adaptation of the APQ in itself may be considered a limitation. The Spanish language has between 20 to 30 distinct dialects and Puerto Rican Spanish is different from other dialects. Dialectical differences may result in misunderstandings and invalid results. Finally, as with all self-report measures, including the APQ and CBCL, social desirability bias may persuade participants to report false information and respond in a manner that is deemed “desirable.” This bias may be particularly acute regarding parenting questionnaires, such as those administered in the study. Of course, participants are guaranteed confidentiality, however, the bias may persist.

Future research may expand on this study’s efforts by re-administering the APQ and CBCL, using appropriately translated forms to match the dialect of the participant. (i.e. a version adapted to Puerto Rican Spanish). Once that data is gathered, the breadth of constructs will offer a greater analysis of differences across cultures. This will allow measurements across all different parenting practices, and correlational analysis between multiple parenting practices and child behavioral outcomes. To further counteract social desirability biases, a study might employ a mixed-method approach by incorporating qualitative analysis. Parenting interviews can be

coded using a thematic coding scheme to illuminate the findings and address any items that are not covered by the questionnaires that largely influence parenting behaviors.

The findings of the current study are significant for informing a culturally adapted framework that escapes buy-in to narratives of the dominant culture and account for heterogeneity. Unfortunately, existing cultural adaptations of parenting measures and interventions for members of the “Latino” community rely on the “common culture” schema, assuming cultural values and traditions are the same across all Latin American groups. The current study encourages that future interventions for Latin American communities and other cultural groups use a *deep* cultural adaptation. *Deep* cultural adaptations for interventions adopt a cultural sensitive framework, which interprets “ethnic/culture characteristics, experiences, norms, values, behavioral patterns, and beliefs of a target population,” and incorporates “relevant historical, environmental, and social forces... in the *design, delivery, and evaluation*” (Resnicow et al., 2002, p. 272, as cited by Domenech Rodríguez & Bernal, 2012).

This exploratory study analyzing culture differences may support the development and adaptation of parenting measures, but more importantly parenting interventions and programs. Parenting interventions actively shape parent-child interactions which contribute to the child’s socialization. It is critical that these tools are culturally competent and avoiding taking an ethnocentric mindset about parenting.

Considering these limitations noted previously, the current study does not claim that one parenting practice is optimal, or claim a causal relationship between the variables presented in the study. The study highlights cultural differences with the implication that values and traditions should be integrated into the development of parenting theories.

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