

# Latino Students' Perceptions of Educational Involvement of Mother/Female Guardians Compared to the Father/Male Guardians and other members of the Family.

Daniela De Sousa Arocha

Advisors: Dr. Lyn Howell, Dr. Angela Hilton-Prillhart, and Dr. Bert Allen

Sponsors: Milligan College and ACA ARC grant

## Research Question

People of various cultural backgrounds are rarely represented in higher educational institutions. In many colleges, these cultural groups make up a low percentage of the college student population. While there are multiple reasons for the lack of representation, this research looks at what support students of a Latino background receive to encourage their getting a better education. Family and friends act as motivators to the student to further their education after they have graduated high school.

It is the mother or female guardian the one who is most involved in her children's education, rather than the father or male guardian and other members of the family. This might be due to modern American culture requiring college degrees to be seen as successful in this society. In order to gather information to test this hypothesis, a questionnaire was given to high school students in two different locations, Northeast Tennessee, where Latinos are the minority of the population, and Southern Texas, where Latinos are the majority.



## Method and Participants

To measure the involvement of the parents and other members of the family, a seventy-three question survey was given to Latino students in three schools in Northeast Tennessee and a school in Southern Texas. After getting permission from the school and IRB, the questionnaire was placed along with a consent form in an envelope, and sent to the schools with directions. For this research, this study analyzed specific questions from the questionnaire, including how often parents are involved in their education, interested in knowing their grades, and other aspects.



The study ran a correlation to see if a relationship exists between mother and father and other members of the family involved in the child's education. Also, it ran a correlation to see if there is a difference between female students' perceptions and male students' perceptions of their families' involvement in their education. There were 170 high school students who participated in this research, with all being in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade. There were 31 students from Northeast Tennessee, with 13 being male and 18 being female. There were 139 students from Southern Texas with 61 being male and 78 being female. Participants were mainly from a Mexican background.

## Literature Cited

- Alfaro, E.C., Bamaca, M.Y., & Umana-Taylor, A.J. (2006). The influence of academic support on Latino adolescent's academic motivation. *Family Relations*, 55(3), 279-291
- Castellanos, J., Gloria, A.M., Herrera, N., Kanagui-Munoz, M., & Flores, C. (2013). ¡Apoyamos La Educación de Nuestros Hija/os!: How Mexican parents' college knowledge, perceptions, and concerns influence the emotional and behavioral support of their children to pursue higher education. *Journal Of Latino-Latin American Studies, (JOLLAS)*, 5(2), 85-98.
- Clark, M., Ponjuan, L., Orrock, J., Wilson, T., & Flores, G. (2013). Support and barriers for Latino male students' educational pursuits: perceptions of counselors and administrators. *Journal Of Counseling & Development*, 91(4), 458-466. doi: 10.1002/j.1556-6676.2013.00118.

## Literature Review

Latinos are one of the largest ethnic minority populations in the United States and it is quickly growing, and they have been more focus on researching their involvement on higher education. One research (Alfaro, 2006) looks at the influence and support of parents, teachers, and classmates on the students' motivation to better their education. Also, one research (Clark, 2013) focuses on how much counselors and other school administrators are aware of the support and difficulties that Latino students go through to better their educations. Another is how a study (Castellanos, 2013) in looking at what are the ways that parents of Mexican background are involved their children's pursuit of higher education. They all have the common factor of looking at what support Latino students receive to better themselves and pursue higher education.

## Results

Latino students' perceptions of their mother or female guardians' involvement in their education are influenced by their location, even when looking at the difference between a female or male student's perceptions.

In Northeast Tennessee, there is a statistically significance positive relationship between Latino students' perception of mother or female guardian expecting children to go to college and the perception of father or male guardian expecting them to go to college,  $r(28)=.37, p<.05$ . There is also a statistically significance positive relationship between Latino student's perception of mother or female guardian reading to them when they were children and the perception of father or male guardian reading to them,  $r(28)=.47, p<.05$ .

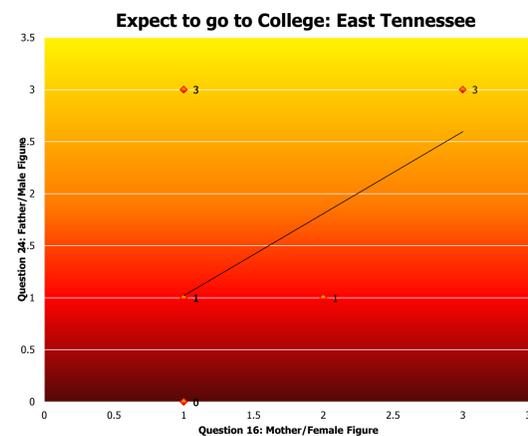


Figure 2: Correlation between Mother/Female Guardian and Father/Male Guardian for Northeast Tennessee

Expect to go to College: Southern Texas

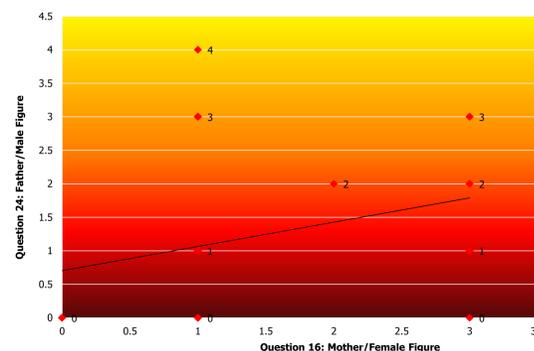


Figure 3: Correlation between Mother/Female Guardian and Father/Male Guardian for Southern Texas

There is a statistically significance positive relationship between Latino male students' perception of father or male guardian talking to them about college and female students' perception of father or male guardian talking to them about college,  $r(28)=.565, p<.05$ .

In Southern Texas, there is no statistical significance between Latino students' perception of mother or female guardian expecting children to go to college and the perception of father or male guardian expecting them to go to college,  $r(139)=0.29, p\neq.05$ .

Regarding the students' perception of reading, there is no statistical significance between Latino student's perception of mother or female guardian reading to them when they were children and the perception of father or male guardian reading to them,  $r(139)=.47, p\neq.05$ . There is no statistical significance between Southern Texas Latino male students' perception of father or male guardian talking to them about college and female students' perception of father or male guardian talking to them about college,  $r(139)=-.02, p\neq.05$ .

The other questions that were looked at, including involvement in education, help with homework, interest in knowing grades, and encouraging them to go to college were not statistically significant for either Northeast Tennessee or Southern Texas.

### Results:

Southern Texas

- No significance in any question
- All questions were positive correlated
- Difference between male and female students: No significance; Most questions were negative correlated

East Tennessee

- Question 9- 17: Correlation- 0.47
- Question 16- 24: Correlation- 0.37
- All positive correlated expect question 15-32
- Difference between male and female students: Question 23: Correlation- 0.56; Mainly all positive correlated (expect 3) ; There were two that had no correlation (0)

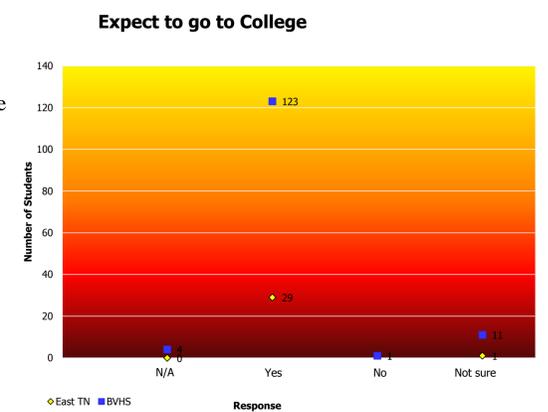


Figure 4: Mother/Female Guardian expect children will go to college in both cities

## Conclusions

The results found that the mothers or female figure expect their children to go to college, and they are involved in their learning, especially how to read, since childhood. This was only seen in Northeast Tennessee and not in Southern Texas. It shows that the data partially supports the idea that the mother or female figure is the one who is more involved in the education of her children. This may be the influence of the population being a minority in Northeast Tennessee and a majority in Southern Texas. There may be a chance that being the minority makes the mother or female guardian put greater pressure on students. This study shows how involved parents or guardians are in their children's education, especially the mother or female guardian.

With this research, one of the limitations that was present is that there were not as many participants from the Northern Tennessee area. Another limitation was that the participants from Southern Texas were mostly seniors in high school so the data that could be use for either city was going to be 12<sup>th</sup> grade, which affected the schools in Northern Tennessee because the population was not many and they were spread across grades. The strength of the data gathered shows the importance of education these students. One of the questions was about the student's perception of expectation of their parent's or guardian's of the student going to college. The students mainly answer that they are expected to graduate high school and pursue higher education. This not only shows the students' goals but also the expectation that parents or guardians have for them.

## Acknowledgments

To start, I want to thank the participants who decided to be part of this project. Second, I want to thank my family who have helped me with this project by teaching me how to use Excel, and supported me through my own path to higher education. Third, I want to thank my advisors who have helped me and guided me throughout this long process. I have learned a lot from each and every one of you. Fourth, I want to thank Milligan College and ACA grant because without your support I could not be able to do this. Fifth, my classmates who have motivated me and guided me through this long process. Last but not least, Rudy. You are an amazing mascot and relax therapy dog.