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Recommended Citation

Arellanes, J. A., Miller, K., & Wesselmann, E. D. (2024). A Mixed Methods Investigation into Latino Fathers' Roles in Their Children's Educational Expectations. *Journal of Latinos and Education*, 1–13.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15348431.2024.2388635>

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To cite this article: Jordan A. Arellanes, Kyle Miller & Eric D. Wesselmann (17 Aug 2024): A Mixed Methods Investigation into Latino Fathers' Roles in Their Children's Educational Expectations, Journal of Latinos and Education, DOI: [10.1080/15348431.2024.2388635](https://doi.org/10.1080/15348431.2024.2388635)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/15348431.2024.2388635>



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Published online: 17 Aug 2024.



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A Mixed Methods Investigation into Latino Fathers' Roles in Their Children's Educational Expectations

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ABSTRACT

Latino fathers make meaningful contributions toward their children's educational expectations. Cultural factors and structural barriers may shape unique parenting roles for Latino fathers and their influence on their children's educational expectations. To explore the culturally nuanced roles of Latino fathers, we conducted a convergent mixed-methods study with 244 emerging adults to gain their perceptions of their fathers' parenting roles and how those roles influenced the relation between the fathers' and emerging adult children's educational expectations. A content analysis of qualitative data identified positive (e.g. motivation and emotional support) and negative roles (e.g. family absence and overworking) that participants perceived their fathers had in their education. Quantitatively, Latino fathers' educational expectations predicted emerging adults' own educational expectations, with the strongest association for fathers coded as having a positive parental role. Findings from this study support the need for more inclusive and culturally relevant research practices with Latino fathers and families. Supporting and incorporating the roles of Latino fathers in the school system may increase students' educational expectations.

KEYWORDS

Fatherhood; parenting roles; educational expectations; mixed-methods design

So much of who a person becomes stems from their parents' educational expectations for them. Parents' educational expectations for their children differ based on family background, personal educational experiences, and income (Briley et al., 2014; Jung et al., 2018; Roche et al., 2017). Though there is a general trend for parents to push children to obtain a college education, expectations for post-undergraduate education can vary by ethno-racial identity (Ceja, 2004; Hill & Torres, 2010). Thus, investigations into the influence of parents' educational expectations on their children should consider culturally nuanced perspectives and research strategies (Amatea, 2013; S. Garcia et al., 2024; Lin et al., 2022; Sands & Plunkett, 2005). The lack of culturally sensitive, context-driven measures of fathers' involvement has resulted in ineffective programming for families and sub-optimal outcomes for children (Cowan & Cowan, 2019; McWayne et al., 2013). Investigators should consider the intersectionality of parents' identities, such as ethno-racial backgrounds and gender (e.g., fathers; Volling & Cabrera, 2019). One underexplored group would be Latino¹ fathers (Do & Mancillas, 2006). We address this gap with a convergent mixed-methods design to explore and develop a culturally nuanced understanding of Latino fathers' parenting roles and educational expectations for their emerging adult children and how they ultimately influence their children's educational expectations.

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¹We recognize there are debates about the most appropriate terms, such as Latino/a/x/é. We chose to use the term Latino because that was the term used most by our participants (see Participants section).

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Theoretical framework

The extant studies on Latino fathers reveal that their role in the family is complex and multidimensional. Therefore, we utilize Social Role Theory to contextualize the findings of this study. Social Role Theory links one's personal development to the social environment in which they live (Newman & Newman, 2007). Theoretically, each social environment has a set of expected and acceptable behaviors, commonly called "roles" (Garvin, 1991). In this study, we define "fathers' roles" as the behaviors and responsibilities fathers have in parenting contexts (e.g., financial provision, caregiving, companionship, and teaching) (Lamb et al., 1985) that are shaped by history, culture, and familial ideologies (McWayne et al., 2013; Shwalb et al., 2013). Roles are often unwritten norms based on a person's social position (e.g., teacher, student, parent) in reference to another person or within society (Biddle, 1986; Newman & Newman, 2007). What is expected and acceptable for a person depends on their environment (Biddle, 1986). Fathers from varied ethno-racial backgrounds have unique beliefs about their expected roles within the family (N. M. Garcia & Mireles-Rios, 2020).

Similarly, research has consistently found different expectations for men's and women's attributes and social behaviors (Eagly & Wood, 1991). Historically, fathers have been considered the *providers* within families, indicating their limited parenting role compared to mothers (Lamb et al., 1985; Palkovitz, 1997). Although numerous studies have described the historic shift from the unidimensional "breadwinner" to the more engaged multidimensional parent, only a few studies have considered the cultural parameters that may exist for ethno-racially diverse fathers and their parenting behaviors (Amatea, 2013; Arellanes et al., 2023; Cedeño et al., 2021; Schoppe-Sullivan & Altenburger, 2019). Given the more traditional cultural values of many Latino fathers, we expect the role of the provider will be an important component of Latino fathers' parenting. Yet, being the provider may not be limited to financial assistance but also providing support and security for their children's education.

Latino fathers' parenting roles

Given that Latino families are among the fastest-growing populations in the U.S. (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018), this demographic shift calls for increased attention toward Latino families and the development of a more nuanced cultural understanding of parenting roles in education. The cultural influences (Cruz et al., 2011), immigration concerns (Behnke et al., 2008), and generation statuses (Planalp et al., 2021) of Latino fathers can facilitate varying levels of involvement with their children. Latino fathers' parenting roles and educational expectations for their children have yielded many positive academic outcomes (M. Castro et al., 2015; Do & Mancillas, 2006; Jessee & Adamsons, 2018). Latino fathers' parenting roles are commonly associated with *machismo* (strong adherence to traditional masculine gender norms; Glass et al., 2010). Yet other more family-oriented values also describe their roles, such as *educación* (education within the home to support social and moral developments; Taggart, 2023), *respeto* (reverence for those in respected positions and elders; Kuhns & Cabrera, 2020), and *familismo* (strong orientation and commitment toward family; Chen et al., 2021). These family-oriented values position Latino fathers as influential figures in their households who account for essential parenting decisions (Cabrera & Bradley, 2012; Moreno & Chuang, 2015; Zhang et al., 2020). Thus, it is critical to expand the scholarship on Latino fathers and their contributions to their children's educational achievements to include family values (Boutin-Martinez et al., 2019).

In a study of first-generation Latino fathers, Arellanes and colleagues (2023) found that these men saw their role in education as providing a safe and secure environment for their children to grow in. Though aspects of helping with homework were seen as important, they were not the main contributors to how Latino fathers themselves described their role. Instead, this role was closely related to the traditional role of the financial provider while also providing emotional and social guidance. Cross and colleagues (2019) described the difference between these roles as "school-based tasks" or "home-based tasks." Traditional forms of involvement, such as attending parent-teacher conferences, would

be considered “school-based tasks,” whereas the support of Latino families within the household is “home-based tasks.”

However, little educational research includes “home-based tasks” as a means by which parents are involved in their children’s education (Quiñones & Kiyama, 2014). These “home-based” or non-traditional forms of parental involvement tend to be viewed as deficient or entirely ignored by previous scholarship, leading to the view of Latino parents as uncaring or less involved (Pstross et al., 2016). Latino fathers’ involvement in their children’s education is often misunderstood, ignored, or dismissed, as their efforts might not always align with the middle-class norms that dominate education (Gallo, 2017; N. M. Garcia & Mireles-Rios, 2020; Hill & Torres, 2010). Walker and colleagues (2005) review seven measures of education-related parental involvement, of which the predominant focus was on “school-based tasks.” The limited “home-based tasks” that were included, such as helping with homework, were general and did not fully encapsulate how parents support their children’s education. For example, many Latino fathers may motivate their children (Alfaro & Umaña-Taylor, 2015) by sharing their hardship stories (Behnke et al., 2008), thereby communicating their educational expectations for their children. A more nuanced understanding of Latino fathers’ roles allows for cultural variation and understudied roles and forms of parental support in education to be measured (Quiñones & Kiyama, 2014). Such culturally nuanced possibilities are under-represented in extant theory and research, thus providing an incomplete picture of fathers’ roles in their children’s educational development.

Educational expectations and Latino families

While educational aspirations describe the goals one has for the future, expectations describe whether a person believes they will achieve those goals (Knight et al., 2017; S. Garcia et al., 2024). Educational expectations connect a person’s beliefs about the level of education an individual must attain to succeed in their community and their ability to reach that level (Briley et al., 2014; Fan & Wolters, 2014). Increasingly, high school graduation is no longer the educational end goal in the United States. Some researchers suggest that the U.S. has entered a generation of “college for all,” where 85% of high school students believe college is the answer for future success (Cundiff, 2017; Goyette, 2008). Previous research demonstrates that one’s educational expectations correlate with one’s eventual educational achievement (Fan & Wolters, 2014; Walker et al., 2005). One study demonstrated that emerging adults with higher educational expectations achieved greater education levels eight years later compared to peers with lower educational expectations (Beal & Crockett, 2013). Considering that a growing body of scholarship has highlighted the significance of fathers to their children’s educational expectations, it is critical to explore the nuances and complexities of fathers’ contributions to their children’s education (Carlson, 2006; N. M. Garcia & Mireles-Rios, 2020).

For Latino families, education is generally considered the route toward upward mobility and a way to break out of the cycle of poverty (Arellanes et al., 2018; S. Garcia et al., 2024). Most Latino parents expect their children to graduate from high school and college, and those with greater educational expectations have children with greater academic achievement (Do & Mancillas, 2006). Increased levels of Latino parents’ educational expectations were also associated with children who had higher rates of self-esteem (Cross et al., 2019). Compared to their Black and White peers, Latino students may have lower rates of educational expectations; with particularly low rates for males (Taggart, 2023). Yet further research is needed to describe the influences of educational expectations.

Purpose of the current research

This study highlights the cultural influences of Latino fathers’ parenting roles and educational expectations for their children. Fagan and colleagues (2014) encouraged scholars to look beyond traditional methods for measuring fatherhood. We follow the spirit of this recommendation by adopting a convergent mixed-methods design, which collects both forms of data together to confirm

or divert findings from each form of data (Creswell, 2021). One challenge in this method is how researchers integrate the data (Creswell et al., 2003; Greene & Caracelli, 1997). We address this issue by transforming the qualitative data into a quantitative format using multiple coders. This transformation ensures a deeper understanding of the results and facilitates further statistical analyses and metainferences (de Block & Vis, 2019). A metainference is a finding drawn from combining data forms (Creswell, 2021). Considering the scarce scholarship on Latino fathers and emerging adults, we asked the following research questions:

- (1) How do Latino emerging adults describe their fathers' parenting roles in education?
- (2) Do emerging adults' perceptions of their fathers' parenting roles in education moderate the relation between their fathers' educational expectations and their own educational expectations?
- (3) What metainferences can be made between the two forms of data collection?

Methods

Participants

Two-hundred forty-four Latino emerging adults were selected for this study (Age: range = 18–24, $M = 20.6$). Participants were recruited by university research software and Qualtrics Panel services. The participants most frequently self-identified as Latino or Latina ($n = 116$, 47.5%), followed by Hispanic ($n = 97$, 39.8%), Latino/a ($n = 16$, 6.6%), Chicano ($n = 7$, 2.9%), Latinx ($n = 4$, 1.6%), Latine ($n = 0$, 0%), and others ($n = 4$, 1.6%). The sample mainly comprised heterosexual ($n = 168$, 74.7%) females ($n = 170$, 69.7%), and no participant identified outside of the gender binary.

Participants selected a father figure, of which they identified biological ($n = 200$, 82.0%), stepfather ($n = 27$, 11.1%), adopted ($n = 3$, 1.2%), and estranged ($n = 14$, 5.7%) fathers. Fathers' highest level of educational attainment varied substantially: elementary school/primaria ($n = 16$, 7.7%), middle school/secundaria ($n = 34$, 16.3%), some high school/preparatoria ($n = 41$, 19.7%), graduated high school/preparatoria ($n = 64$, 30.8%), some college ($n = 22$, 10.6%), graduated from trade school ($n = 4$, 1.6%), graduated college ($n = 14$, 6.7%), graduated college with an advanced degree (e.g., MA, PhD) ($n = 13$, 6.3%).

Procedures

Inclusion criteria

This study was approved by the associated university's Institutional Review Board. The data were collected online using the Qualtrics software. To be selected for this study, participants needed to confirm that they 1) had a father figure, 2) lived in the U.S., and 3) were between the ages of 18 and 24. Additionally, we excluded participants' data if 1) they failed an attention check ($n = 0$), 2) had any missing qualitative responses ($n = 10$), 3) their father figure passed away ($n = 7$) or was deported ($n = 3$) while they were growing up, or 4) if their qualitative responses were incoherent or were nonsensical ($n = 13$). Data from this study is available at osf.io/qa3r4.

Integration design

Participants first completed the open-ended question: "What role did your father play in your education?" Their response to this question played a crucial role in our analytic coding design, which we used to generate a nuanced and culturally centered "measure" of Latino fathers' parenting roles to use for our analysis of the quantitative measures. Seven trained undergraduate and graduate researchers coded and conducted a content analysis of the qualitative data to generate "observer reports" (de Block & Vis, 2019). This integration technique creates a series of participant-specific scores. We believe this can account for the bias that traditional measures

may not fully account for the parenting roles of Latino fathers. Each researcher rated participants' qualitative responses to their "parenting role" question on a five-point Likert scale (from $-2 =$ very negative to $2 =$ very positive, with $0 =$ neutral). We conducted an interrater reliability test using a two-way mixed model and absolute agreement, which demonstrated excellent reliability, $ICC = 0.96$, 95% C.I. (0.95, 0.97), $F(0) = 26.69$, $p = .001$.

Quantitative measures

Educational expectations

We adapted a three-item measure of educational expectations (Gillette & Gudmunson, 2014), which assessed both participants' own educational expectations ($\alpha = 0.75$) and their fathers' perceived educational expectations for them ($\alpha = 0.86$). An example question was, "How much did you/did your father expect you to graduate from high school?" ($1 =$ very little to $5 =$ very high). We scored both sets of items such that higher numbers indicate higher average expectations.

Data analysis

Qualitative data analysis

For Research Questions 1 and 3, we analyzed the qualitative data using a content analysis approach with MAXQDA 20 software. The content analysis technique focuses on identifying frequencies and patterns across data in relation to the research questions (Mayring, 2014). The researchers followed the phases and stages guidelines for performing the analyses: (i) initialization, (ii) construction, (iii) rectification, and (iv) finalization stages (Vaismoradi et al., 2016). Initially, researchers performed the independent qualitative coding of specific parenting roles of fathers within the data to describe the criticality of the specific actions of fathers in supporting their emerging adult children's education (i). Next, the researchers classified and labeled the coding (ii) before rectifying the similarities and differences among the parenting roles to elucidate the categories (iii). Codes were identified into separate positive or negative categories, and the five most frequent codes were described as the storyline for fathers' parenting roles in their children's educational aspirations (iv).

Quantitative data analysis

We analyzed the quantitative data analysis using SPSS (version 29.0). First, we generated descriptive (means and standard deviations) and bivariate correlations. Then to examine Research Questions 2 and 3, we used Hayes (2021) PROCESS macro (Model 1) for the moderation analysis. Following Hayes (2021) recommendation, we examined the indirect effects using 5000 bootstrapped samples and used 95% confidence intervals (C.I.) for inference without assuming the shape of the sampling distribution.

Results

For Research Question 1, the results indicated that Latino fathers' role generally impacted their emerging adult children's education positively ($n = 157$, 64.4%), compared to negatively impacts ($n = 82$, 33.6%); five responses (2.0%) had a mean score of 0 (neutral). These results indicate that most participants enjoyed positive relationships with their fathers. Figure 1 shows an example of the reflective quotes by score.

Qualitative findings

Figure 2 provides the most frequent positive and negative parenting roles. As expected, the positive parenting roles of Latino fathers predominantly focused on support that can be described as "home-based tasks." The priority of "home-based tasks" was foundational in how emerging adults described their fathers' roles. The most common role (with at least two times the number of any other category)

Rating	Example Quotes of Latino Father's Parenting Roles
2 = Very Positive	“He was my role model. He taught me how to be successful and make meaning out of what we learned in class. He praised my accomplishments and would take our family out for ice cream to celebrate.” (M = 2.00)
1 = Positive	“Father was always tried to remind us how important it is to finish school to be able to get a good job in the future; So you can provide for your family and not to be stuck like him or our mother” (M = 1.29)
0 = Neutral	“He would encourage me to get better grades, but he was always working and that would make him really grumpy.” (M = 0.00)
-1 = Negative	“He was not around a lot because of my parent's divorce. He wanted to help, but even when he was there, he was limited by his own education.” (M = -1.14)
-2 = Very Negative	“He made my education horrible. He had addiction issues and we bounced from house to house and were sometimes homeless” (M = -2.00)

Figure 1. Integration design of qualitative description of fathers' roles and corresponding quantitative rating. Note: M= mean of seven researcher's scores for the corresponding quote

Positive Roles n = 324	Motivated me to be better n = 126 (38.9%)	Provided emotional support n = 46 (14.2%)	Work and financial security n = 34 (10.5%)	Valued education as a priority n = 34 (10.5%)	Helped with homework n = 31 (9.6%)
Negative Roles n = 157	Did not have a role n = 51 (32.5%)	Not around n = 43 (27.4%)	Minimal educational support n = 27 (17.2%)	Worked too much n = 26 (16.6%)	Mom had a bigger role n = 9 (5.7%)

Figure 2. Categories of qualitative codes by frequency of scores and population group. Note: Percentage represents the frequency of each code to the total text within each sub-category. Some participants identified multiple positive or negative roles. Thus the N reflects the total codes in each category, not the number of participants.

focused on fathers offering motivation for educational success. This was followed by providing emotional support when the emerging adult was discouraged or upset. Both categories describe the father's role primarily through talking and spending time with the emerging adult. These roles could be considered important parenting practices that could positively support their children educationally and socially. The third most common role was providing financial security to the family. Participants described their fathers as ensuring they had a safe place to live so that they could focus on their schoolwork. The fourth most common role was valuing education as a priority in the home. Participants described their father's work as difficult and taking long hours. Because of this, fathers valued education to ensure their children did not work in the same careers in the future.

My father was and is the person who inspires me because he's such a hard-working man and would do anything to keep the family happy. He never needed anything or complained about how much he does for us.

Illustrative quotes demonstrate that the Latino fathers coded as having positive roles expected their children to do well in school. Participants noted that their fathers were often their role models and inspirations. Despite many Latino fathers facing systemic barriers and educational challenges in their

own lives, they worked hard to instill the value of education in their children. Fathers who did not have the formal education to assist with homework could still provide financial stability and emotional guidance through challenging times. High levels of educational expectations were seen as beneficial because they created standards by which the emerging adult had to live up to. Positive educational expectations can be demonstrated through “school-based tasks” such as attending parent/teacher conferences, or taking children to school. However, more frequently, it was by being invested in their children and providing support along the way.

He always pushed me to go further. Although he dropped out [of school] very early, he always pushed me to go further. He was my biggest supporter.

The emergent themes on negative parenting roles of Latino father figures focused primarily on their absence and lack of support. The most common negative role was simply that the father did not have a role. This is at least partially due to the father’s absence due to divorce or family abandonment. Others described that their fathers barely provided any educational support, and their fathers did not view education as their role. Interestingly, though the father’s role as a provider was more frequently depicted positively, some participants indicated their fathers worked excessively. Excessive working limited fathers’ ability to be present and provide educational support. Other participants described various negative behaviors of their father, creating negative roles. For example, some fathers struggled with substance dependence, were incarcerated, or physically abused family members. Interestingly, some participants described these negative actions as motivators for furthering their education to avoid a similar fate.

He didn’t really have a major role. He was always busy at his job and was gone for months on end, working and providing for us as much as he could.

Quantitative results

Generally, the positive or negative degree of the Latino fathers’ parenting role ($M = .25, SD = 1.25$) correlated with their educational expectations ($M = 3.76, SD = 1.21, r = .37, p < 0.01$) and emerging adults’ educational expectations ($M = 3.64, SD = 1.09, r = .20, p < 0.01$). Fathers’ educational expectations also correlated with emerging adult’s educational expectations ($r = .51, p < 0.01$). We investigated Research Question 2 by examining the potential moderation effect of fathers’ parenting roles in education on the direct effect of their education expectations for their children and their children’s own expectations. Table 1 depicts the results of the moderation analysis, which fit the data. There was a positive association between fathers’ and emerging adults’ educational expectations. Fathers’ parenting roles were also significantly associated with emerging adults’ educational expectations and demonstrated a significant interaction within the model.

As demonstrated in Table 1, the conditional effect of fathers’ role on the emerging adults’ educational expectations also exhibited significant results. We examined fathers’ roles at one standard

Table 1. Moderation of Latino fathers’ parenting roles and educational expectations on emerging adults’ educational expectations.

Model Summary	R	R ²	F	df1	Df2	p
	.53	.28	30.98	3	240	.001***
	<i>B</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>t</i>	LLCI	UUCI	<i>p</i>
Constant	1.71	.22	7.67	1.27	2.14	.001***
F Educational Expectations	.50	.06	8.89	.39	.61	.001***
F Parenting Role	-.36	.15	-2.31	-.66	-.05	.021*
Intercept	.10	.04	2.57	.02	.18	.011*
Conditional Effects of Latino Fathers’ Parenting Role ¹						
Negative (-1.00)	.39	.06	6.76	.28	.51	.001***
Neutral (.25)	.52	.06	8.76	.40	.64	.001***
Positive (1.50)	.65	.09	6.94	.47	.84	.001***

Note: F: Father, EA: Emerging Adult. ¹ Values are shown 1 SD above, at, and below the median. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

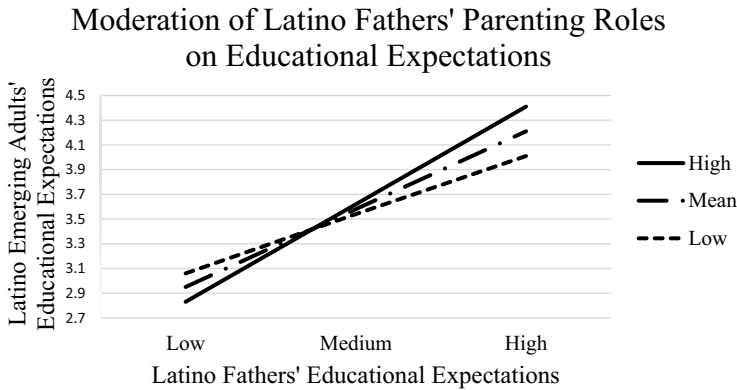


Figure 3. Simple slopes analysis of moderation model.

deviation above the mean, at the mean, and at one standard deviation below the mean. All three levels demonstrated significant associations with emerging adults' educational expectations. The results of the test of the highest-order unconditional interaction demonstrated a significant change with the inclusion of fathers' parenting roles in the model [$\Delta R^2 = 0.02$, $F(1, 235) = 6.64$, $p = 0.011$]. The Johnson – Neyman significance regions demonstrate that all parenting role values demonstrated significant findings (Figure 3).

Metainferences

In general, the qualitative and quantitative analyses showed convergent patterns. The participants qualitatively indicated that supportive fathers had a positive effect on their own educational expectations. The moderation analysis demonstrated that Latino fathers with greater educational expectations and positive parenting roles were associated with emerging adults with the highest educational expectations. Thus, it is important to consider what these roles are and how they are enacted within the family. Most of the positive roles identified were through providing motivation, encouragement, and support. These may be seen as characteristics of good parenting practices that could benefit many life avenues, not just education. However, these positive roles were defined by emerging adults as roles in education. These roles demonstrate the influence of the father in their children's lives.

The educational expectations of Latino fathers were correlated statistically with emerging adults' educational expectations, further supporting the explanation of fathers influencing their children's educational expectations. Though the beneficial connection between fathers' roles and participants' expectations focused on positive experiences, a few participants shared that their father's negative role motivated them to do better educationally. Figure 3 illustrates an interaction between negative fathers' roles and low fathers' educational expectations, predicting higher rates of emerging adults' educational expectations. Thus, perhaps some emerging adults are motivated by their father's shortcomings, increasing their desire to achieve educationally to avoid ending up in a similar situation.

Discussion

We employed a convergent mixed-method design to develop a culturally nuanced understanding of Latino fathers' roles on their children's educational expectations. It is essential to recognize the multiple adaptive mechanisms of the parenting roles of Latino fathers (Cedeño et al., 2021). Latino emerging adults' positive perception of their fathers' parenting roles moderated the effect of the perceived educational expectations of their fathers on their educational expectations for themselves. Our results indicated that Latino emerging adults with fathers who have high educational expectations

are associated with higher educational expectations themselves. However, when Latino fathers played positive roles in addition to having high educational expectations, these emerging adults had the highest educational expectations for themselves.

In line with Social Role Theory, Latino fathers influence their children's personal development by supporting the social environment in which they live (Newman & Newman, 2007). Though Latino fathers can help with "school-based tasks," a vast majority of Latino fathers' positive roles in education were "home-based tasks" through social interactions (Cross et al., 2019). Participants recalled that their fathers' positive influences typically involved offering financial support, encouragement, motivation, emotional support, and being a role model. A further example is the importance of the fathers' job in providing a *safe* environment for their children. Although the description of fathers as providers has long been established (Lamb et al., 1985; Palkovitz, 1997), this study demonstrated the association of this role with emerging adults' educational expectations. Therefore, while supporting the shift from viewing fathers as mere providers to more multidimensional caregivers, we must not dismiss or undercut the value of the *provider* role within Latino families.

Findings also indicated that the provider role, when focused on providing financially, could be viewed negatively, as some fathers tended to work for extended periods, which limited their involvement in their children's lives. This additional working time is a common hurdle for Latino fathers' involvement in their children's education (Behnke et al., 2008; Sands & Plunkett, 2005). Participants experienced their fathers' work as either a positive or negative influence depending upon their fathers' ability to maintain a work-life balance that provided financial security and opportunities to be directly involved in their children's education.

Yet our study depicted that the main deterrent, or negative role, appeared to be the father's absence within the household. Other negative roles were Latino fathers' limited education, substance abuse, and complications from immigration. All of which may influence one's role and ability to be *involved* in their children's education, yet the fathers' perceived educational expectations transcended these limitations. For example, immigration status may negatively influence Latino fathers' ability to be involved in their children's education, but it does not diminish their desire for their children to accomplish (or achieve) more than they accomplished (or achieved) (Arellanes et al., 2023; Quiñones & Kiyama, 2014).

Theory and research must allow ample room for interpreting the cultural differences among the expectations of one's roles in education. Convergent mixed-methods research designs can be essential for practitioners and applied researchers as they facilitate the culturally inclusive analysis of data that is often ignored. Some of our findings might have been missed if we used a solely qualitative or quantitative design. For example, Walker and colleagues (2005) listed seven measures of education-related parental involvement, and none included the aspects of motivation, parents' jobs, or acting as a role model, which were all identified in this study. Such measures might portray dominant ideologies rooted in traditional, middle-class norms and motherhood, which typically drive research regarding families and fathers (Auerbach, 2007; Valiquette-Tessier et al., 2019). Though there has been significant progress in developing culturally inclusive validated measures (Lin et al., 2022; Sands & Plunkett, 2005), a convergent mixed methods design with intentional integration techniques better ensures that what is meaningful to the participants is included into the research; providing a nuanced understanding of participants' cultural identities. Therefore, additional research is needed to include participants' values in parental involvement measures to enrich our understanding of fathers and their cultural identities.

Implications

In order to uproot traditional and culturally biased practices, educators, researchers, and practitioners need stronger connections to families and communities (Caspé & Hernandez, 2023). Encouraging schools and programs to critically examine and disrupt family-engagement strategies that privilege middle/upper-class families, as well as mothers is a critical starting point (Amatea,

2013; Miller & Arellanes, 2023). Unfortunately, many schools do not consider the ethno-racial needs of different families or the needs of fathers when developing family programming or events (Miller et al., 2024). Without such consideration, family engagement efforts will remain ineffective and inequitable as Latino fathers remain invisible or misunderstood. To better support the educational expectations of the next generation of Latino students, it is important that schools make intentional efforts to better understand, support, and incorporate those roles into research and practice.

Additionally, this research should be used by practitioners and teachers to encourage fathers to share their educational expectations with their children. Though many fathers made intentional efforts to discuss the importance of education, that is not always the case. Some fathers may need encouragement from practitioners and teachers to have conversations with their children about their educational expectations. Bringing together students and fathers to discuss their educational expectations could become an important intervention to encourage students to pursue higher education and have meaningful conversations. Such conversations could not only support students' educational expectations but improve father/child relationships more broadly.

Limitations and future research

Despite our best efforts, this study still exhibited limitations. First, the data for this study were collected from emerging adults and their perceptions of their fathers' expectations rather than directly collecting data from their fathers, which would have provided a more thorough and complete understanding of fathers' experiences (Volling & Cabrera, 2019). Yet, youth reports are common and have been found to be reliable when studying Latino parents' educational expectations (Cross et al., 2019).

Additionally, this study collected cross-sectional data from an online sample. Thus, we cannot assume that these data are representative of the Latino community or can address issues of causality. Further, the scope of the study only considered fathers' positive and negative roles without addressing their involvement frequencies or the significance of their roles. Future studies should consider describing the roles of fathers in these different contexts. Our data suggest family separation influenced parenting roles in education, but future research should explore nuances in various forms of family separation (Hill & Torres, 2010; Jung et al., 2018).




Conclusions

Much of who we are stems from our parents' expectations for our education. While little is known about fathers' roles in children's education, we know even less about the roles of Latino fathers. We hope this research encourages educators, researchers, and practitioners to reconsider traditional views and approaches to family and father engagement with an eye toward cultural inclusivity. This study suggests that Latino fathers engage in a range of parenting roles that include home-based and school-based tasks, and those roles moderated the degree to which participants' views of their fathers' educational expectations for them impacted their own educational expectations. As the field advances to be more inclusive, it is important to recognize the role of father as a provider in a strengths based perspective. Our research suggests that Latino fathers' financial contributions and efforts to provide a safe home for their children are still important to their paternal identity. Additionally parenting roles such as emotional support and efforts to motivate their children to do well in education should also be considered in research on parental involvement. Supporting Latino fathers' multidimensional identities, as well as understanding the systemic barriers to their parenting roles, is essential to supporting the success of Latino children/students and making education more culturally inclusive.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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