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**Child Rearing Beliefs Held by Hispanic Mothers: Clinical and
Theoretical Implications**

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**Child Rearing Beliefs Held by Hispanic Mothers: Clinical and
Theoretical Implications**

by

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Report

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Dedication

This master's report is dedicated to my parents, Mr. Rodolfo Hinojosa and Mrs. Teresa Hinojosa, for always providing me with kind and encouraging words and for instilling in me the importance of hard work and education.

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Abstract

Child Rearing Beliefs Held by Hispanic Mothers: Clinical and Theoretical Implications

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This study investigated the cross-cultural and intracultural diversity of Anglo-American and Mexican-American individual's beliefs regarding nine child rearing variables. Eleven Mexican-American and ten Anglo-American students at the University of Texas at Austin completed a questionnaire. Results indicated that when compared to Anglo-American participants, Mexican-American participants provided more collectivistic-oriented answers for two of the nine child rearing variables. Furthermore, Mexican-American participants were more likely than their parents to hold more individualistic-oriented values for three of nine child rearing variables. Clinical implications of the findings are discussed.

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INTRODUCTION

In order to provide culturally sensitive services to clients, professionals need to have a genuine understanding of the client's culture. Research has shown that professionals who work in multicultural settings have reported a discrepancy between the beliefs they hold, the beliefs and values of the educational setting and the beliefs held by Mexican-American parents (Greenfield, 2006). These discrepancies may lead to decreased parental involvement in their child's intervention process. In order to avoid these types of discrepancies and improve the collaborative relationships between parents and clinicians, speech language pathologists (SLPs) need to become informed about the cultural beliefs and views held by the culture(s) of the families which they are providing services to.

Estimates from the 2009 U.S. Census Bureau show that the number of Hispanics in the United States reached 46.9 million in 2008, a 3.2 percent increase from 2007, making Hispanics the largest and fastest-growing minority group in the United States (U. S. Census Bureau, 2009). Furthermore, 47 percent of the nation's children younger than five were a minority in 2008, 25% of which were Hispanic.

Because the demographics of the U.S. with respect to the Hispanic population continue to change, the number of Mexican-American children on bilingual speech language pathologists' (SLPs) case loads will more than likely continue to grow at fast rates. The American Speech and Hearing Association (ASHA) reports that in the United States, projections for the years 2000-2015 indicate that the percentage of racial/ethnic minorities will increase to over 30% of the total population. Projections indicate that by

2010, children of immigrants will represent 22% of the school-aged population (cited in ASHA, 2004). However, in light of these projections, a recent ASHA survey indicated that 7% of the total membership are from a racial/ethnic minority background and less than 6% of ASHA members identified themselves as bilingual or multilingual (ASHA, 2002).

On a study regarding self-rated cultural competency and confidence when working with multi-cultural clients, Hammer, Detwiler, Blood, and Qualls (2004) reported that approximately one third of a sample of 213 speech language pathologists did not receive training in multicultural/multilingual issues as undergraduate or graduate students. Respondents reported a lack of confidence when assessing bilingual children whose primary language was Spanish and when working with parents who do not speak English. This evident lack of knowledge regarding multicultural issues and lack of confidence when assessing children from multicultural backgrounds reveals the need for increased education regarding multicultural issues. Furthermore, this data reveals the importance and increased need to provide effective, appropriate, and culturally sensitive services to clients who come from multicultural backgrounds.

Parental involvement in the intervention process is typically valued in the field of speech-language pathology. For example, clients' parents are often asked and encouraged to aid their child's intervention at home when the SLP is not present. Many early childhood intervention programs focus on parent-facilitated programs such as Hanen in which the parent is responsible for implementing treatment in the home setting (Girolametto, Pearce & Weitzman, 1996). However, parents may be hesitant to carry out certain intervention techniques if they feel that there is a mismatch between the cultural

beliefs they hold and those that the SLP holds or if they find the specific techniques used by SLPs irrelevant to the improvement of their child's communication development. For example, if a clinician were to ask a Mexican-American mother to use play-based intervention with their child at home but the mother does not view her child as an equal play and conversational partner, the mother may not carry out these intervention techniques at home. Furthermore, even as families start to speak English there are cultural differences that need to be taken into account when considering which intervention practices will be most suitable for families. In order to avoid this cultural barrier, SLPs need to educate themselves regarding mother's beliefs regarding key child rearing variables.

This paper will follow a collectivistic-individualistic framework. A collectivistic-individualistic framework is a framework which can be used to classify beliefs, values and goals and can be useful for understanding differences held between and within different cultures (Greenfield, Keller, Fuligni & Mayard, 2003; Peña & Méndez-Pérez, 2006; Greenfield, 2006). There are relatively few research articles within the field of speech-language pathology that have taken this framework (e.g. Peña & Méndez-Pérez, 2006). Viewing cultures and their beliefs within this type of framework prevents stereotyping. Individuals within a specific culture may have differing beliefs and assuming that all individuals within one culture hold the same beliefs and values may lead to stereotyping. In order to avoid this, professionals can classify beliefs and values held by individuals as either collectivistic or individualistic.

Data from a questionnaire regarding Mexican-American and Anglo-American individuals' beliefs with respect to the following child-rearing variables will be analyzed

and compared: Respect vs. Equality, Modeling vs. Teaching, Closeness vs. Independence, Directive vs. Negotiative Parenting Style, Shared vs. Individual Possessions, Praise vs. Criticism, Narrative Style, Broader Community, and Greeting Rituals. Clinicians need to be aware of the beliefs held by client's families regarding these variables. For example, clinicians often ask mother to implement intervention practices at home in which the parent is instructed to play with the child and speak to them as an equal partner. However, not all mothers in the Hispanic culture view play as a learning activity or view their children as equal conversational partners. Furthermore, many Hispanic mothers may not implement techniques used in the therapy room such as praise (e.g. positive feedback), question-asking to test knowledge, and implicit teaching of strategies. Because this is not part of their culture, they may be hesitant to carry out these techniques at home if asked to do so by a clinician. The beliefs held by Mexican-American and Anglo-American individuals regarding child-rearing variables will be examined and identified as either collectivistic or individualistic. Furthermore, data will be analyzed to determine whether Mexican-American individuals' belief vary between generations. Clinical implications of the literature review and results of the analysis will be discussed.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Individualistic-Collectivistic Framework

Cultures typically will demonstrate values or tendencies that identify more with either individualism or collectivism. The individualistic-collectivistic framework can be viewed as a continuum, with highly collectivistic beliefs falling along one end of the continuum and highly individualistic beliefs falling along the opposite end. It is also important to note that within a culture, some individuals may have more individualistic values while others hold more collectivistic values. Classifying beliefs held by individuals into either one of these two categories reduces the generalization that all individuals in a culture will be either completely individualistic or completely collectivistic in their beliefs and values. Instead, using this framework accounts for differences seen among individuals within groups.

INDIVIDUALISTIC TRAITS

In individualistic-oriented cultures, parents tend to value independence and encourage their children to develop their own, independent goals and self-awareness (Peña & Méndez-Pérez, 2006). Children learn to become aware of their needs to be separate and independent of the family. Individualistic cultures place a focus on children as individuals with their own needs, desires, and personalities. Behavioral autonomy is highly valued in individualistic-oriented cultures (Greenfield, Keller, Fuligni, & Mayard, 2003).

COLLECTIVISTIC TRAITS

In collectivism-oriented cultures, individuals/parents value interdependence among family members. For example, individuals from collectivistic cultures highly value loyalty to family and close mother-child relationships (Greenfield, Keller, Fuligni, & Mayard, 2003). Instead of placing a high level of importance on academic achievement, collectivistic-oriented cultures tend to place a greater value on appropriate social behavior. Individuals with collectivistic-oriented beliefs highly value respect. For example, children are expected to respect their elders and to remember that adults are the most important members in a family.

Cultural Variables

The nine child-rearing variables listed earlier will be discussed in this section. Furthermore, the beliefs typically held by Mexican-American individuals regarding these variables will be identified as either collectivistic or individualistic.

RESPECT VERSUS EQUALITY

Mexican-American and Puerto Rican individuals highly value the idea of respect or “respeto” and obedience (Valdes, 1996; Rodriguez & Olswang, 2003; Delgado-Gaitin, 2004, Langdon & Cheng, 1992, Harwood, Scholemerich, Ventura-Cook, Schulze, & Wilson, 1996, Zea, Quezada & Belgrave, 1994). Mexican-Americans value hierarchal relationships within their families. For example, adults are considered to be more important than children and hold certain rights, one of which is that their children do not demand unnecessary attention from them (Valdes, 1996). Adults also expect that their children remain quiet and do not interrupt while adults are speaking. Furthermore,

children and adults are not viewed as equal conversational partners (Valdes, 1996). For example, if a parent, an older sibling and a younger child were in a room together and the adult asked the young child a question, the child would not respond. Instead, the older sibling was expected to answer for the child. Some Hispanic parents do not consider play to be a learning activity and will therefore not frequently engage in play activities with their children. Adults primarily interact with other adults at social gatherings and events (Langdon & Cheng, 1992). Children in Latino families tend to interact more with their peers and siblings than they do with adults (Delgado-Gaitin, 2004). The strong emphasis Mexican-American individuals place on respect and obedience is classified as a collectivistic-oriented belief (Greenfield, Keller, Fuligni & Mayard, 2003).

MODELING VERSUS TEACHING

Mexican-American mothers expect that their children learn through observation rather than discrete step-by-step directions (Valdes, 1996; Langdon & Cheng, 1992; Losey, 1995). Mexican-American mothers often assign a large number of chores or responsibilities to their children. However, they expect that they learn how to do these chores by watching and imitating adults and older siblings. Furthermore, Mexican-American mothers have been observed to use more non-verbal instructions (e.g. to teach a game) than Anglo-American mothers while teaching their children (Losey, 1995). Modeling as a form of teaching children is classified as collectivistic (Peña & Méndez-Pérez, 2006).

A theme that was observed in the literature was the belief held by Mexican-American mothers that school systems hold the main responsibility for teaching their

children (Rodriguez & Olswang, 2003; Losey, 1995). Mexican-American mothers believe that they hold the role of a moral guide rather than an academic instructor (Losey, 1995).

CLOSENESS VERSUS INTERDEPENDENCE

The family is a tight-knit unit in the Mexican-American culture (Delgado & Gaitin, 2004; Valdes, 1996). Family members are very close and maintain good relationships. Mexican-Americans view the well-being of the family as more important than the well-being of the individual (Zea-Quezada & Belgrave, 1994; Rodriguez & Olswang, 2003). Family members tend to be more cooperative as opposed to competitive in their home interaction styles (Losey, 1995). The emphasis on interdependence in the Mexican-American culture is considered collectivistic (Peña & Méndez-Pérez, 2006). For example, communities that value collectivism exhibit close mother-child relationships that include close body contact during the day and night (Greenfield, Keller, Fuligni, Mayard, 2003).

DIRECTIVE VERSUS NEGOTIATIVE PARENTING STYLE

Mexican-American mothers tend to be more directive in their commands to their children (Delgado & Gaitin, 2004; Valdes, 1996). Valdes (1996) writes that Mexican-American mothers believe that they know what is best for their children because they are adults and they have the right to make their children do what they are told. Mothers do not believe that they need to negotiate with their children to make them follow commands. Instead, children are expected to carry out these commands and not argue with or question their parents. Parents and children are not viewed as equal members of

the family and a child disagreeing with a parent is viewed as disrespectful. Furthermore, Mexican-American mothers do not always recognize that neither their children nor they themselves have the freedom to choose from a variety of options (Rodriguez & Olswang, 2003). Because the directive parenting style is reflective of the strong emphasis Mexican-American parents place on parental control and respect, directiveness is classified as collectivistic (Greenfield, Keller, Fuligni & Mayard, 2003).

SHARED VERSUS INDIVIDUAL POSSESSIONS

Greenfield, Keller, Fuligni and Mayard (2003) explain that parents in the mainstream U.S. culture teach their children that sharing with their siblings is a personal choice and they are not obligated to share with one another. For example, if one sibling is using a toy and the other sibling asks to use it, it is the personal choice of the child to determine whether or he wants to share the toy with his sibling. Contrastingly, Mexican-American parents view sharing as a social obligation. Mexican-American parents reported that they expect their children to share with peers and siblings (Greenfield, 2006; Greenfield, Keller, Fuligni & Mayard, 2003; Valdes, 1996).

PRAISE VERSUS CRITICISM

Langdon and Cheng (1992) report that Hispanic parents tell their children what to do and then give them either direct or negative feedback by saying “good” or “bad.” Losey (1995) wrote that Mexican-American mothers with higher levels of education tend to use praise as a teaching strategy more often than those with lower levels of education. The fact that Mexican-American mothers who have higher levels of education use praise often agrees with the research which shows that wealthy and more educated cultures are

often considered more individualistic (Greenfield, 2006). Kummerer and Lopez-Reyna (2006) report that Anglo-American mothers use praise more often than do Mexican-American mothers. Furthermore, because praise is often used by teachers in the mainstream American classroom, it can be classified as an individualistic belief (Losey, 1995).

NARRATIVE STYLE

Minami and McCabe (1995) write that European American mothers requested descriptions from their children by asking questions such as “What happened?” and “Why do you think the bear fell down?” In contrast, Mexican-American parents do not typically ask children to repeat facts or foretell what they are going to do. Parents do not ask the child to re-tell something that happened when both the child and the adult were present (Langdon & Cheng, 1992). Valdes (1996) writes that once their children grew older, Mexican-American parents did not feel the need to “test” their knowledge by asking questions. Similarly, Goldenberg, Reese and Gallimore (1992) and Rodriguez, Hines and Montiel (2009) report that during a book-reading session between Mexican-American parents and their children, parents asked their children almost no questions and interactions held between parents and children were minimal. This coincides with other research showing that Hispanic parents do not typically comment on what is happening during certain pastimes such as watching television (Langdon & Cheng, 2002).

Furthermore, Losey (1995) reported that a sample of Mexican-American kindergartners only answered their teacher’s questions 50% of the time. This may reflect the teaching styles held by Mexican-American mothers reported above. For example,

research has shown that Mexican-American mothers do not tend to ask their children questions to seek information that they both know (Langdon & Cheng, 2002). Because Mexican-American mothers do not typically ask these types of questions, their children may not be accustomed to answering these questions in the classroom, which may explain why these students failed to answer 50% of their teacher's questions. Another explanation could be provided by the research that has shown that some Hispanic parents may not read books to their children and instead tell personal stories about their own lives (Langdon & Cheng, 2002). It has been reported that mothers in collectivistic-oriented groups ask more "authentic" questions (e.g. "Are you hungry?") as opposed to "test-type" questions such as "What color are your shoelaces?". Because research shows that Mexican-American mothers do not typically ask information-seeking questions while reading to their children, the narrative style held by Mexican-American mothers can be classified as collectivistic (Vigil, 2002).

BROADER COMMUNITY

Mexican-American individuals view the family as a tight-knit unit (Delgado-Gaitin, 2004; Valdes, 1996). Children frequently communicate with siblings, uncles, aunts, grandparents and other extended family members and friends (Delgado-Gaitin, 2004). During social events and gatherings, adults primarily interact with other adults (Langdon & Cheng, 1992) while children interact more with their peers and siblings (Delgado-Gaitin, 2004). When children are young, parents prefer to leave children in the care of other family members. Leaving children with "strangers" at a day care facility is viewed as a last resort (Valdes, 1996). The emphasis on interdependence in the Mexican-

American culture is considered collectivistic (Peña & Méndez-Pérez, 2006). Therefore, the fact that Mexican-American individuals tend to interact primarily with other family members is seen as collectivistic.

GREETING RITUALS

The Mexican-American culture has very unique and specific greeting rituals. Latinos tend to demonstrate close physical distance during personal interactions and frequent physical contact is considered normal in this culture. For example, Mexican-American individuals will often greet their friends, close acquaintances, and family members with a kiss on the cheek (Taveras-Koranda, 2008; Falcon, 1998; Singh, McKay & Singh, 1998). Handshakes and embraces between friends are common (Fisher, 1996). Latino males typically hug and simultaneously pat each other on the back while greeting (Singh, McKay & Singh, 1998). While greeting a group of Hispanic individuals, practitioners are expected to greet the eldest male first followed by the eldest female of the group. A failure to offer this type of greeting is viewed as disrespectful (Fisher, 1996). During warm greetings, the word “bienvenidos” is used. This word means “welcome” in English and emphasizes the important role that proper forms of greeting play in the Hispanic culture (Singh, Baack, Kundu, & Hurtado, 2008). Collectivistic cultures tend to value close body contact and often place an emphasis on social behavior (Greenfield, Keller, Fuligni & Mayard, 2003). Because Mexican-American individual’s greeting rituals entail close physical contact and emphasize the importance of social behavior, they may be classified as collectivistic.

Generational Changes

When looking at the child-rearing beliefs held by Mexican-American individuals, it is important to take into account what, if any, differences are held between different generations. Factors such as Spanish use, family income and level of education all impact the amount of acculturation an individual experiences. Buriel (1993) compared the childrearing practices used by 317 Mexican-American parents of first, second, and third generation adolescents. Furthermore, variables such as child's Spanish use with the parent, family income and mothers' schooling were examined.

GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES

For the purpose of the study done by Buriel (1993), first generation families included children who were born in Mexico but later moved to the United States. Second generation families consist of U.S. born children who have either both or one parent who was born in Mexico. Third generation families were those in which both the parents and the children were born in the United States. Mothers of first and second generation children expected earlier autonomy (for children to become independent at an earlier age) and more productive use of time. They had a higher expectation of obedience to parental rules and placed less emphasis on the need for harsh punishment than did third generation mothers. Third generation mothers were more supportive (they comforted their child often) and controlling (had high expectations of the child's behavior at home and at school) than first and second generation mothers.

SPANISH USE

Increased amounts of a child's use of Spanish with his/her mother were associated with an increased tendency to value the responsibility beliefs. The more Spanish a child used with his parent, the more the parent carried out responsibility type beliefs. Responsibility beliefs were defined as mother's tendencies to value the ideas of autonomy (earlier self-reliance), productive use of time, and adherence to family rules within an open parent-child relationship (Buriel, 1993).

Hakimzadeh and Vohn (2007) collected data regarding English usage among Hispanics in the United States. These researchers found that half of second generation Hispanic individuals speak only Spanish and only 1 in 4 third and fourth generation individuals speak only Spanish. Only 23% of Latino adults reported that they speak English very well, while second and third generations reported speaking English very well 88% and 94% of the time, respectively. This increase in English use and confidence using that language may indicate acculturation effects associated with living in the United States. Furthermore, Hakimzadeh and Vohn (2007) wrote that Latino immigrants who speak English often and know this language well are more likely than immigrants who mainly use Spanish to have attitudes and opinions on social values that are more similar to those of non-Latinos.

INCOME

Higher levels of income were associated with a decreased tendency to value the responsibility beliefs. Again, responsibility beliefs were defined as mother's tendencies to value the ideas of autonomy, productive use of time, adherence to family rules within an open parent-child relationship, and permissiveness. In other words, parents with

higher levels of income were less likely to value (a) autonomy (for children to become independent at an earlier age), (b) productive use of time, (c) adherence to parent's rules and (c) permissive (that is, these parents were more likely to emphasize the need for harsh punishment). This decreased tendency to value the responsibility beliefs may be due to greater financial resources which may relieve families of some survival pressures which initially encouraged a responsibility style of childrearing.

Research Questions

1. Do the beliefs of Mexican-American and Anglo-American individuals regarding different child-rearing variables differ?
 - a. If there were differences, which child-rearing variables did they fall under?
 - b. For those variables which Mexican-American and Anglo-American individuals beliefs did significantly differ, did the Mexican-American individuals provide more "collectivistic"-oriented answers?
2. Do Mexican-American individuals' beliefs vary between generations?
 - a. If so, under which child-rearing variables did the differences fall?
 - b. For those variables which Mexican-American individuals' beliefs did vary between generations, did their beliefs become more "individualistic"-oriented?

METHODS

Participants

Eleven Mexican-American and ten Anglo-American students at the University of Texas at Austin participated in this study. The students were undergraduates majoring in Communication Sciences and Disorders. Respondent ages ranged from 19 to 33 with a mean age of 21.4 years. Twenty participants were female and 1 participant was male.

Questionnaire

A questionnaire which contained fifty-nine questions about child rearing practices was administered to a class of undergraduates by a professor at the University of Texas at Austin. All questions were administered in English. The questionnaire was designed to examine beliefs and values regarding child rearing. Questions were grouped into nine child-rearing variables: Respect versus Equality, Modeling versus Teaching, Closeness versus Independence, Narrative Style, Directive versus Negotiative Parenting Style, Shared versus Individual Possessions, Praise versus Criticism, Broader Community, and Greeting Rituals. Table 1 lists the categories, total number of questions in each category, and a sample question for each category.

Table 1
Total Number and Examples of Questions for Each Category

| Category | Total # of Questions | Sample Question |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|---|
| Respect Versus Equality | 11 | We children were expected not to interrupt when our parents were talking with adults. |
| Modeling Versus Teaching | 4 | My parents expected us to learn mostly by watching them. |
| Closeness Versus Independence | 1 | My parents encouraged us to play on our own when they had people to talk to. |
| Narrative Style | 8 | While reading book to children, adults often added new parts or made up new things. |
| Directive Versus Negotiative | 6 | My parents though that children need to understand the reasons for doing what they asked. |
| Shared Versus Individual Possessions | 1 | In our home, you could not take someone's possessions without asking them first. |
| Praise Versus Criticism | 3 | Praise played a larger role than criticism in raising children. |
| Broader Community | 5 | We children mostly talked with our parents or with family members. |
| Greeting Rituals | 4 | We were expected to learn proper ways of greeting relatives when they came over. |

Each question on the questionnaire had two different components. The first component asked what the participants experienced growing up, while the second component asked the participants to rate how they feel now. The purpose of the “growing up” category of questions served to indirectly view the beliefs held by the participant’s parents. For example, question 8 asked “Growing up, praise played a larger role than criticism in raising children,” *and* “I believe, praise should play a larger role than criticism in raising a child.” These separate sections within each question allowed the researcher to view differences, if any, between beliefs held by the two generations.

Procedures

The questionnaire was administered by a research assistant to several Communication Sciences and Disorders classes at the University of Texas at Austin. The paper-based questionnaire was administered to the students and they were instructed

to fill out the survey and return it to their professor if they were interested in participating. Class credit was not given for filling out the survey.

The participants were asked to rate their beliefs regarding different child rearing variables (e.g. Respect versus Equality, Narrative Style, Praise versus Criticism) on a likert scale of 1-5, 1 being strongly agree and 5 being strongly disagree. For each question, the participants were asked to answer what they believed growing up, and what they believe now.

Statistical Analysis

Participants rated their beliefs on a likert scale ranging from 1-5, 1 being strongly agree and 5 being strongly agree. Data was entered into Microsoft Excel and then inserted into the statistical program SPSS for analysis. The data for 21 questions was reverse coded so that 1 corresponded to more collectivistic values and 5 corresponded to more individualistic values. This reverse coding allowed for the comparison of means for different items in order to determine whether groups answered more collectivistically or individualistically.

Data analysis proceeded in two steps. For example, one purpose of this study was to determine if, and where, statistical differences exist between Mexican-American individuals and Anglo-American individuals regarding the following variables: Respect versus Equality, Modeling versus Teaching, Closeness versus Independence, Narrative Style, Directive versus Negotiative Parenting Style, Shared versus Individual Possessions, Praise versus Criticism, Broader Community, and Greeting Rituals. A repeated measures ANOVA was used to determine statistical significance between

groups. If statistical differences were found, mean ratings were then compared to determine whether the Mexican-American group rated their beliefs as being more collectivistic-oriented than the Anglo-American group, which would be demonstrated by a lower mean. A separate purpose of this study was to determine if, and where, differences exist between generations of Mexican-American individuals. In order to answer this question, differences between the “Growing Up” and “I believe” questions were examined. If differences were found, means were then compared to determine whether Mexican-American individual’s beliefs became more individualistic, demonstrated by a higher mean in the “I believe” than “Growing Up” section.

RESULTS

Differences between beliefs held by Mexican-American and Anglo-American students

The data was analyzed to determine whether the two groups of individuals (Mexican-American and Anglo-American) differed on their views regarding child-rearing variables. Furthermore, the data was analyzed to determine whether any differences were noted between generations.

The repeated measures ANOVA yielded a statistical difference in only two of the nine child rearing variables. Statistical significance was determined by a p-value that is less than .05. The answers provided by Mexican-American and Anglo-American participants were statistically different for the following two variables: Narrative Style, $F(1, 19) = 4.06, p = .009$ and Broader Community, $F(1, 19) = 5.26, p = .03$. Table 2 shows the average ratings for each category of questions.

Table 2
Mean Ratings for Each Category of Questions

| Category | <u>Mexican Americans</u> | | <u>Anglo Americans</u> | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------|------------------------|-----------|
| | Growing up | I believe | Growing up | I believe |
| Respect Versus Equality | 3.01 | 3.37 | 3.05 | 3.19 |
| Modeling Versus Teaching | 2.59 | 2.57 | 2.80 | 2.85 |
| Closeness Versus Independence | 3.34 | 3.48 | 3.53 | 3.57 |
| Narrative Style | 2.99 | 3.41 | 3.39 | 3.64 |
| Directive Versus Negotiative | 3.25 | 3.48 | 3.53 | 3.57 |
| Shared Versus Individual | 2.45 | 1.78 | 2.20 | 1.60 |
| Praise Versus Criticism | 3.61 | 3.91 | 3.58 | 3.80 |
| Broader Community | 3.31 | 3.49 | 3.84 | 3.90 |
| Greeting Rituals | 1.98 | 1.73 | 2.33 | 1.93 |

These results showed that Mexican-American participants were more likely to provide more “collectivistic”-oriented answers than were Anglo-American participants

on questions that fell under the “Narrative Style” category. For example, the average rating for the items that fell under the “Narrative Style” category was a 2.99 for Mexican-American individuals and 3.39 for Anglo-American individuals. While reading, Mexican-American’s were less likely than Anglo-American’s to: add new parts to text while reading to their children, ask questions such as “what does that remind you of?” or “have you ever done that?” and allow children to interrupt during a book-reading session.

The Mexican-American participants were also more likely to provide more collectivistic-oriented answers than were Anglo-American participants on questions that fell under the “Broader Community” category. The average rating for the items that fell under the “Broader Community” category was 3.31 for Mexican-American individuals and 3.84 for Anglo-American individuals. Mexican-Americans were more likely than Anglo-Americans to report that they disagree that as children, they liked to interact with people outside of the family and that their parents were less likely to encourage them to have conversations with different people outside the family.

Generational differences within Mexican-American individual’s answers

Data analysis from the repeated measures ANOVA revealed that answers provided by Mexican-American participants regarding the “Growing Up” and “I believe” categories of questions significantly differed for six of the nine child rearing variables. For example, Mexican-American participants’ answers statistically differed on the following child-rearing variables: Respect, $F(1, 19) = 9.19, p = .007$, Directive versus Negotiative, $F(1, 19) = 5.35, p = .032$, Narrative Style, $F(1, 19) = 8.38, p = .009$, Shared

versus Individual Possessions, $F(1, 19) = 5.48, p = .032$ and Greetings, $F(1, 19) = 7.92, p = .01$.

The answers provided by Mexican-Americans were more individualistic-oriented for three out of five variables. For questions grouped under Respect, Directive versus Negotiative, and Narrative style, Mexican-American's answers on the "I believe" category of questions were more individualistic-oriented when compared to their answers on the "Growing Up" category of questions. As demonstrated in Table 2, the mean scores for these three categories were higher for the "I Believe" category versus "Growing Up" category. This increase shows that the participants themselves identify with more individualistic views than they reported for their parents (e.g. "Growing Up"). For example, Mexican-American participants were more likely to agree that children should be taught to say what they think even though parents may not like it, more likely to believe that parents should ask questions such as "What does that remind you of" or "Have you ever done that?" when reading to their children, and more likely to believe that children need to understand the reasons for doing what is asked of them.

DISCUSSION

This study investigated the differences held by Mexican-American and Anglo-American individuals regarding child-rearing variables. Generational differences between Mexican-American individual's and their parent's beliefs were also examined. Two main differences were revealed. First, results from a statistical analysis showed that Mexican-American participants were more likely than Anglo-American participants to hold collectivistic-oriented beliefs for two of the child-rearing variables, Narrative Style, and Broader Community. These results which state that Mexican-American participants were more likely to hold collectivistic-oriented beliefs regarding Narrative Style and Broader Community variables reflects what is written in the literature (e.g. Minami & McCabe, 1995; Langdon & Chang, 1992; Valdes, 1996; Goldenberg, Reese & Gallimore, 1992; Rodriguez, Hines & Montiel, 2009; Losey, 1995; Vigil, 2002; Delgado-Gaitin, 2004; Peña & Méndez-Pérez, 2006). Second, Mexican-American participants beliefs were more individualistic oriented when compared to their parents beliefs for three variables, Respect, Directive versus Negotiative, and Narrative Style. The fact that Mexican-American participant's beliefs were more individualistic oriented when compared to their parents for these three variables also reflects what is written in the literature (e.g. Buriel, 1993). These findings and their implications relating to clinical intervention will be discussed.

The first finding revealed that the beliefs of Mexican-American participants were more strongly collectivistically-oriented than were the beliefs of Anglo-American participants for two variables, Narrative Style, and Broader Community. Collectivistic-oriented beliefs under the Narrative Style category include the notions that “When

parents read books to children, it is important to stick to the story,” “My parents did not want us interrupting them when they were reading a book to us,” and “While reading books to children, adults did not often add new parts or make up new things.”

Collectivistic-oriented beliefs under the Broader Community category include the notions that “Children usually talked with other children rather than with adults,” “Children mostly talked with parents or family members,” and “Children did not often interact with people outside of the family and were not encouraged to have conversations with different people outside of the family.”

The second finding revealed that Mexican-American participants provided more individualistically-oriented answers on the “I believe” versus “Growing up” category for three variables, Respect, Directive versus Negotiative, and Narrative Style.

Individualistic-oriented ideas under the respect category include the notions that “Children should be taught to say what they think even though parents may not always like it,” “Children need to be spoken to as equals,” “When parents play with children they should do so at their level and treat them as equals,” and “Parents should speak with their children as they do with adults.” This shift from their parent’s more collectivistic-oriented beliefs to the beliefs participants hold now indicates that Mexican-American participants are beginning to foster the ideas that children should have a right to express their feelings, regardless of whether or not their parents may like it. A shift in the beliefs regarding whether children should be treated as equals was also observed. Mexican-American individuals were more likely than their parents to believe that children should be spoken to as equals, and that parents need to get down on their child’s level when playing games, reading books, etc.

Individualistic-oriented ideas under the Directive versus Negotiative category included the notions that “Parents should talk with their child about why they have to do certain things,” “Children need to understand the reasons for doing what parents ask,” and “When possible, parents should give children options so that they have a choice.” These results indicate that Mexican-American individuals were more likely than their parents to believe that parents should explain to their children why they ask them to do certain things or follow certain rules. The participants were also more likely than their parents to believe that parents should give their children options and children should have the opportunity to make choices.

Individualistic-oriented ideas under the Narrative Style category include the notions that “While reading books to children, parents should add new parts or make up new things,” “Children should be tested by asking things like ‘what’s that called?’” and “Parents should talk about things from books when children aren’t reading, reminding them what they read about.” Results indicate that Mexican-American individuals are more likely than their parents to value the importance of expanding text in books and testing children’s knowledge and understanding by asking questions such as “What’s that called?”. Furthermore, Mexican-American participants were more likely than their parents to believe that parents should talk about events, people, and things from a book when the children aren’t reading in order to remind them what they read about.

The results indicating that Mexican-American participants were more likely than their parents to report more individualistic-oriented beliefs for several child-rearing variables reflects what is written in the literature. For example, Buriel (1993) writes that

third generation mothers were less strict (e.g. expecting obedience) when compared to second and first generation mothers.

Benefits Associated with an Individualistic-Collectivistic Framework

As previously mentioned, the Individualistic-Collectivistic framework is a framework which can be used to classify beliefs and values held by a number of different cultures. By classifying beliefs as either Individualistic or Collectivistic, differences within cultures can become more evident and easily seen. For example, some individuals within the Mexican-American culture will tend to identify more with individualistic beliefs while others identify more with collectivistic beliefs. Furthermore, a number of variables may predict or determine whether an individual is more likely to identify more with either individualistic or collectivistic beliefs. Among these variables are income, Spanish use, and education level (Buriel, 1993; Losey, 1995).

Future research in the area of individuals with culturally diverse backgrounds should take into account the benefits associated with using an Individualistic-Collectivistic framework and incorporate this into their work. Furthermore, instead of making the generalization that all individuals in a specific culture must believe a certain way, clinicians should carefully determine which beliefs are held by the families they serve and where these beliefs fall along the Individualistic-Collectivistic framework.

Clinical Implications

The results of this study indicate that the beliefs of Mexican-American participants were more strongly collectivistically-oriented than were the beliefs of Anglo-American participants for the following variables: Narrative Style and Broader Community. That is, Mexican-American participants were more likely than Anglo-

American participants to report that when reading books, it is important to stick to the story and not interrupt. Furthermore, participants reported that adults did not often add new parts to a book. These results indicate that growing up, the parents of Mexican-American participants strictly focused on the text of the book, and did not add new parts to a story. Furthermore, adults did not want their children to interrupt to ask questions or comment on the book during reading time. This leads to the belief that adults did not feel the need to test their children while reading a book, nor did they expect their children to ask questions or comment about what was happening in the story. These results have several clinical implications. For example, SLPs often establish therapy activities which include the use of questions to test the child's knowledge or understanding of a specific topic. These results indicate that children may not frequently be asked questions which test their knowledge in the home environment. Due to their unfamiliarity with being prompted with information-seeking questions, children may not be willing to answer or share information with clinicians. Furthermore, mothers may not carry-out at-home tasks provided by the clinician which include the use of questions to test their child's knowledge due to the unfamiliarity of using this type of learning task.

Under the Broader Community variable, Mexican-American participants were more likely than Anglo-American participants to report that children typically spoke more frequently with other children than with adults. Furthermore, Mexican-American participants reported that children mostly talked to parents or family members and were not encouraged to and did not often interact with people outside of the family. These findings reflect the information found in the literature which states that Mexican-American families tend to value the collectivistic belief of inter-dependence within one's

own family (Delgado & Gaitin, 2004; Valdes, 1996; Zea-Quezada & Belgrave, 1994; Rodriguez & Olswang, 2003; Losey, 1995; Peña & Méndez-Pérez, 2006).

RESPECT

It is essential that clinicians value and understand the hierarchal relationships within Hispanic families. In the Hispanic culture, adults do not view children as equal conversational partners and expect that children remain quiet and do not interrupt while adults are speaking (Valdes, 1996). Furthermore, Langdon and Cheng (1992) noted that parents often do not understand the value of play and therefore will not frequently engage in play activities with their children.

The views held by Mexican-American parents regarding play can become problematic when the clinician asks that parents practice play-based techniques at home with their children. In this case, it is extremely important that the clinician collaborate with the family in the following ways: (a) provide education regarding play-based techniques, (b) alter the intervention techniques to more closely match the parent's interaction style and (c) include other family members such as young brothers and sisters. More detailed instructions to implement specific techniques which can be helpful when collaborating with Hispanic families follow.

PROVIDE EDUCATION

Often, families may be hesitant to carry out intervention techniques in the home environment if there is mismatch between the belief system of the clinician and the parent. For example, clinicians often ask parents to implement play-based intervention in the home environment. However, parents may hesitate to do so if they do not view play as a learning task, nor do they see their child as an equal conversational partner (Langdon & Cheng, 1992; Valdes, 1996). In this case, the clinician will want to provide research

which highlights to benefits and measured gains that can arise as a result of providing play-based intervention. Providing education to the family can provide them with a strong knowledge foundation of how implementing play-based intervention in the home can be beneficial for their child. If families have proof that these strategies will improve their child's communication skills, they may be more willing to implement these in the home environment.

ALTER TECHNIQUES

It has been well established in the literature that Mexican-American and Puerto Rican individuals highly value the idea of respect towards one another (Valdes, 1996; Rodriguez & Olswang, 2003; Delgado-Gaitin, 2004, Langdon & Cheng, 1992, Harwood, Scholemerich, Ventura-Cook, Schulze, & Wilson, 1996, Zea, Quezada & Belgrave, 1994). In order to gain the family's trust and respect, the clinician should compromise with the family by altering intervention techniques in order to more closely match their belief system. For example, instead of playing on the floor with the child, the parent may prefer to sit on a chair while speaking to their child who is on the floor. Because parents in the Hispanic culture expect that their children learn through observation rather than direct instruction, clinicians can alter intervention techniques by allowing the parent to provide more direct language teaching (e.g. reading a book to the child).

Clinicians often establish therapy activities which include the use of questions to test the child's knowledge or understanding of a specific topic. However, Mexican-American parents do not typically ask their children to repeat facts or re-tell something that happened when both the child and the adult were present (Langdon & Cheng, 1992). Furthermore, Goldenberg, Reese and Gallimore (1992) reported that during book-reading sessions, Mexican-American parents asked their children almost no questions and interactions between the parent and child during book-reading were minimal. Due to

their unfamiliarity with being prompted with information-seeking questions, children may not be willing to answer or share information with clinicians. Furthermore, mothers may not carry-out at-home tasks provided by the clinician which include the use of questions to test their child's knowledge. Rather than instruct the parents to administer many information-seeking questions to the child at home, the clinician can ask the parent to serve as a language model for the child (e.g. use complete sentences with descriptive and specific information). This compromise on the part of the clinician may result in the family being more willing to implement treatment at home.

DEVELOP MUTUALLY SELECTED GOALS

Because Mexican-American parents often value social skills versus cognitive skills (Greenfield, 2006), they may be more concerned that their child learn the social skills rather than language skills needed to interact with other children at school. For example, parents may express an interest in the child being able to make eye contact with other children and introduce themselves using a phrase (e.g. "Hola, me llamo Jimmy/Hi, my name is Jimmy). It is the SLPs responsibility to not only become informed about the wishes and goals that the client's family holds, but to respect these wishes and incorporate them into an individualized treatment plan.

INCORPORATE EXTENDED FAMILY INTO INTERVENTION PLAN

Hispanic families tend to value the collectivistic belief of inter-dependence within one's own family (Delgado & Gaitin, 2004; Valdes, 1996; Zea-Quezada & Belgrave, 1994; Rodriguez & Olswang, 2003; Losey, 1995; Peña & Méndez-Pérez, 2006). These results have several clinical implications. Because Mexican-American families are tight-knit units, it is critical to the success of the child that the SLP include the family in the intervention plan. It is also essential that SLPs not only include immediate family such as

the mother and father of the child, but include siblings and extended family as well (e.g. aunts or uncles and grandparents). In order to do this, SLPs need to inquire information regarding the dynamics of the client's current living situation. For example, if the child lives at home with grandparents, the SLP will want to spend time counseling and training the grandparents to include them in the intervention process.

HOLD INFORMATION SESSIONS

Holding information sessions designed to specifically focus on the questions, comments, or concerns of the family regarding the intervention process can be extremely helpful. These information sessions can be held before or after intervention sessions, or on a separate day of the week. The purpose of these information sessions would be to give the family an opportunity to voice any questions they may have regarding the intervention they are providing at home and to discuss which techniques they feel are effective or not effective. Furthermore, the family should feel comfortable informing the clinician about any aspects of therapy that they themselves may want to alter for any reason.

Information sessions may also serve as an opportunity for the clinician to become more knowledgeable about the beliefs held by the client's family. One way to do this would be to hold a question and answer session in which the clinician asks specific questions that are relevant to the intervention techniques carried out in the clinical environment and/or at home. It is important to determine whether or not the family will feel comfortable providing this information prior to holding this type of information session. If the family agrees, they may feel thankful and respect that the clinician is taking the steps needed to bridge any cultural gaps that may exist and interfere with intervention.

The delivery of efficient and effective intervention is enhanced by a genuine understanding of the culture(s) of the clients who are being served. Developing cultural competence requires that a clinician have a genuine understanding, awareness, and a strong knowledge base of the beliefs and values held by individuals from culturally diverse backgrounds. Instead of viewing cultural diversity as a barrier to providing effective treatment, clinicians should view the beliefs held by families as a strength which can be used to develop culturally sensitive intervention techniques. Specifically, the views held by Hispanic mothers can serve as a foundation for the development and selection of intervention goals and techniques.

Limitations and Future Directions

Limitations of this study include a small sample of participants and a limited number of analyses which could be performed due to this small sample. A larger sample size could lead to more opportunities to analyze the sample with regards to different variables such as the effect that income or Spanish use have on beliefs. Furthermore, several analyses yielded significance values that were approaching significance. Reaching significance may be more likely with a larger sample size.

Developing cultural competence in issues related to the field of speech language pathology is an ongoing process essential for providing appropriately sensitive diagnostic and treatment services. Using the Collectivistic-Individualistic framework is an important concept in our field which should be utilized and valued because it asks individuals to consider the variations and differences held between or within a specific culture. Future research should continue to focus on the importance of increasing knowledge regarding the beliefs and values held by clients who come from culturally

diverse backgrounds and explore the relationship between variables such as income, Spanish use, and generation and the cultural beliefs held by individuals.

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Vita

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