The Various Impacts External Factors can have on Latino Youth’s Outcomes

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Abstract
This manuscript serves as an extensive literature review surrounding many different external factors that can impact Latino youth, and their outcomes. This manuscript explores the various impacts role models, siblings, family cohesion, mental health services, protective factors, risk factors, and SES levels can have on Latino youth’s mental health treatment outcomes, substance use, obesity rates, and other health disparities, as well as their sexual acting-out behaviors, academic success, and health development/adjustment. Key information was gleaned from empirical, as well as theoretical research to inform on the aforementioned topic areas.

*Key words:* Latinos, role model, paternal role, youth
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**Peer & Family Relationships**

**Importance of Family**

Family is known to be highly-regarded amongst the Latino culture (Crean, 2008). “Familism” is a concept embedded within the Latino culture (Crean, 2008). Familism is centered around the notion that children should be respectful and supportive toward their family members, with a high emphasis placed on their fathers (Crean, 2008). Mothers in Latino households often serve as the mediator when problems arise between the children and their fathers (Crean, 2008).

**Parental Conflict and Support**

As children enter the adolescent stage, it is common for their level of dissatisfaction toward their parents’ authority to increase (Crean, 2008). During this stage of development, youth are also more likely to have more conflict with their parents, as opposed to previous years (Crean, 2008). This increased conflict is often attributed to the youth engaging in open disagreement with their parents (Crean, 2008). Youth’s high conflict with their parents has been attributed to several types of negative youth outcomes, which include the following: moving out, running away from the home, joining a religious cult, marrying early, becoming pregnant early, school drop-out, suicide attempts, and drug abuse (Crean, 2008).

Regarding potential conflict that can occur between Latino youth and their parents, Crean (2008) assessed support buffering’s effects on the conflictive parent-youth dyad amongst inner-city Latino youth (Crean, 2008). Specifically, Crean (2008) assessed the potential relationships between parental support, parental conflict, internalizing symptoms, and externalizing symptoms (Crean, 2008). The ages of the youth in this study ranged from 11-15 (Crean, 2008). The data from the study was collected via survey dissemination at the participants’ middle school (Crean, 2008). There was a total of 329 participants in this study (Crean, 2008). Based on the survey’s
results, it was found that when the male youth indicated higher levels of conflict with their fathers, internalizing symptoms, as well as externalizing symptoms were higher (Crean, 2008). Additionally, male youth’s conflict with their fathers was viewed as being a predictor of internalizing symptoms (Crean, 2008).

For the female youth participants of this study, their reports of high internalizing symptoms was associated with father conflict mixed with their mothers’ support (Crean, 2008). When the female participants had low levels of conflict with their fathers, having higher support from their mothers seemed to serve as a protective factor for them (Crean, 2008). When assessing the study’s results overall, higher levels of internalizing symptoms, as well as externalizing symptoms, was associated with higher levels of conflict (Crean, 2008).

**Mental Health Services Needs and Barriers**

Kapke and Gerdes (2016) completed an intensive literature review in terms of Latino families’ participation in mental health services, as well as nuances that should be kept in mind when working with/treating this population. The U.S. Census Bureau (Kapke, & Gerdes, 2016) projected that by 2060, approximately 40% of the children residing in the United States will identify themselves as Latino (Kapke, & Gerdes, 2016). According to Kapke, & Gerdes (2016), approximately 20% of the youth who are living in the United States have either, an emotional or a behavioral disorder (Kapke, & Gerdes, 2016). Unfortunately, less than one-half of the youth who are living in the United States and are in need of receiving mental health services are actually receiving services (Kapke, and Gerdes, 2016). It has been reported that mental health professionals in the United States are not able to meet Latino youth’s needs (Kapke, & Gerdes, 2016). Likewise, it has also been reported that appropriately treating this population’s mental health needs is a public health issue (Kapke, & Gerdes).
Latinos face a number of barriers when it comes to mental health treatment (Kapke, & Gerdes, 2016). Some of the barriers this population faces in the mental health field include the following: communication barriers, cultural barriers, and being objectified to cultural stigmas (Kapke, & Gerdes, 2016). Potentially linked with these aforementioned treatment barriers, and despite the fact there is a small percentage of Latinos who actually seek the mental health treatment they need, a relatively large percentage of these consumers terminate their services early (ranges from 30%-75%) (Kapke, & Gerdes, 2016). Early termination from treatment has been associated with negative outcomes for Latinos (Kapke, & Gerdes, 2016). Subjection to sigma could be attributed to Latinos’ underutilizing needed mental health services (Kapke, & Gerdes, 2016).

Latinos who hail from low-income communities, in particular, can face unique challenges in terms of accessing mental health treatment (Kapke, & Gerdes, 2016). Some of the barriers this population faces include the following: violence in the community, exposure to trauma, limited educational/employment opportunities, and a lack of insurance (Kapke, & Gerdes, 2016).

**Positive Treatment Outcomes Linked with Mental Health Services**

Positive treatment outcomes have been linked with parents’ participation in Latino youth’s mental health treatment. Parental investment and engagement in the youth’s treatment is linked with an improvement in treatment outcomes for youth (Kapke, & Gerdes, 2016). Likewise, Latinos having a therapeutic alliance with their practitioner has been reported as serving as a buffer in treatment retention (Kapke, & Gerdes, 2016). Families’ communication and cohesion with one another has been reported as being the best predictor of whether or not the family will engage in mental health treatment (Kapke, & Gerdes, 2016). Latino clients having an
ethnic match with their mental health practitioner also serves as an aid in having improved treatment outcomes (Kapke, & Gerdes, 2016).

**Physical and Mental Health**

*Access to Role Models’ Impacts on Substance Use*

Youth having access to peer role models and communication with members of their family is seen as a positive buffer to the youth engaging in alcohol and/or drug use (Oman, 2004). In a study that was conducted by the Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy and Texas A&M University, 1,350 randomly-selected participants who hailed from two low-income areas in the Midwest were assessed in terms of the possible linkage between what were perceived to be nine youth assets, and engaging in alcohol and/or drug use (Oman, 2004). The nine youth assets that were assessed for the purposes of this study were as follows: non-parental adult role models, peer role models, family communication, use of time (groups/sports), use of time (religion), community involvement, aspirations for the future, responsible choices, and good health practices (nutrition/exercise) (Oman, 2004).

In terms of the findings of the study, age increase was seen to have a correlation with the proportion of nonusers (Oman, 2004). In other words, this indicated more alcohol and drug use as the participant age got older. Additionally, youth who resided in two-parent households were less likely to use alcohol than youth who resided in a household with one parent (Oman, 2004). When compared to youth without a peer role model, the participants who had a peer role model were almost 2.5 times more likely to report alcohol non-use (Oman, 2004). Being involved in one’s community seemed as though it served as an alcohol use protective factor, but only for the participants who resided in one-parent households (Oman, 2004).
**Correlation between SES and Health Disparities**

Low socioeconomic status (SES) is one of the highest contributors of disease in developed countries (Chen, Cavey, & Ho, 2013). The following are believed to include what resilience is comprised of at varying levels for children: child level (temperament and emotional regulation); family level (warm, responsive caregiving); and neighborhood level (connections to community adults) (Chen, Cavey, & Ho, 2013). Chen, Cavey, and Ho (2013) believe the notion of engaging in shift-and-persist, an adaptive coping mechanism, directly relates to people who chronically face difficult situations. *Shifting* consists of reframing a situation to make it seem better in one’s mind (Chen, Cavey, & Ho, 2013). Shifting also consists of regulating one’s emotions (Chen, Cavey, & Ho, 2013). *Persisting* consists of being strong and optimistic during difficult times (Chen, Cavey, & Ho, 2013).

In their study, Chen, Cavey, and Ho (2013) assessed socioeconomic status (SES), the tendency of participants to shift-and-persist, and whether or not youth self-reported to have a role model they looked up to. Additionally, the authors had participants’ blood analyzed, as well as their cholesterol levels (Chen, Cavey, & Ho, 2013). Participants consisted of 163 Canadian families (youth and one parent) (Chen, Cavey, & Ho, 2013).

Chen, Cavey and Ho’s (2013) study indicated that females were more likely to report having a role model, as well as having a supportive role model than boys were. Additionally, it was found that having a supportive role model served as a buffer for youth of low SES households (Chen, Cavey, & Ho, 2013). These youth were also found to have lower IL-6 levels (Chen, Cavey, & Ho, 2013). Regarding the study’s shift-and-persists scores, youth who hailed from low-SES backgrounds and had higher shift-and-persist scores were found to have lower IL-6 levels (Chen, Cavey, & Ho, 2013). Regarding youth who hailed from high-SES households,
there were not any recorded benefits of having a role model, or exercising shift-and-persist exercises (Chen, Cavey, and Ho, 2013).

**Impacts on Obesity**

Childhood obesity is an issue in the United States (Ayala et al., 2014). Mexican-American boys are at the highest risk for obesity, as compared to children of other ethnic backgrounds (Ayala et al., 2014). Second and third-generation adolescents who hail from ethnically-diverse backgrounds are more likely to be overweight than adolescents who hail from first-generation parents (Ayala et al., 2014). The Study of Latino (SOL) Youth is a study that was funded by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (Ayala et al., 2014). This study examined existing literature for theoretical information regarding childhood obesity. The aim of this study is to assess what impacts childhood obesity and cardiometabolic risk have on Hispanic/Latino children (Ayala et al., 2014). Diet (Ayala et al., 2014), physical activity (Ayala et al., 2014), inactivity (Ayala et al., 2014), and the amount of time spent sleeping (Ayala et al., 2014) are all contributors to childhood obesity. Emotional and behavioral health also impact obesity (Ayala et al., 2014).

Through the authors’ reviews of the existing information available on the topic area, they found that Socioecological Framework and Social Cognitive Theory aligned well with this topic area (Ayala et al., 2014). Socioecological Framework is based off the notion that influences can occur from multiple levels/directions, and these direct/indirect influences can contribute to both, behaviors and health outcomes (Ayala et al., 2014). Social Cognitive Theory operates under the idea that people and their behaviors are influenced by the environment they are in (Ayala et al., 2014). Both of these theories can be applied to research pertaining to childhood obesity, and role models’ impact on Latino youth.
Generally-speaking, one of every seven children from low-income homes is obese, and Latino children are among the most obese, compared to children of other ethnicities (Cook, & Hayden, 2012). Obesity can negatively impact children’s health, emotional well-being, and their academic outcomes (Cook, & Hayden, 2012). Cook and Hayden (2012) report that school counselors can significantly improve/impact Latino children’s obesity rates. In particular, Cook and Hayden (2012) recommend for school counselors to offer an obesity prevention program in their places of work. These obesity prevention programs could consist of both, physical activity and life skills development for Latino youth (Cook, & Hayden, 2012).

The American School Counselor Association’s (ASCA) (2005) National Model is designed to support school counselors in their guidance lessons with youth. In particular, Cook and Hayden (2012) report that this model can be used to aid obese students in making healthier lifestyle choices for themselves. Cook and Hayden (2005) also acknowledge the importance of including parents in youth’s efforts to live healthier lifestyles, as it could help the parents feel as though they are directly involved in their children’s healthier lifestyle efforts.

**Type 2 Diabetes**

In terms of type 2 diabetes (T2D), Latino youth face many deficits (Williams et al., 2017). For instance, Latino youth are more frequently insulin-resistant than white youth, and 30 percent of Latino youth have pre-diabetes (Williams et al., 2017). The Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP) has indicated it can prevent or delay high-risk adult populations when it comes to T2D (Williams et al., 2017).

Williams et al. (2017) proposed a study that consists of a randomized control trial of 160 Latino adolescents that are ages 14-16 to test the Every Little Step Counts (ELSC) lifestyle intervention in terms of its short-term and long-term effects on the adolescents (Williams et al.,
2017). The program consists of the following: health screenings, ELSC curriculum (weekly education classes regarding living a healthy lifestyle that take place in a group setting), physical activity, and booster sessions (Williams, et al., 2017).

The proposed outcomes that would be assessed from this study are as follows: insulin sensitivity, perceived quality of life, physical activity, nutrition assessment, social support, self-efficacy, body composition, socioeconomic status, and pubertal maturation (Williams et al., 2017).

**Siblings’ Impacts on Health Outcomes**

One’s relationship with their sibling(s) can have a great influence over their life (East, & Toon Khoo, 2005). It has been found that mothers’ caregiving styles can impact their children’s relationships with their siblings (East, & Toon Khoo, 2005). Specifically, mothers who engage in careful monitoring with their children are believed to influence closer relationship amongst the siblings, as well as relationships that are more affectionate (East, & Toon Khoo, 2005). Additionally, a child in the home with a sibling who is a teenage parent has been observed as a leader to more stress, and more sibling conflict in the home (East, & Toon Khoo, 2005).

East and Toon Khoo (2005) conducted a study in which they observed the potential link between family stress and mothers’ monitoring on the quality of siblings’ relationships with each other. The study’s participants consisted of 227 Latino and African-American families (East, & Toon Khoo, 2005). The families were assessed over the span of five years, and at three different points in time (East, & Toon Khoo, 2005). The study’s measures consisted of mothers’ monitoring, older sisters’ drug and alcohol use, sibling relationship qualities, younger siblings’ drug and alcohol use, and younger siblings’ high-risk sexual behaviors/sexual outcomes (East, & Toon Khoo, 2005).
The results of this study indicated that youth who hailed from single-mother homes tended to have warmer and closer relationships with one another, which could be attributed to them developing stronger bonds post-their parents’ divorce (East, & Toon Khoo, 2005). Additionally, older sisters having a higher level of power over their younger siblings was associated with high-risk sexual behaviors, which could be attributed to the younger siblings seeking to mimic or appease their older sister with their sexual acting out behaviors (East, & Koon Thoo, 2005).

Youth’s Sexual Acting-Out Behaviors

Sexual risk-taking behaviors amongst teenagers is currently an issue, and it has been in previous decades (Harris et al., 2006). Youth who are home alone more frequently are expected to be more sexually active than youth who are home alone less frequently (Harris et al., 2006). Decreased adult supervision is also believed to lead to youth being more likely to engage in crime and substance abuse (Harris et al., 2006).

In Harris et al.,’s (2006) study, they collected data from 1,350 homes. In each of the aforementioned households, there was a parent, and a teen pair in the home (Harris et al., 2006). With the help of a computer-assisted data entry system, parents and teens were interviewed (Harris et al., 2006). Nine youth assets were assessed during this study, which consisted of the following: non-parental adult role models; peer role models; family communication; use of time (groups/sports); use of time (religion); good health practices (exercise/nutrition); community involvement; aspirations for the future; and responsible choices (Harris et al., 2006).

The results of the study indicated that as youth’s household income amounts increased, the amount of reported sexual activity decreased (Harris et al., 2006). Additionally, the results
indicated that the presence of any of the aforementioned nine assets was significantly related to the youth reporting they had never had sexual intercourse (Harris et al., 2006).

Overall Well-Being

Youth’s Risk Factors

In order to serve Latino clients as well as we can as mental health professionals, we need to understand the risk and protective factors they are exposed to. Latino youth are exposed to many different risk factors, including substance use, taking on an adult role at young ages, migrating to a new country/culture, feeling the need to acculturate/assimilate to a new culture, and experiencing difficulties in the school environment (Chapman, & Perreira, 2005).

It is believed that alcohol use/abuse serves as a gateway to other types of substance use for Latino youth (Chapman, & Perreira, 2005). School-wise, Latino youth have been found to be impacted the most by individual, family, and institutional nuances (Chapman, & Perreira, 2005). Additionally, Latinas who are childbearing are most likely to drop-out of high school (Chapman, & Perreira, 2005). In terms of migrating or immigrating to a new country, there are a myriad of potential life-changing issues associated with this, including being separated from one’s family, parents separating from each other, and traumatization before and/or after the immigration process (Chapman, & Perreira, 2005). When it comes to acculturating and assimilating to one’s new life in the United States, it can require learning a foreign language very rapidly, adjusting to the new culture, and adjusting to the new systems one has become immersed in. In their new schools, Latino students can face discrimination as a new student, and as an ethnic minority (Chapman, & Perreira, 2005).
Youth’s Protective Factors

Regarding potential protective factors that can help to mitigate the aforementioned risk factors Latino students face, practitioners and policy-makers can select from several different options (Chapman, & Perreira, 2005). Some of the options that practitioners have to mitigate those risk factors are as follows: trying to understand the youth’s and parents’ rationale or motivations for moving to the United States, encouraging youth and their parents to discuss their immigration experiences with one another, encouraging youth and their parents to discuss the individual challenges they experienced during the immigration process, and building on their existing strengths (Chapman, & Perreira, 2005).

Acculturation Process

The Latino population is the largest minority population in the United States (Kapke, & Gerdes, 2017). The Latino population is also the country’s fastest-growing ethnic population (Kapke, & Gerdes, 2017). Acculturation is a process that Latino youth go through once they come to the United States (Kapke, & Gerdes, 2017). Acculturation can be linked with risk factors that Latino youth experience, as well (Kapke, & Gerdes, 2017). Stressors that are linked with the acculturation process have also been linked with Latino youth experiencing lower self-esteem, as well as internalizing issues (Kapke, & Gerdes, 2017).

The present study consisted of a cross-sectional research design (Kapke, & Gerdes, 2017). 79 early adolescents participated in this study, which assessed Latino youth and parents’ psychopathological development factors (Kapke, & Gerdes, 2017). Based on the study’s correlation and regression analyses, bicultural orientation did not significantly associate with global self-worth (Kapke, & Gerdes, 2017). Additionally, the study indicated that acculturation risk factors had a negative impact on global self-worth (Kapke, & Gerdes, 2017). Lastly, youth
who perceived they were subjects of ethnic discrimination had lower levels of global self-worth (Kapke, & Gerdes, 2017).

In sum, this study shines light on the negative impacts that risk factors can have on Latino youth’s feelings of self-worth (Kapke, & Gerdes, 2017). Similarly, this study indicates similar negative effects that ethnic discrimination can have on Latino youth’s feelings of self-worth (Kapke, & Gerdes, 2017). Practitioners and school personnel who work closely with Latino youth should use the findings from this study to the youth’s advantage by mitigating the risk factors they are exposed to, as well as helping them feel more included/accepted by their classmates (Kapke, & Gerdes, 2017).

Latino youth who have immigrated to the United States are faced with the tasks of becoming adjusted to their family’s culture/their heritage, as well as the United States’ mainstream culture (Liao, & Sánchez, 2014). When Latino youth are in the midst of the acculturation process, it is common for them to engage in identity exploration (Liao, & Sánchez, 2014). Fortunately for youth, youth mentoring can help them during the identity exploration process (Liao, & Sánchez, 2014).

The current study used existing, archival data regarding Latino/a adolescents who hailed from low-income families (Liao, & Sánchez, 2014). The study’s researchers assessed the relationships between youth mentoring and the youth’s acculturation (Liao, & Sánchez, 2014). The youth’s mentors could consist of family members, or non-family members (Liao, & Sánchez, 2014).

The study indicated that more often than not, the youth identified familial members as their mentors (Liao, & Sánchez, 2014). Also, the results indicated that Latino youth having at least one cross-race mentor was significantly associated with them having less perceived
discrimination (Liao, & Sánchez, 2014). Lastly, the youth who had more frequent contact with their mentors were less likely of being in a marginalized group (Liao & Sánchez, 2014). The term “marginalized group” is referring to the youth being associated with just the American, or the Latino culture (Liao, & Sánchez, 2014).

**Significance of Family Cohesion on Acculturation**

For Latinos, as well as other minorities, the immigration process does not only consist of moving to a new place, as it also consists of the assimilation process (Jaggers, & MacNeil, 2015). Youth can experience a great deal of stress post-immigrating to the United States (Jaggers, & MacNeil, 2015). Post-immigration, Latino youth can find themselves developing a new identity about themselves while trying to acculturate to American culture (Jaggers, & MacNeil, 2015). For Latino immigrants, their individual perceived stress, as well as their perceived social support serve as predictors of their own psychological health (Jaggers, & MacNeil, 2015).

The present study used a secondary data analysis, which originated from the National Latino and Asian American Study (NLAAS) (Jaggers, & MacNeil, 2015). The Mexican-American Prevalence and Services Survey was used to measure acculturative stress of Latinos living in the United States (Jaggers, & MacNeil, 2015). The specific types of stress this scale measured were questions about respondents adapting to a new culture, and learning the English language (Jaggers, & MacNeil, 2015). Based on the regression models that were used, the results indicated dissonant acculturation can influence Latinos’ depressive symptoms (Jaggers, & MacNeil, 2015). Fortunately, high levels of family cohesion decreased dissonant acculturation’s potential harm on the immigrants (Jaggers, & MacNeil, 2015). Additionally, females were more likely to experience symptoms of depression than males were (Jaggers, & MacNeil, 2015).
In sum, the findings from this study suggest that increasing family cohesion can help to mitigate symptoms of depression for Latino youth (Jaggers, & MacNeil, 2015). Additionally, when it comes to acculturation, Latino females might be more in need of depression-related support than males (Jaggers, & MacNeil, 2015).

**Stressors that Impact Latino Youth**

This study assessed stressors that Latino students experienced within the past year (Rubens, Fite, Gabrielle, Evans, Hendrickson, & Pederson, 2013). Demographics, language spoken, anxiety, negative life events, and adolescent delinquency were all assessed in this study (Rubens et al., 2013). The measures were assessed via surveys (Rubens et al., 2013). The lowest number of negative life events the participants experienced in the past year was 0-24. 96% of the adolescents reported they experienced at least one negative life experience within the past year (Rubens et al., 2013).

This study’s results indicated that the youth who reported more exposure to negative life events within the past year reported more anxiety symptoms, and they engaged in more delinquent acts (Rubens et al., 2013). Likewise, the adolescents who spent more time in the United States engaged in more delinquent acts (Rubens et al., 2013). The adolescents who had spent more time in the United States, as well as the adolescents who spoke more English with their family and friends had more exposure to negative life events, indicating the potentially negative influences the American culture/norms could have had on these youth (Rubens et al., 2013).

**Factors that Impact Healthy Development**

This study consisted of semi-structured interviews with professionals who worked with Latino youth from a wide variety of fields (Porta, Allen, Padilla, Arboleda, Svetaz, Balch, &
Sievling, 2016). Some of the fields the professionals from this study represented included the following: clinic staff, school staff, and community-based staff (Porta et al., 2016). The study’s key informants were asked to express their ideas regarding their opinions on what factors impact healthy Latino youth development (Porta et al., 2016).

A wide variety of factors were reported to impact healthy Latino youth development (Porta et al., 2016). Culture was reported by the key informants as a contributor to healthy Latino youth development (Porta et al., 2016). Cultural values, cultural pride, cultural knowledge, and cultural identity were all reported as pertinent, culturally-related factors that impact Latino youth development (Porta et al., 2016).

Intrinsic factors, such as feeling a sense of belonging, having goals, feeling self-worth, and having confidence were the intrinsic factors that key informants reported about (Porta et al., 2016). Hopelessness and feeling a lack of belonging were reported as detrimental to Latino youth development (Porta et al., 2016).

The healthy extrinsic factors that were reported to promote Latino youth development were as follows: family support, parent connectedness to the community, having caring and trustworthy adults in one’s life, having role models in one’s life, having community supports, having consistent access to community programs and supports, having access to education, and having the availability of programs (Porta et al., 2016). The extrinsic factors that were reported to inhibit healthy youth development were as follows: stressors on the family, whether due to immigration, work challenges, or violence, having limited access to services, basic needs not being met, and migration-related challenges, including being separated from one’s family (Porta et al., 2016).
Fathers’ Impacts on Youth’s Adjustment

Fathers can have significant roles in youth’s adjustment (Perez-Brena, Cookston, Fabriciuss, & Saenz, 2012). In the past, fathers have been seen as many different types of roles/providers for their children, including the following: moral guides, financial providers, gender role models, and nurturers (Perez-Brena et al., 2012). In particular, it has been found that youth who have higher levels of father involvement tend to have fewer internalizing and externalizing symptoms (Perez-Brena et al., 2012).

This study assessed European-American, Mexican-American, and Mexican immigrant fathers’ self-evaluations of their personal successes, and their shortcomings (Perez-Brena et al., 2012). Via a mixed-methods design, this study assessed 337 fathers, and their adolescent-aged children (Perez-Brena et al., 2012).

Fathers who self-identified as emotionally-involved and affective-controlled mentioned “involvement” more than affective-model fathers (Perez-Brena et al., 2012). Five dimensions of fathering were assessed, which consisted of the following: emotional quality, involvement, provisioning, discipline, and role modeling (Perez-Brena et al., 2012). Fathers who self-identified as affective-control fathers mentioned provisioning and discipline significantly more than emotionally-involved and affective-model fathers (Perez-Brena et al., 2012). Regarding the adolescent-aged study participants, adolescents who had affective-control fathers reported having externalizing behaviors more than adolescents who had emotionally-involved fathers (Perez-Brena et al., 2012).

Based on the indications of this study, regardless of whether adolescents hail from a European-American, Mexican-American, or Mexican-immigrant background, certain types of fathering can lead to youth’s externalizing behaviors (Perez-Brena et al., 2012). This study’s
results also indicate that professionals who work with the father-son dyad can encourage fathers to be more emotionally-involved, as this can be advantageous in helping to mitigate youth’s externalizing behaviors (Perez-Brena et al., 2012).

Factors to Bolster Academic Success

Mexican-American youth are more at-risk of failing academically than their fellow classmates of other ethnic backgrounds (Roosa, O’Donnell, Cham, Gonzales, Zeiders, Tein, Knight, & Umaña-Taylor, 2011). Approximately 20% of Latino youth drop-out of high school before graduation (Roosa et al., 2011).

Roosa et al.’s (2011) study used random and purposive sampling to conduct computer-assisted personal interviews with 749 families. Family-level and adolescent-level demographic variables were assessed as predictors of academic success in this study (Roosa et al., 2011).

The results of the study indicated that having a parent with at least a high school-level education, and having positive family role models in the 5th grade correlated positively with academic performance for 7th graders (Roosa et al., 2011). Additionally, the results indicated that immediate family members, as well as extended family members who serve as academically-related role models, and know what is needed for students to be successful, aided in Mexican-Americans’ school success (Roosa et al., 2011).

It was found that for these middle schoolers, externalizing symptoms were more common for males than they were for females (Roosa et al., 2011). Unsurprisingly, externalizing symptoms were found to negatively impact students’ grades (Roosa et al., 2011). Overall, female students achieved better grades than male students (Roosa et al., 2011).
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