ABSTRACT

INFLUENCES ON GENDER ROLE ATTITUDES AMONG MEXICAN ADOLESCENTS

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This study examines parental and familial influences on gender role attitudes of a Mexican adolescent population. The data used comes from a cross-national survey of adolescents and the analyses conducted address the following specific dimensions: parental connection, punitiveness, monitoring and permissiveness as well as familism and other demographic variables. Analyses involved separation of the sample population by gender as well as by gender of parent in order to examine differences between parent-child gender dyads. Results showed significant predictive relationships between gender role attitudes and age of adolescent, parental connection, punitiveness, monitoring and familism. Findings suggest that female adolescents’ gender role attitudes are more influenced by the dimensions studied compared with males, and that maternal influences are more salient than paternal influences.
INFLUENCES ON GENDER ROLE ATTITUDES AMONG MEXICAN ADOLESCENTS

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Introduction

Gender role attitudes are crucial in the development of adolescents and individuals in general. Understanding a population’s gender roles can explain how workplace as well as personal relationships function, and these attitudes can be correlated to various behaviors toward women in both personal and professional settings (O’Neil, 1981). Acknowledging gender roles in regard to “traditional” feminine and masculine roles versus “progressive” or more androgynous roles can help to establish underlying assumptions that influence the way that any given culture or society works. The way in which men and women relate to themselves and each other can give clues as to why various social issues become more or less prevalent within certain populations or during certain ranges of historical time. In this study, the relationship between gender role attitudes and a variety of parental influences and familism was examined within a sample of adolescents living in Mexico.

Research has also shown a variety of ways in which gender can intersect with other important aspects of the self. For example, gender and gender-role conformity can affect self-esteem. The desire to conform to societal gender norms tends to negatively predict self-esteem, while one’s own private regard of gender norms that results in gender-conforming behavior is shown to positively predict self-esteem (Good & Sanchez, 2010). Also, different gender dyad pairings between parents and children have been shown to influence varying levels of parental behaviors (Bush, Supple, & Lash, 2004; Chiñas, 1993). Because of the significant impact of gender and gender role attitudes on other conceptualizations of the self, the factors that influence these attitudes warrant more in-depth study.

In Latin American culture, gender roles and, more specifically, traditional roles for women have a particularly salient place. In Mexican culture specifically, women have historically been cast in a traditional gender role, reflecting the idea of self-sacrificing maternal figures whose main purpose is childbearing and childrearing (DiGirolamo & de Snyder, 2008; Vasquez-Nuttal et al., 1987). While this role is changing just as gender roles throughout the world have been changing as a result of globalization and an increase of women in the workforce, these gender stereotypes are still significantly present in many aspects of Latin American cultures (Villegas, Lemanski, & Valdéo., 2010; Kulis, Marsiglia, Lingard, Nieri & Nagoshi, 2008).
An additional significant factor found in Mexican culture is the concept of familism. Familism can be considered a form of family loyalty, which puts the needs of the family before other concerns (Pinto & Coltrane, 2009). It is also possible that familism can be interpreted and acted upon differently depending on gender roles. Familism has been measured in a variety of ways, but generally involves a strong connection to family including extended family as well as the solidarity felt between family members (Rodriguez, Mira, Paez, & Myers, 2007).

Another possible influence on adolescent gender role attitudes could be parental behavior and styles. This particular relationship has yet to be studied, but there are many examples of parenting styles influencing positive or negative adolescent behaviors. For example, in Mexican American youth, maternal permissiveness was associated with a higher likelihood of adolescent alcohol problems, while adolescents with authoritative mothers were less likely to be delinquent (Driscoll, Russell & Crockett, 2008). Higher self-esteem and fewer depressive symptoms were both related to more supportive parenting styles as well (Driscoll et al., 2008). Since these parental discipline styles have such a profound effect in other areas for adolescents, it stands to reason that these behaviors might also be related to adolescents’ formation of gender role attitudes within a Mexican population.

The development of gender role attitudes is important to investigate because of its reflection on larger societal patterns. While research on gender role attitudes in Mexican populations is growing, there is still much left to discover especially in examining the intersections of those attitudes with parental and familial influences during adolescence. Because of the increasing influence that Mexican culture is having on the United States, it is essential that we better develop an understanding of how adolescents’ gender role attitudes develop within these cultures.

This study seeks to address the development of gender role attitudes within Mexican adolescents. Specifically, this research will begin to examine how perceived parental behaviors, familism, and various demographic characteristics may affect adolescent gender role attitudes. The following questions will be addressed:

1.) How are adolescents’ gender role attitudes influenced by parental behavior?
   a. Do higher levels of any one parental behavior predict greater or lesser traditionalism in gender role attitudes?
b. How do the gender of the adolescent and the gender of the parent influence the relationship between parental behavior and the adolescent’s gender role attitudes?
c. How does the mother’s employment status influence the gender role attitudes of the adolescent?

2.) How does familism influence adolescents’ gender role attitudes?
   a. Does familism influence adolescent gender role attitudes?
   b. How might the gender of the adolescent affect the significance of familism’s effect on gender role attitudes?

**Literature Review**

**Familism**

Familism, a value common in the Latin American community inclusive of Mexico, emphasizes the group rather than the individual and promotes interdependence over independence (Rinderle & Montoya, 2008). Extended family ties are considered very important, with many of those family members living in close proximity to one another (Ingoldsby, 1991). As part of this construct, it can be common for adult children to help their parents with financial support (Ingoldsby, 1991). This is in addition to the more robust emotional support and obligation felt in families with high levels of familism. Given the limitedness of the current body of research concerning familism’s impact upon adolescents, our findings begin to help fill this void.

When examining familism, it is crucial to note that it is a multidimensional construct that interacts with a variety of factors (Bush, Supple & Lash, 2004). Familism encompasses social and personal relationships, family solidarity, and a commitment to relationships over material gains (e.g. Bush et al., 2004). There are relatively few studies examining the interaction between familism and parental behaviors (Martyn, Loveland-Cherry, Villarruel, Gallegos Cabriales, Yan, Ronis & Eakin, 2009), and much of the existing research focuses on familism within the context of Latino or Mexican-origin families in the U.S. rather than within the Mexican population itself (e.g., Updegraff, Kim, Killoren & Thayer, 2010). This study examines the role of familism as it relates to gender role attitudes of adolescents within a resident Mexican population. Since
familism is a significant determinant of other family values like interconnectedness and family unity, it is likely that familism may also influence adolescent gender role attitudes.

In families of primarily Mexican origin living in the U.S., there are often higher levels of interdependence than is found in White non-Hispanic American family counterparts (Dorner, Orellana & Jiménez, 2008). Rather than encouraging and rewarding independence, Latin American-origin families tend to value the ability to both rely on and support one’s own family members as compared to other U.S. families (Dorner et al., 2008). With this strong sense of familism comes an increased interdependence as part of the socialization in Mexican families (Peterson, Bush, Supple, Kupanoff, Mosack & Pappas, 2000). Mexico follows some of these same cultural patterns in terms of familism, sharing similarities with other Latin American countries (Baca Zinn, 2000). The family is a central means of interfacing with the outside world for many Mexican adolescents, partially due to the restrictions like close parental monitoring that are traditionally placed on Mexican male and especially female adolescents (Webb, Bray, Getz & Adams, 2002). Coupled with the encouragement of interdependence and a strong sense of familism comes a profound respect for authority within the Latin American and Mexican family (Halgunseth, Ispa, & Rudy, 2006; Baca Zinn, 2000; Ingoldsby, 1991).

Furthermore, familism can be a potential predictor of adolescent behavior, making it that much more important to study. McHale, Updegraff, Kim, and Cansler (2009) found that youth with reported strong familism values were less likely to engage in risky behavior. It is possible that the parents’ more restrictive behavior, as a correlate of higher levels of familism, is at least partially responsible for their children’s lesser likelihood of participating in risky behavior. With these things in mind, the study of familism and parental behaviors in relation to adolescents is especially relevant with the growing immigrant population and the general desire to reduce risky adolescent behavior. Because of familism’s significant effect on adolescent behavior, it may also be very important to consider when researching what influences adolescent gender role attitudes.

**Gender Role Attitudes**

In Mexican culture, the idea of gender and gender roles is still considered to be very much dominated by the constructs of “machismo” and “marianismo” (DeSouza, Baldwin, Koller & Narvaz, 2004). DeSouza et al. (2004) discusses these two essential dimensions as cultural constructs within gender studies. Machismo basically equates to an exaggerated sense of
masculinity for men in Latin American cultures, and marianismo as a cultural construct depicts women as passive and, above all, nurturing caregivers and mothers (DeSouza et al., 2004).

In discussing machismo, Ingoldsby (1991) argues that the dominant cultural stereotype is that the “macho” man will protect his family, but to the extent that the women in the household are sufficiently restricted in their actions. The machismo sentiment is that of hypermasculinity that manifests itself in behaviors that may be high-risk, aggressive toward women, and overly concerned with maintaining an image of superiority and sexual conquest (Villegas et al., 2010). Following machismo ideology, women are submissive to and dependent upon their men, whether they be fathers, brothers or husbands (Ingoldsby, 1991). Machismo is also seen to revere the sexual exploits of the man, while vehemently defending the virginity and purity of their daughters (Ingoldsby, 1991). There are, however, some positive traits of machismo that include high paternal involvement, emphasis on providing for the family and concern for the well-being of the family (Villegas et al., 2010).

In contrast, marianismo views the role of the woman as the self-sacrificing matriarch, serving the needs of the macho man, but in a way that solidifies her femininity and moral superiority (Ingoldsby, 1991; Vasquez-Nuttal et al., 1987). Marianismo places women in an idealized setting, where they are seen as the generous, self-giving mother who puts the needs and interests of her family far above herself (Villegas et al., 2010). Within the family, the woman sees that she is less important than her brothers, but has the ability to be respected and venerated like her mother as a martyr for the good of the family (Ingoldsby, 1991). While these gender stereotypes are somewhat pervasive, Ingoldsby (1991) argues that women can use this system of submissiveness to work their way into a variety of societal roles, and that women may actually have more flexibility than their male counterparts in certain areas since men are still negatively viewed for taking part in work that is traditionally done by women.

There has been some research that is beginning to challenge these stereotypical constructs of Mexican culture, although media representations of women are far from egalitarian in nature (Villegas et al., 2010). Women are still seen as narrowly represented in one of two roles: the dutiful wife and mother or as the overly sexualized, independent female (Villegas et al., 2010). Villegas et al. argue that these narrow choices for female roles are reinforced by the media, which in turn mirrors society in a form of circular influence, thus maintaining cultural norms and stereotyping of women’s roles. Paz (2008) also argues that literature readily reinforces the rigid
gender roles of Mexican society by emphasizing deviant behavior through historical and fictional archetypes of the traditional “good” and “bad” woman.

In the research conducted by Howell (1999), some of the traditional stereotypes of women are challenged. She argues that access to education and employment can drastically change the position and gender roles of women within Mexican society, and in this particular case within Oaxaca (Howell, 1999). Traditionally women have been responsible for all of the household duties and childrearing, but there is evidence that this may be gradually changing; women are still the primary providers of household and childcare duties, but fathers are becoming increasingly involved and included in these responsibilities (Esteinou, 2004). Even the United Nations (1995) has acknowledged the power that education and paid employment can have to affect larger gender role change within a society.

Attitudes regarding marriage and the nature of motherhood itself are changing for the southern Mexican population, however certain cultural norms are still evident (Howell, 1999). Women in more contemporary roles are still more readily accepted into Mexican society when they conform to gender role norms in as many ways as possible. For example, a single working woman is more accepted in general if she also performs the role of a good daughter and/or sister to her family (Howell, 1999). Also, working mothers are better accepted if they demonstrate that their work is meant to support the family, thus still conforming to some of the marianistic tendencies of self-sacrifice for the benefit of the family.

Another way in which gender roles may significantly impact adolescents can be found in parental occupation. Tuck, Rolfe and Adair (1994) found that a mother’s employment status more significantly influences the gender role attitudes of adolescents. In this study, adolescents were more egalitarian in their gender role views if their mothers were employed outside of the home, rather than occupying the primary role of caregiver (Tuck et al., 1994). These authors found no such correlation between gender role attitudes and father’s employment status, thus emphasizing the primacy of the mother’s role in this scenario.

**Gender intensification hypothesis**

With these underlying cultural constructs in mind, the role that gender plays in the lives of adolescents can be very powerful. One of the central theories in adolescent development of gender roles and gender identity is the gender intensification hypothesis (Priess, Lindberg &
Hyde, 2009; Hill & Lynch, 1983). This hypothesis, proposed by Hill and Lynch (1983), suggests that as males and females progress through adolescence, they face increasing pressure to conform to socially accepted gender role norms. There are a variety of sources from which these gender role pressures can arise, including parents, teachers, peers and media. Specifically, this hypothesis is used to explain how gender characteristics and behaviors begin to emerge and solidify throughout adolescence (Hill & Lynch, 1983). Although little research directly tests this hypothesis, it has appeal based upon its intuitive explanation of systematic changes in adolescents ascribing to gender role norms (Priess et al., 2009).

This hypothesis securely posits that adolescents will become more stereotypical in their gender roles as they experience the increasing pressure throughout adolescence beginning at puberty (Priess et al., 2009). The family structure can influence significantly how adolescents experience gender role development, but it is still unclear as to how demographic characteristics of income and parental education may influence gender development (Priess et al., 2009). As part of this hypothesis, parents are seen as a particularly important influence on the changes that occur during adolescence (Priess et al., 2009). Parents may exacerbate gender differences by encouraging or discouraging certain types of behavior depending on the gender of the child (Hill & Lynch, 1983). In particular, parents tend to encourage daughters to be more warm, compassionate and courteous than sons. Conversely, sons are encouraged by parents to be more independent, competitive and self-confident than their female counterparts (Hill & Lynch, 1983). The influence of parents in this gender intensification hypothesis lends itself to the inclusion of parental behaviors as potential mitigating factors in adolescent gender role attitude development.

**Parental Behaviors**

Parental behavior has a profound influence on the development of children and adolescents, although the significance of that influence can be altered based upon parental gender as well as adolescent gender. As an example of the significant long-term impact that parental behaviors can have, recent research suggests that higher parental support and monitoring tends to predict lower lifetime alcohol use within a Mexican population (Becerra & Castillo, 2011). Congruent with earlier suppositions and the previous research on the topic, Updegraff et al. (2010) determined that mothers typically have more knowledge about their adolescents’ daily activities than fathers. Mother-daughter relationships tended to be closer (e.g. support and time
spent with daughters’ peers) compared to other parent-adolescent gender dyads. Updegraff and colleagues suggest that this may be because daughters are more likely to rely on the support and guidance of their mothers (Updegraff et al., 2010).

Gender differences can particularly affect the parental behavior components of monitoring and support. Based on prior studies, females have been shown to report higher maternal monitoring than males (Webb et al., 2002). Webb et al. (2002) also found that perceived paternal monitoring was less significant than perceived maternal monitoring in determining adolescent behavior among both male and females. In regard to parental support, gender of child has an important effect as well. It has been shown that, in Mexican American families, women reported greater levels of support from parents than their male counterparts (Moilanen & Raffaelli, 2010), and it is possible that similar results can be seen in Mexican families because of shared values.

Currently, there is not much research connecting parental punitiveness or permissiveness to either familism or adolescent gender role attitudes. Previously parental punitiveness ha been correlated with more resistance from children and less communication and closeness in parent-child relationships in Mexican families (Bronstein, 1994). Punitive control was also associated with openly defiant behavior in Mexican children (Bronstein, 1994). Because of these correlations, this study seeks to determine if a relationship exists between these three parenting behaviors and gender role attitudes.

Consistent with social learning theory, parents teach their children about gender roles through modeling (Ormond, 1999). Studies have shown that parenting behaviors and division of labor can influence gender role development in Mexican children (Esteinou, 2004). Additionally, such social and cultural norms can also be taught through parental induction, which teaches children about the consequences of their behaviors. In this study, several parental behaviors were analyzed to determine their relation to adolescent gender role attitudes. Social learning theory could potentially offer an explanation for why a relationship may exist between these variables.

Methods

Sample

The sample for this study consisted of Mexican adolescents who attended state-funded secondary schools in the city of Hermosillo, Mexico, a medium-sized city that is the capital of
Sonora. This study includes the responses from 501 of the total 600 questionnaires distributed. In regard to gender, there was a relatively even distribution of males and females, with 215 of the respondents being male and 286 being female. Although the mean education level of parental education was high school completion, it ranged from less than a grade school education through advanced graduate study. Study participants ranged in age from 10 to 16, with a mean age of 13.35. The sample population was found to be fairly representative of the various sociodemographic qualities of the surrounding area (e.g. parental educational attainment and family structure).

Measurement

The instrument used for this study is a portion of the cross-national study of adolescents (Bush, Peterson, Cobas, & Supple, 2002). Because of the nature of this instrument, it can be used for adolescent populations in many different countries. Translation into the local languages includes slight variances in language to account for cultural differences in the populations to be surveyed (Bush et al., 2004). The response format for this questionnaire consists of a four-point Likert-type scale ranging from “Strongly Agree” and “Strongly Disagree” with assigned values of 4-1, respectively. Adolescent respondents also provide general demographic information about themselves and each parent. The selected portions of this questionnaire instrument that will be used for the purpose of this study are the Attitudes Toward Women Scale, the Parental Behavior Measure, and the Familism Scale.

The questionnaire was administered to adolescents directly, relying on adolescent self-report mechanisms. Previous research suggests that adolescents’ perceptions of parental and familial behavior are more predictive of their attitudes and actions than parental reports of these factors (Gecas & Schwalbe, 1986). It has also been shown that adolescent reports of parental actions tend to be more reliable since parental reports on these same factors tend to underreport behaviors that could be perceived as not socially acceptable (Gecas & Schwalbe, 1986). Because of these trends, using adolescent perceptions on their own as well as their families’ behaviors is appropriate for the research questions that this study addressed.
Gender role attitudes

The Attitudes Toward Women Scale (Spence & Helmreich, 1972) was designed to measure respondents’ attitudes toward women in regard to gender roles. This study uses 7 items from this 15-item scale that specifically measure respondents’ perceptions of women’s roles in society and in the home. A higher score indicates that the respondent’s attitude toward women favors traditional, in-home roles for women. Sample items include: “No woman’s life is really complete until she marries” and “The career of men should take priority over the career of women”. The reliability of this shortened version was determined to be .71 for males and .72 for females.

Familism

The familism scale used to assess respondents’ orientation toward the family is the Bardis Familism Scale (Bardis, 1959). This scale is designed to measure how much the interests and priorities of the family are considered in comparison to personal priorities. The 5 items in the scale can be combined to create an overall familism rating, with a higher rating indicating that family priorities are perceived as more important than personal priorities. This scale demonstrated reliability alpha coefficients of .63 for girls and .61 for boys. Items in this scale consist of statements such as: “Family responsibilities should be more important than my career plans in the future” and “Family ties are more important than friendships outside of the family”.

Parental behaviors

In order to assess the adolescent respondents’ perceptions of parental behaviors, the Parental Behavior Measure (PBM) was used. It is a 34-item self-report instrument that has been used in a variety of prior studies (Peterson, Bush, & Supple, 1999). The PBM covers a wide range of parental behaviors, including parental monitoring, support, punitiveness, positive induction, guilt induction and love withdrawal. In order to assess these dimensions, items from previous instruments with highest loadings on identified factors were selected (Peterson, Rollins, & Thomas, 1985). After reverse coding selected items, each category of items can be summed into a score representing each dimension for each parent. The subscales of the Parental Behavior Measure asks adolescents to respond to each question separately for mothers and fathers.
Each of the six dimensions of parental behavior used in this study measures a distinctly different facet of parental behavior. The 4-item parental support dimension assesses the behaviors that communicate feelings of warmth, affection and value to the adolescent. This dimension uses items such as: “This parent has made me feel that he or she would be there if I needed him or her” and “This parent seems to approve of me and the things that I do”. The 5-item positive parental induction dimension measures how the parent teaches the adolescent about the way that their behavior and choices can affect others. Sample items include: “This parent explains to me how good I should feel when I do what is right” and “This parent explains to me when I share things with other family members, that I am liked by other family members”. There is previous support within Mexican families for the combination of parental support and parental induction dimensions into a unified variable (Bush et al, 2004). For this study, the support and induction dimensions have been combined into one variable labeled parental connection, with alpha coefficients of .87 for males and .88 for females.

Additionally, the 5 items measuring parental punitiveness assess parental use of coercive or controlling behaviors that are considered harsh and strict. Items include: “This parent punishes me by not letting me do things that I really enjoy” and “This parent does not give me any peace until I do what he or she says”. The maternal punitiveness items have reliability coefficients of .81 for males and .83 for females, and the paternal coefficients were found to be .81 for both males and females. The degree to which parents are lenient and laidback is measured by the 3-item parental permissiveness dimension. Items that test this dimension consist of statements like: “This parent usually lets me do anything I want to do” and “This parent allows me to have any friends I want without questioning me”. The reliabilities for males with this scale are .73 and .72 with females’ being .67 and .70 for maternal and paternal permissiveness respectively.

Finally, 6 items regarding parental monitoring measure the adolescent’s perception of how much parents supervise their activities with items such as: “This parent knows where I am after school” and “This parent knows who my friends are”. The maternal monitoring reliability coefficients are .76 for males and .74 for females, while the paternal monitoring coefficient alphas are .79 and .76 for males and females respectively. In assessing parental involvement, 2 items were used, with maternal reliabilities of .68 for males and .70 for females, and paternal reliabilities of .70 for males and .73 for females. The items in this scale include “This parent enjoys doing things with me” and “This parent shares many activities with me”.

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Analysis and Results

First, a series of bivariate correlation analyses were conducted between traditional gender role attitudes (Attitudes Toward Women scale) and each of the other variables including parental behaviors, maternal employment status and familism. The combined scale scores for each parenting behavior, rather than each individual question, were used in the analysis for appropriate variables. Then, the respondents were divided by gender and the same correlational analyses were performed. This was used to determine if there is more or less correlation between the variables for male or female respondents. Gender is a component of particular interest in all of the analyses. This was analyzed in a variety of ways throughout the testing of the hypotheses. The sample was split by gender for many of the selected analyses. The results of these correlational tests can be found in Tables 1 and 2 (Appendix A).

Following these correlational analyses, a series of step-wise linear regressions were conducted for those dimensions demonstrating significant correlations. Four separate regression models were conducted, separating out gender of adolescent and gender of parent. Maternal and paternal behaviors were analyzed separately as predictors to help prevent issues of multicollinierity since the questions regarding mothers and father were identical (with the exception of references to either their mother or their father) and all reported by the adolescent. These regression models use traditional gender role attitudes (attitudes toward women scale) as the criterion, and familism and selected parental behaviors as the potential predictive variables. Variables were selected based upon significant correlation findings in either male or female respondents and included in all regression models. Age and parental educational attainment were also used in the regression model as control variables. The results of these regression analyses can be found in Tables 3 and 4 (Appendix B).

Females: Maternal Model

For females, several maternal variables were found to be significant predictors of gender role attitudes in the regression model (F = 4.86; p < .001). Maternal involvement was shown to positively predict traditional gender role attitudes (β = .19; p < .01), whereas maternal punitiveness and familism are both negative predictors of traditional gender role attitudes for females (β = -.17; p < .01 and β = -.17; p < .01 respectively). Although significantly correlated at the bi-variate level, maternal monitoring was not found to be a significant predictor in this model. Additional regression coefficients and R² values for each model can be found in Table 3.
Females: Paternal Model

In examining paternal behavior with the female respondents, only paternal involvement was shown to be significant ($F = 3.85; p < .01$). Further details and $R^2$ values can be found in Table 4. Paternal involvement was a positive predictor of traditional gender roles for females ($\beta = .2; p < .01$); while familism was still a negative predictor of traditional gender roles, similar to the maternal model results ($\beta = -.2; p < .01$).

Males: Maternal and Paternal Models

Alternatively, the results for male respondents were less conclusive than the female regression models. For both parental models, only familism was found to be a significant predictor of male adolescents’ gender role attitudes (See Tables 3 and 4). In both the maternal ($F = 6.80; p < .001$) and paternal models ($F = 7.70; p < .001$), familism was a negative predictor of traditional gender role attitudes ($\beta = -.22; p < .01$ and $\beta = -.25; p < .01$ respectively). Age was also suggested to be a positive predictor of traditional attitudes for males (but not for females) in both the paternal and maternal models ($\beta = .30; p < .001$ and $\beta = .31; p < .001$ respectively).

Discussion

In order to interpret the findings of this study, it is essential to return to the original research questions. First, this study sought to examine the influences of various parental behaviors and teen’s sense of familism on adolescent gender role attitudes. By further examining these behaviors broken down by gender of the parent and gender of the adolescent, a variety of interesting results were discovered. Secondly, the relationship between familism and gender role attitudes was also investigated. This relationship also warranted gender differentiation in order to more adequately consider the impact of familism on Mexican adolescents’ attitudes toward traditional gender roles.

For males, at the bivariate level both maternal and paternal connection were found to be significantly and negatively correlated to traditional gender role attitudes, measured by the Attitudes Toward Women scale. Further examining this relationship through regression analyses, it was found that paternal connection was not a significant predictor of gender role attitudes. Paternal connection was found to have significant correlations with many of the other variables in this study such as age, permissiveness, monitoring and involvement. In the regression model,
shared variance between these variables changes the relationship/significance from the individual bivariate correlations. Future research can potentially expand upon these complex relationships and more definitive interactions can be determined.

Regarding maternal connection, it was shown to have a marginally significant predictive value (negative direction) on gender role attitudes for males. Based on these findings, male adolescents may tend to adopt more egalitarian gender roles if they have a stronger connection with their mothers. Since the connection variable is a combination of the support and induction scales, male adolescents may interpret support as well as lessons about how their actions influence others from their mothers as important roles that females can have, lending more egalitarian views to their overall gender role attitudes.

In female respondents, parental involvement was a more important factor than parental connection in influencing gender role attitudes. These analyses suggest that parental involvement is a positive predictor of traditional gender role attitudes. These findings can perhaps be explained at least partially by Social Learning Theory. The more involved that parents are with their children, the more opportunities the child has to observe and learn gender role behaviors (Ormond, 1999). The parental involvement measure used in this study specifically addresses sharing activities together, and this coincides with Social Learning Theory as a potential explanation for more traditional roles being predicted by higher parental involvement. While this relationship was significant for females, it was not for males in either the bi-variate level correlation nor regression models. This gender difference in parental involvement is consistent with previous research showing that overall parental contact with sons tends to be less than daughters (e.g., Webb et al., 2002).

Additionally, maternal monitoring was only found to be a significant predictor of gender role attitudes for females, and it was negatively associated with traditional gender roles. This relationship was not found to be significant for males. The regression analysis on this component confirms the predictive significance of maternal monitoring on female adolescent gender role traditionalism. This negative relationship suggests that higher levels of perceived monitoring for females predicts slightly more egalitarian gender role attitudes in those respondents. These findings are consistent with existing research that has emphasized parental monitoring for females but not for males, and that maternal monitoring was more significant for adolescents than paternal monitoring (Webb et al., 2002). Since current research shows that Mexican parents
generally monitor daughters more closely than sons (Webb et al., 2002), it stands to reason that parental monitoring would have a more significant influence on gender role attitudes of females than males.

However, there is limited research addressing the effect of parental monitoring relating to gender roles, and what does exist tends to emphasize the reinforcement of gender roles through monitoring. For example, some research has noted that monitoring by more traditional mothers leads females to have more traditional gender roles (Bumpus, Crouter & McHale, 2001). Perhaps then, the findings in this study could posit that the maternal monitoring found to be significant may be from mothers with less traditional gender roles and their monitoring helps transmit those egalitarian tendencies to their daughters. There appears to be an emerging shift from the traditional, authoritarian parenting style to a more democratic way of parenting, indicating more flexibility within the family in general (Esteinou, 2004), and this changing parental climate may also explain how parental monitoring might be a positive predictor of egalitarian gender roles. Higher levels of monitoring have also been linked to higher familism in studies with Mexican-origin families (Romero & Ruiz, 2007), both of which were negative predictors of traditional gender roles in this study. Perhaps exploring the relationship between monitoring and familism can further elaborate on the complexities of their interaction with gender role attitudes.

Maternal punitiveness was also negatively associated with traditional gender role attitudes for females, and, once again, there was not a significant relationship identified with this variable for males. Upon further examination, the regression model suggests that the more punitive that parents were with their daughters, the more egalitarian gender role attitudes the daughters would have. Interestingly, maternal punitiveness had a more significant impact than paternal punitiveness. Possible explanations for these findings reference gender roles in parenting. Following traditional gender trends, fathers have been seen as demonstrating more authoritarian and punitive behaviors than mothers (Esteinou, 2004; Conrade & Ho, 2001; Aloa, Feder, Glover, Miller, & Palmer, 1998), and daughters are traditionally more protected and nurtured by their parents than sons (Updegraff, K., Delgado, M. & Wheeler, L., 2009; Azmitia & Brown, 2002). While mothers do have some disciplinary responsibility in Mexican families, children generally identify fathers as primarily responsible for discipline (Esteinou, 2004). Thus, punitiveness exhibited by mothers may represent changing gender roles in parenting and relating to more egalitarian gender role development by their daughters. However, Biblarz and Stacey
(2010) have more recently acknowledged that, rather than the gender of the parent influencing parenting behaviors, it may be the role of the parent within the household that determines their parenting behavior relative to the other parent, but that existing research does not examine parental gender differences adequately. Additionally, parents who are more punitive toward their daughters instead of the more traditional coddling and sheltering of daughters relative to sons may be communicating more gender equality than their less daughter-punitive counterparts.

Familism was significantly related to gender role attitudes for both male and female respondents. Bivariate correlation analysis showed that this relationship was negative in nature, with higher familism levels correlating to less traditional gender role attitudes. Regression models demonstrate that familism can be considered a significant negative predictor of traditional gender role attitudes. This finding was particularly salient in that familism and machismo are generally discussed in tandem with one another in existing cultural research, while machismo has been associated with increased traditionalism in regard to women’s gender roles (Ingoldsby, 1991). However, these cultural elements are not inextricably linked and familism may outlive machismo as increasing acceptance of more egalitarian gender roles becomes more widespread (Ingoldsby, 1991). Recent qualitative findings demonstrate that women may be seeking the interconnectedness of familism while also maintaining a sense of autonomy and gender equality (Belknap, 2010). These recent developments may help differentiate the cultural elements of familism and machismo in separate ways as gender roles become more equal over time, especially in urban settings such as the Belknap study (2010). The findings in this study demonstrate the need for further delineation between the distinct cultural constructs of familism and machismo.

A point of particular interest from this study is that familism was the only tested variable that had a significant predictive relationship with gender role attitudes across all four gender dyads. This may be the case because of familism’s overarching salience at the family level, and not just the individual relationship level due to it being such a powerful cultural construct. It seems that the shared variance found with the intercorrelated parenting variables have limited their significance related to predicting gender role attitudes in males, thus further elevating the importance of familism. It is also possible that the larger familial concepts of interconnectedness and interdependence associated with familism have a more prominent role than parental behaviors for males (Webb et al., 2002).
Finally, age was found to be a factor that also predicts gender role attitudes for male adolescents. As the age of the male adolescents in this sample increased, so did their level of traditionalism in gender role attitudes. Regression analysis shows age as a significant predictor of traditional gender roles for male respondents. The Gender Intensification Hypothesis may offer some guidance for interpretation of this finding. As males age and go through adolescence, they may more significantly experience and then ascribe to traditional gender roles than they did as young adolescents (Priess et al., 2009). Thus, young adolescence may be a crucial intervention point when contemplating how to create more egalitarian gender role attitudes in Mexican males. It is possible that the same relationship was not found for females because the hypothesis may not be as relevant for this age group or that other factors found to be more salient in gender role development such as parental involvement for the female adolescent sample outweighed age in significance.

It is also important to acknowledge some of the limitations inherent with secondary data analysis. While the influence of familism on gender role attitudes was a central component to this study, examining the cultural constructs of machismo and marianismo through other similar scales might have contributed to these findings. Because this study was designed as a more comprehensive look at adolescents in multiple countries, such specific measures were not examined. Additionally, it is possible that other scales measuring gender role attitudes could better capture the nuances of Mexican gender constructs.

With respect to using this data for gender research purposes, even certain demographic information could have been more specific. While this examination of data did not yield significant results for the comparison of maternal employment status and gender role attitudes, future research design might include more specific measures regarding the amount and type of work to inquire about maternal employment so that it can be better analyzed. Despite the limitations that secondary analysis may have, the findings in this study can be used to help guide future research directions on Mexican adolescent gender role attitudes.

Other limitations for this study include the sample as well as some of the specific measurement instruments. While the sample was relatively representative of the mid-sized Mexican city where data was collected, it is difficult to generalize these findings to the larger Mexican population as a whole. For example, larger metropolitan cities such as Mexico City or Guadalajara as well as smaller rural towns may all have distinctly different views regarding
gender roles based on elements such as exposure to other cultures, work environment and availability of resources such as education. In regard to the measurement instruments, there are multiple scales available that measure the various dimensions studied in this research. It is possible that other familism or culture-based scales could better assess these dimensions for the Mexican population. It is also important to note that the data are cross-sectional and the direction of influence implied in this study (e.g., parents influence adolescents) is posed only for heuristic reasons.

**Conclusion**

This research has the potential to add to the limited body of work discussing Latin American and specifically Mexican adolescent research on gender role attitudes. Because of the limited amount of current research regarding influences on gender role attitudes, these analyses will serve to continue building a more comprehensive view of Mexican adolescent gender role development.

The influence of parental behavior in gender role attitudes is somewhat under-studied, especially within the Mexican adolescent population. Behaviors such as support as well as punitive elements can be crucial to understanding adolescent development. By examining the ways in which parents can influence their children’s gender role attitudes, we can better understand how certain cultural and societal patterns are perpetuated or perhaps changed.

Implications for family life professionals involve several areas. First, when issues regarding gender role attitudes become harmful, either from external or internal forces, professionals can analyze how parental behaviors may be influencing these pieces of adolescent development. Understanding the interactions of parental behaviors and adolescent gender role attitude outcomes can help to identify where modifications might need to be made to better serve the Mexican adolescent population.

Because of the potential for depression or other psychological consequences of perceived non-conformity to gender roles, it is important that professionals and parents recognize the impact that their behaviors have on adolescent internalization of gender roles, attitudes and stereotypes. Additionally, there could be implications for addressing issues with adolescents in schools when non-conformity results in situations of bullying or harassment related to gender
norms. Through discussion and potential intervention with parents, behaviors could be modified to better insulate adolescents from the pressures of gender norm conformity.

There are also implications for family life professionals who conduct parenting courses or workshops. Since gender identity and gender role attitude development are crucial to the overall development of adolescents, parents can be made aware of the ways in which they implicitly and explicitly communicate their gender-related expectations to their children, even before adolescence. With greater awareness of the interactions between parental behaviors and gender role attitude creation, parents will be better able to modify and adjust their practices to more likely produce the outcomes that are in the best interests of their children.
References


Appendix A

Correlation Tables

**TABLE 1: Maternal Influences Predicting Adolescent Gender Role Attitudes: Correlations by Gender of Adolescent**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable Name</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>-.00</td>
<td>-.199*</td>
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<td>.20*</td>
<td>-.15*</td>
<td>-.13*</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>-.07</td>
</tr>
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<td>-.14*</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>.27*</td>
<td>.23*</td>
</tr>
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<td>1.00</td>
<td>.29*</td>
<td>-.15*</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
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<td>.40*</td>
<td>-.15*</td>
<td>.23*</td>
<td>.05</td>
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<tr>
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<td>.03</td>
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<td>.26*</td>
<td>-.19*</td>
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<td>-.03</td>
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Note. *p < .05; Correlations for boys are under the diagonal; correlations for girls are above the diagonal

**TABLE 2: Paternal Influences Predicting Adolescent Gender Role Attitudes: Correlations by Gender of Adolescent**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable Name</th>
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<th>3</th>
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<td>1.00</td>
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<td>.17*</td>
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<td>.49*</td>
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<td>.13*</td>
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<td>1.00</td>
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<td>8. Permissiveness</td>
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<td>-.03</td>
<td>-.11</td>
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Note. *p < .05; Correlations for boys are under the diagonal; correlations for girls are above the diagonal
### Appendix B

Regression Models

#### TABLE 3: Maternal Model: Mothers’ Behaviors Predicting Traditional Gender Role Attitudes by Gender:

Unstandardized and Standardized Regression Coefficients

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<th>Girls I</th>
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<td>β</td>
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<td>β</td>
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<td>.96</td>
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<td>-.01</td>
<td>-.18</td>
<td>-.20**</td>
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<td>-.20</td>
<td>.00</td>
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<td>-.13*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²</td>
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<td>.17</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. *p < .10, **p < .05, ***p < .01, ****p < .001

#### TABLE 4: Paternal Model: Fathers’ Behaviors Predicting Traditional Gender Role Attitudes by Gender:

Unstandardized and Standardized Regression Coefficients

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Boys I</th>
<th>Boys II</th>
<th>Boys III</th>
<th>Girls I</th>
<th>Girls II</th>
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<td>β</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>β</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>.10</td>
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</table>

Note. *p < .10, **p < .05, ***p < .01, ****p < .001