ABSTRACT

FAMILISM AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT: A PERSPECTIVE FROM PUERTO RICAN MOTHERS LIVING ON THE ISLAND.

by Arelis V. Vellón Fernández

While there is sizable body of literature substantiating the significance of family values such as familism for Latino families, most research has focused on Mexican families or Latinos living in the US mainland. Research is needed to examine specific factors of familism among Puerto Rican families living on the island. The principal objective of the current study was to explore familism with specific emphasis on the academic achievement of young school children. Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Framework guided the study, where 10 married or cohabiting women were interviewed using a semi-structured qualitative approach. Mothers provided information about their perceptions of values, familism, parents as models to instill values and contributions of teachers to child’s values. Findings demonstrated that familism is predictor of positive child’s academic achievement. Some exceptions were found regarding family relationships and child’s education. The study promotes discussion and further exploration about unique perspectives in family values.
FAMILISM AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT: A PERSPECTIVE FROM PUERTO RICAN
MOTHERS LIVING ON THE ISLAND.

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Introduction

The family group represents the center of most influence on the attitudes and behaviors of most people. As a part of this, the immediate family transmits family values from generation to generation, which represent a distinctive and influential aspect of family bonds, specifically among Latino families (Zayas & Palleja, 1988). In Latino families these values are significant elements that contribute to the attitudes and actions that individuals take in their daily life. Hence, family values and its implications in the nuclear family become particularly important characteristics to be considered in Latino families. In order to understand Latino family values it is important to recognize one of the most important values, known as familism (Zayas & Palleja, 1988). According to Sabogal, Marín, Otero- Sabogal, Marí, and Perez- Stable (1987) familism has been identified as a unique characteristic in Latino families that is described as a cultural value that emphasizes a strong bond of attachment to the family unit, and support that family members have between each other. Familism is an important and complex cultural value that impacts the Latino family environment. Hence, it is meaningful to consider the influence and effects of familism among specific Latino groups, such as Puerto Rican families (Zayas & Palleja, 1988).

Rogler and Cooney (1984) conducted a study where they wanted to know what specific aspects of Puerto Rican culture are retained by Puerto Rican families living in New York. Familism was one of the value systems that was identified, which they defined as a cultural value that promotes family integrity; represents the family pride and feeling of mutual obligation to help a family member when necessary. In this way, Puerto Rican familism is the extent in which family relationships are given priority and keeps family together no matter the circumstances. In addition, among Puerto Ricans, familism promotes not only family togetherness within the immediate or nuclear family, but also includes the act of providing help to extended family.

As a cultural family value, it is useful to note that familism not only impacts family ties, but also has a great significance for each individual family member. Zayas and Palleja (1988) reported that familism, as a cultural value, has a great influence in the behavior that is present in relatives within and outside of the family context. Therefore, familism is a factor that contributes to the actions of the members in their macro and micro contexts. These influences foster the development of new patterns of behaviors that represent a new model in the life of the individuals. It is important to note that in the literature that is presented in this study, family values in general, will also be explored as a significant factor, from which familism emerges and influences the family ecological system.

In the nuclear family, family values provide families, specifically Latino parents, a guiding framework for developing strategies about childrearing, which, in turn, foster behaviors that reflect the family cultural values (Roosa, Morgan, López, Cree & Specter, 2002). Family values are tools that allow selecting and shaping the parenting behavior used with children. Many of the behaviors children have are based on the influence family values has on their parents. Thus, through family values, positive and effective strategies that contribute to the well being of children and family are developed and maintained.

In school, familism also has an important role. Valenzuela and Dornbush (1994) reported that familism has demonstrated to be a significant source of support in the academic achievement of Latino students, such as Mexican students. Hence, familism provides motivation and contributes to school success in Latino youth. Through the familism that parents transmit to their offspring, children develop skills that provide the emotional support to achieve school success.
Therefore, familism is a distinguished value in Latino families that provides enriching benefits in Mexican families; however, there is less research about familism among other specific Latino groups. Cortes (1995) reported in her study about familism among Puerto Ricans living in mainland United States, that there is the need to conduct research about familism in Puerto Ricans living on the island, which she strongly recommended. In her study, she found a correlation between familism across two generations (parents and child) of Puerto Ricans in New York. She states that education level and age affect the belief or adherence of familism in the family environment. For parents who received an education in Puerto Rico, their familism beliefs demonstrated to be higher in comparison to their children, who received an education in New York. Coinciding with this, in both generations it was noted that familism beliefs decrease in those who received an education away from Puerto Rico. Regarding age, it was found that the older individuals are when they arrive in United States, the stronger are their familism beliefs. Because of this finding, she suggests to conduct research among Puerto Ricans living on the island, who could demonstrate more familism than Puerto Ricans living in the mainland United States.

The current study responds to this call to contribute to the lack of research that exists related to family values and the need to identify specific characteristics of familism that are present among Puerto Rican families living on the island. The main aim of this study was to examine the family cultural values such as familism among Puerto Rican families and its implications in the educational setting among young children. Most of the previous research about family values emphasizes the influence of familism among Latino adolescents (Germán, Gonzales & Dumka, 2009), whereby it is also necessary to examine these processes in Latino children. As part of this, the current study also explored how parents transmit family values (e.g., familism) to their children. Such research not only contributes to the lack of research about family values among Puerto Rican families, but also helps to understand the Puerto Rican culture, and produce findings that may prove useful in developing culturally appropriate intervention approaches. Studies about specific group of Latinos are also significant to the research and strategies among other Latino families (Zayas & Palleja, 1988). Additionally, it is expected that the findings will be a valuable source to practitioners and educators working with Latino families, especially Puerto Rican families.

Research Questions

1-How do Puerto Rican women (married or cohabiting) living on the island describe how they transmit familism to their young children attending K-3 grade?
2- From the Ecological perspective, what roles does familism play in the education of Puerto Rican elementary school children from the perspectives of their mothers?
   - How does family closeness contribute to parent’s involvement and concern with their child’s education?
   - How does familism influence the mother’s role in her child’s education at home and school?
   - Are the values associated with familism seen at the school level?
How are the values fostered at school consistent with or different from the family values fostered at home?

How open is the school to parental involvement with children’s education?

Literature Review

The literature review of this study is organized by four different sub-topics such as: Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Framework (Bronfenbrenner, 1994), which contributes to explain the interaction between the systems (e.g., school and home) and family values; Familism, where information about its implication at home as well as school will be presented; parenting styles/behaviors, where the development of parenting styles and their relationship with cultural values in family contexts will be discussed; and academic achievement, where information related to the factors that contribute to academic success of children will be discussed. All of these sub-topics are explored in literature related to Latino families with specific focus on Puerto Ricans families when available.

Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Framework

The present study explores familism in two different contexts: home and school. Both of these contexts work together and contribute to the development of family values such as familism, especially in children. Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological framework provides the opportunity to understand family functioning and external factors that impact child development (Swick & Williams, 2006). This framework allows for understanding the relationship of the individual with her/his social context, including their attitudes, behaviors and values. The ecological framework is based in the interactions between the followings five systems:

1. Microsystem- the interaction with one’s immediate environment (person to person). For a child, the family is the essential microsystem in order to learn how to live. For example, parent behaviors impact child behaviors, which in turn, influence parents.

2. Mesosystem- the relationship between two or more microsystems. It allows differentiating the behavior/attitude which person’s enact in different settings. For example, children in the school context and children at home.

3. Exosystem- constitutes the link and relationship between two or more contexts. For example, the parent’s relationship with their child’s teacher.

4. Macrosystem- is all of the systems as they work together and influence its values, beliefs and behaviors. For example, the Woman, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program significantly impacts the health care, nutrition, and others areas of child development, whereby it is helpful to enhance the mother and child relationship.

5. Chronosystems- refers to the dimensions that occur within of the systems through time. For example, the history of relationships in the macrosystem may impact how families act to different stressors (Swick & Williams, 2006).

All of these systems work together and influence the development of every family member. As previously discussed, the interactions in the microsystem (home) impact other ecological systems. Therefore, the family cultural values learned at home have significant meaning in the other systems in Bronfenbrenner’s model.
Familism

As previously discussed, familism is an influential factor among Latino families. Recently, familism has had a great deal of attention in research due to the psychological effects it has on family and individuals (Lugo & Contreras, 2003). Familism involves diverse areas that impact the family group, which in turn, increases the interest of different disciplines regarding the effects of familism. Familism as a cultural value in Latino families works on many different levels. Valenzuela and Dornbusch (1994) reported that familism is a theoretical construction that includes three different dimensions: structural, behavioral, and attitudinal. The structural dimension “marks the spatial and social boundaries within behaviors that occur and attitudes that acquire meaning” (p.18). The behavioral dimension “involves different degrees of attachment and affinity during contact with family members” (p.19). The attitudinal dimension “refers to the expressed identification with the interest and welfare of the family” (p.19). Based on this, familism is a multidimensional factor that deals with emotional and social aspects in family groups. In terms of this study, although there will not be a specific focus on each of the familism dimensions, all of aspects of familism that emerge from the data will be presented. Thus, family values at a broad level, including diverse dimensions of familism, will be explored among Puerto Rican families.

Familism at Home

At home, familism has an important role, since it is associated with specific changes in feelings and attitude. As a cultural value, familism is a tool that helps develop and shape family interaction (Gamble & Modry-Mandell, 2008). Familism is an element that promotes closeness among each family member, which also contributes to positive individual development. When effective interactions are maintained within the family, it also brings positive results in the attitudes that are present in the young. Marsiglia, Parsal and Kulis (2009) reported that familism protects Mexican adolescents from engaging in high risk behavior. In this way, adolescents living in an environment that instills familism are benefited through having a positive family relationship which helps to avoid family stress by protecting against deviant behavior. Ramirez, Crano, Quist, Burgoon, Alvaro and Granpre (2004) reported that among adolescents with high knowledge about drugs, familism contributed to avoiding the use of drugs. Their findings suggest that an association between familism and refraining from drug use is more emphasized in young people who are aware of the use and effect of drugs.

Puerto Rican families, in particular, learn to assume the responsibility of protecting their family to maintain family integrity (Canino & Canino, 1980). The family develops new roles within their extended family, having as priority, the welfare of each family member. All of these processes help establish and maintain a positive image of the family. Throughout the literature, the benefit of familism at home, specifically for Mexican adolescents, is evidenced, whereby these findings suggest the need to conduct studies among young children about this family cultural value.

Familism at School

In the educational setting, familism has played a significant role. In the schools familism is associated with the academic success of many Latino children and teenagers. Valenzuela and
Dornbusch (1994) found a positive relation with familism and the academic success of Mexican Americans students. This finding with Latino adolescents suggests that familism is a helpful element in order to gain success in the school context. Among Latino children, studies indicate that familism is also an effective factor in child education. Gamble and Modry (2008) suggested in their study with preschool children that Mexican mothers who adopt familism in their actions have children who demonstrate better performance at school. These findings revealed that when mothers aligned to this value their children develop positive outcomes in the classroom. Thus, the warmth, support and closeness in mother-child relationships (fostered by familism) represent a strong element to child academic achievement. Another important finding reported is that familism is a predictor of students being enrolled in higher education (Valenzuela & Dornbusch, 1994). Therefore, family ties are beneficial not only in school, but also in the decision of college enrollment or professional career.

Some studies have demonstrated that parental level of education is a significant factor in the academic success of children while others have found evidence to the contrary. Coleman (1988) found that parental education is not a sufficient element to foster the academic success in youth, but that the relation between parental education and family ties is an effective facilitator of school success. That is, the association between parental education and family bonds contributes significantly in the academic achievement of many adolescents. Therefore, family togetherness, promoted by familism, seems to be a strong component in academic success, whereby it becomes more important than the socio-economic status demonstrated by parents, in order to obtain school success.

Unlike most studies, which tend to focus on the positive relationship between family ties and individuals, some studies document negative results in this relationship. Portes (1998) claims that family bonds often could prevent the individual from developing freedom, in such cases, close family bonds would restrict behaviors and actions associated to her/his preferences. This attribution may lead the individual to frustration and affect her/his school performance. Certainly, further research related to this topic is needed in order to explore how familism, related to family ties, positively and/or negatively affect child performance at school. Exploring this family value in Puerto Rican families would allow the opportunity to understand, from mothers’ perspectives, how family ties affect child outcomes at school as well at home, which is the aim of the current study.

**Parenting styles/behaviors in Latino culture**

A parenting style is a characteristic that defines parents and has strong implications in the behavior of children. According to Darling and Steinberg (1993) a parenting style is a set of attitudes that parents transmit to their children, creating the emotional climate where the child develops him or herself. Parenting styles are significant components that contribute to the behavior that children present within and outside of their family context. In addition, a parenting style is one of the main elements that contribute to child development, and its’ diverse areas: physical, emotional and social. Considering all the potential contributions of parenting styles in the life of a child; it is important to emphasize where the parenting styles and practices, specifically in Latino parents, arise. In fact, it has been evidenced in many studies that the parenting style of Latino families engages values as the main element of their child-rearing practices. Harwood, Miller and Lucca Irizarry (1995) reported that parenting behaviors in Latino families are based on values which shape the behaviors that are performed by the individual.
That is, family values become the most significant tool that contributes to the parenting styles of Latino parents. In addition, family values foster positive child behavior at home, school and in the community. In one recent study with Latino parents and their children, it was reported that a positive familial relationship includes the promotion of family values; in turn, children internalize the family’s values and adopt behaviors consistent with those values (Gamble & Modry- Mandell, 2008). This finding provides evidence for the positive outcomes that family values have in the parent-child relationship; in addition, fostering these values in the family context contribute to children adopting a positive behavior pattern congruent with family beliefs. In summary, these results support the important relationship that exists between family values, parenting and behaviors presented in Latino children.

Within parenting styles and parenting practices, there are specific values that are recognized for having a greater influence in Latino families. Gamble and Modry-Mandell (2008) found that children of Mexican mothers, who promote familismo (familism), had better performance at preschool. This result revealed that the adoption of familism in parenting style provides effective outcomes not only in mother-child relationships, but also in a school setting. In addition to familism, there exist two other values that impact parenting style and parenting practices: simpatía (nice), which consists in being polite in social interactions, emphasizing positive behaviors (Griffith, Joe, Chatham & Simpson 1998); and respeto (respect) which refers to being responsible and obedient with adults (Arcia, Reyes, Vazquez, 2000). These family cultural values are recognized as contributing significantly in Latino family life. In addition, these family values are transmitted and reflected in the children, creating in them a trend of positive behavior. In terms of ethnic differences, some differences in the values adopted in parenting styles and practices have been found. Gonzalez–Ramos, Zayas and Cohen (1998) reported that Puerto Rican mothers living in United States emphasized respect, loyalty and obedience in their children, in comparison to European American mothers who promoted independence and autonomy in their offspring. These findings demonstrate that Puerto Rican mothers tend to be more collectivistic, while European American mothers tend to be more individualistic in their parenting style. Others findings with Puerto Rican mothers residing in Puerto Rico have revealed the promotion of socio-cultural values such as respect, obedience and generosity in their children (Lucca- Irrizary & Pacheco, 1989).

Academic Achievement among Latino children

Throughout the years education has always occupied an important place in the life of human beings, especially in children. The educational setting is the pathway whereby children acquire knowledge, attitudes and develop new skills of social integration (Anabalon, Carrasco, Diaz, Gallardo & Carcamo, 2008). The school is an institution that impacts the personal and social development of children. At the same time, the school represents an environment where children increase their social networks and learn the skills necessary to survive in it. School becomes a significant place where children develop skills and abilities, which become the tools of success in their lifetime. In order to make the educational process more enriching there exist some highlighted social systems factors that influence it. According to Anabalon, Carrasco, Diaz, Gallardo and Carcomo (2008) the Latino family, especially parents’ participation, constitute a fundamental part of children’s academic success. Academic achievement is facilitated through successful family and school relationships. Both of these contexts should work together, becoming responsible for the educational success of the children. Although both work together,
the family is the main facilitator of children’s academic achievement over the school (Anabalon, Carrasco, Diaz, Gallardo & Carcamo, 2008). At home, children acquire the first experiences that provide significant results at school. That is, interaction with parents influences a child’s development and the skills that are necessary for success in school. For example, a study with Latino children showed that in the learning process, parenting styles, socio-economic status and family structure affect children’s cognitive ability (Guevara, Lopez, Garcia, Delgado, Hermosillo & Rugerio, 2008). Following this, the family is a complex and diverse system that impacts the academic performance of children. Each action and behavior presented by the parents at home becomes an element responsible for the success or failure of children in school. Hence, the backgrounds of families help determine many of the achievements obtained by children in school. Academic success is an important element that is impacted by internal and external factors at home.

Family engagement in school not only provides positive results in attitudes and behaviors, but also influences other areas in child development. Parent’s participation at school influences children’s self-esteem and expectations about their academic future (Anabalon, Carrasco, Diaz, Gallardo & Carcamo, 2008). The active parent’s participation brings support and provides the development of new skills in children. In addition, parental support allows children to have a positive attitude about their future academic achievement. Parent’s participation at school is not only beneficial for the children, but there is also evidence of benefits received by the parents in this process. For example, Anabalon, Carrasco, Diaz, Gallardo and Carcamo (2008) found in their study with primary school children in Chile that the engagement of parents in schools allows them to obtain a better understanding of the learning process and promotes the parent-child relationship. Parent’s participation at school brings positive outcomes in children and their parents. Through this the family learns how to help their children in the classes and assignments, increasing school performance by the children. Moreover, parent’s participation at school also promotes the communication between each family member (Anabalon, Carrasco, Diaz, Gallardo and Carcamo, 2008), which benefits the family climate.

Throughout the years it has been evidenced that differences exist regarding the importance of education across ethnic groups. In studies with Puerto Ricans living in the United States and European American parents it was found that academic success was more significant to Puerto Rican parents than European American parents, who demonstrated lower rankings (Achhpal, Goldman & Rohner, 2007). This result suggests that Puerto Rican families may place more emphasis on academic achievement in their children in comparison with European American families. In addition, these differences represent how valuable education is for Latino parents, which promotes a better future in the life of their children.

**Method**

This section provides full descriptions of the methodology used in the current study. Qualitative methods were used where 10 Puerto Rican mothers were interviewed. Thus, participants, materials, procedure as well as data analysis are the main sub-topics of this section where a clear and precise description of how the study was conducted is provided.
Participants

The participants were Puerto Rican mothers living on the island. Gurabo, located in the east area of Puerto Rico, was the town selected for the sample. Ten women were interviewed, where the majority of the mothers were cohabiting (8) and two reported being married. Mothers who are in cohabitation (8) live with a man, but are not legally married; while the other ones are legally married (2). All participants identified as Puerto Rican and living in Gurabo. Six lived in an urban area, while 4 reported living in rural areas of the town. The women ranged in age from 23-40 years. Eight mothers reported to have their oldest child in second (4) and third grade (4); while two had children in first grade.

In terms of educational status, two mothers do not have high school degrees; two had high school diplomas, while half of these women (5) had two years of college. Only one participant reported having a master’s degree. Six mothers identified as homemakers, followed by 3 who were employed, and the remaining mother (1) reported attending school. The majority of the mothers were from middle class (9) and one reported being from low-socio-economic status.

Materials

The current study is based in a qualitative methodology, with an in-depth semi-structured interview (Appendix E). During the interview, a voice recorder was used in order to record all the responses of each mother. In addition, the researcher used a notebook to take some annotations during the interview.

Procedures

The researcher discussed the proposed study with the principal of Villa Marina School and obtained permission to recruit parents of children attending the school (Appendix A). The researcher also spoke with six teachers (first through third grade) and explained the purpose of the research, and teachers provided access to student’s notebooks to send recruitment letters home to mothers (Appendix B). Approximately 120 students in first, second and third grade received the letter to their parents. The letter described the purpose of the research and what participation would entail. In addition, this letter included the researcher’s phone number and specific days when the researcher was available at school in order for mothers to reach the researcher if they had any questions about the research and/or were interested in participating. The letter noted that the research participation was not related to the child’s school. Three mothers who were interested in finding out more about the study and possibly participating contacted the researcher through coming to the school and meeting with her. Another seven mothers were contacted via the phone by the researcher. The researcher asked the ten participants if they had any questions about the study, addressed any questions they had, briefly reminded the mothers about the voluntary nature of the study, and the nature of her participation in the study. After all questions were addressed and consent was obtained (Appendix C), a demographic sheet (Appendix D) with questions related to age, gender, ethnicity, child age and family structure was completed by every research participant. When the consent form and demographic sheet were completed, the researcher conducted the interview. Each interview was conducted separately with each mother. Nine of the interviews took place in a private room at the school; while one was conducted at the family’s home. The researcher conducted the interview in Spanish as this is the main language of the target population.
At the conclusion of all the interviews, every research participant received a Wal-Mart gift card valued at $10.00 as a gift for their participation in the study.

Data Analysis

This study employs a qualitative methodology, where the researcher used two approaches in order to analyze the participant’s responses. As Braun and Clarke (2006) states, a thematic analysis is a method based in identifying patterns in relation to the data collected. It also is an important method that captures the meaning and experiences of a subject within society. In order to generate codes in the data, the researcher used the research questions that guided the study (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thus, the first step in data analysis, after reading every transcript, was the generation of codes. The coding process also included a constant comparative analysis method, which arises from a grounded theory approach. Constant comparative analysis is a tool that seeks to identify constant relationships or patterns within qualitative data (Hewitt, 2001). The coding included notes and use of highlighters to identify codes in the data. For example, a participant stated that her children learn values “according to the pattern of their parents and how I treat everyone else”. Another participant claimed “with the example of the parents and when I talk to them”. After the researcher read these statements, she wrote as a code “values are what children see from their parents”. The researcher did a comparison between interviews within the sample, where it was found that other participants had the same experience. Thus, in this step the constant comparison approach was used. Then, a coding scheme chart was created where all the codes which arose in the analysis were listed. It also included a code description as well as relevant quotes of participants. With the coding scheme chart, the researcher examined all the possible connections between the codes to develop the themes that organized the data. For example: the theme that arose from the last initial codes was “Parents as models to instill values”. A review of the themes was then conducted in order to make sure that data analysis presents accuracy and coherence. Also, it is important to highlight that the transcription, coding process, as well as the development of themes was conducted in the Spanish language. After the analysis of data was completed, all of the codes and themes were translated into the English language. Additionally, all the quotes of research participants are presented in the original Spanish, as well as translated to the English language. The presentation of both language versions was done to help convey the original meaning of the participant’s responses. The participant’s quote translation was conducted by the researcher of this study, one member of the thesis committee and a third person external to the research project. All the individuals involved in the translation of the quotes were bilingual and descendants from Puerto Rico. The researcher chose Puerto Ricans since the Spanish language has idiomatical expressions in diverse Latin countries, to help avoid loss of meaning through translation.

Findings

The Puerto Rican mothers interviewed shared multiple experiences about their family values. Specifically, they discussed the role that family values such as familism plays in the lives of their family and children. Thus, in the analyses of these data, the following major themes emerged: (1) mother’s perceptions of family values; (2) family cultural values promoted by Puerto Rican mothers; (3) parents as models to instill family values; and (4) contribution of teachers to child’s family values. Subthemes of these main themes were also found and are discussed. In this section, is important to highlight that participant's quotes have been translated from Spanish to
English with the emphasis on preserving meaning from one language to another and not in capturing grammatically correct English.

Mother’s perceptions of family values

One primary theme that emerged from the data analysis was regarding insight that Puerto Rican mothers have about cultural values. Each one of the participants expressed and described the roots as well as the significance of their family cultural values. Two main subtopics arose from this theme and are discussed below.

Family values are what my parents taught me at home

When the researcher inquired about the meaning of family values, seven participants asserted family cultural values were inculcated to them from their parents. As an example, one of them reported that the learning of family values is as a chain, where she has to instill what she learned as a child. Following is Ana’s experience:

Los valores familiares es las creencias y actitudes que los padres de uno y la familia nos inculcan… y según lo que nos inculcan desde pequeños… pues así uno enseñarlos y así el niño se va encaminando en la vida.

(Family values are beliefs and attitudes that our parents and family instill in us… and accordingly what they instilled in us since childhood… I teach them and; this is how the child determines his path in life).

Another participant stated that beyond learning family values from her parents, she noted that it is not only the responsibility of her as a mother, but also that of her partner. Rose stated:

Eso viene desde lo que me enseñaron mis padres, para yo poder enseñarles a mis hijos de parte mía y de mi compañero… porque los dos somos quienes tenemos que enseñarles los valores a los niños.

(That comes from what my parents taught to me, so I, as well as my partner, can teach my children… because both of us are the ones who have to teach such values to the children).

Here, Nery shares that the family values are experiences and learning that contribute to increase family togetherness:

Es lo que nos forma… son todas las vivencias y todo lo que nuestra familia nos enseña y nuestros padres…para educarnos y forjarnos a hacer una mejor familia. Nos une más lo que nuestros padres nos enseñan…. pues así nosotros se lo enseñamos a nuestros hijos y yo espero que mi hijo siga así hasta que tenga sus hijos.

(It is what shapes us… all of our experiences, all of what our family and our parents have taught us… to educate ourselves and to help us build a better family. We are more united by what our parents teach us… so that we will teach our children and I hope my son continues to pass it on when he has children of his own).

For Puerto Rican mothers, family values are those beliefs that they adopted from their own parents in order to teach them to their children. Additionally, they reported that these values pass from generation to generation, which contributes to positive family relationships.
Family values heading for a better future

Seven mothers shared that family values are the correct pathway to impel their children to succeed in life. Consequently, mothers reported that education is a significant family cultural value since they wish for their children a better future. Christine was a participant that reported her own experience, but from a different perspective, since she grew up with a mother with a psychiatric diagnosis. Despite this, she still believes that family values prepare the child for a better future:

Para mí fue diferente. Yo los aprendí sola [los valores]….mi mamá tenía esquizofrenia y mi papa trabajaba. Ahora yo por lo menos estoy aprendiendo con mi esposo…en el camino… y para mí los valores es encaminar a los hijos para algo bueno en su futuro. También los enseño para que mi hija sea algo más de lo que yo fui. Hasta ahora, gracias a Dios, no me quejo porque la nena va bien…en buen camino. A la nena se le habla que tiene que ser responsable, que tiene que terminar su escuela y tiene que ir a la universidad. Definitivamente veo los valores muy importantes, yo no quiero que mi hija ni pase ni sea lo que yo fui, por que por lo menos yo no terminé ni mi cuarto año ni nada, y quiero que la nena sí termine. Sé que los valores familiares la ayudaran en todo ese proceso.

(My case was different. I learned [the family values] alone…my mother had schizophrenia and my father worked. Now, I’m learning it with my husband... in the path… and for me the values are to raise our children to become something better in the future. I also teach them because I want my daughter to be so much more than what I was. Until now, thanks to God, I do not have complaints; because the girl is doing well… she is heading in a good direction. We talk to the girl about the need of being responsible; she has to finish school… she has to go to college. I definitely see values as very important. I do not want my child to go through what I had to undergo, because I did not finish high school or anything and I want my girl to finish [high school and attend the university]. I know family values will help her in this process).

Similarly, Carla noted that family values are the key to their child obtaining a better future. She also shared that through values the child not only has benefits in his personal development, but also in his social interaction:

Importantísimos [los valores familiares ] para que sea en el futuro un niño bueno y educado…responsable con sí mismo y con los demás; que se crie para bien y para que cumpla todo lo que se proponga ahora como niño y en un futuro… para mí son muy importante porque de eso depende el futuro de él.

(It is the most important [the family values] in order for him to be a good and educated boy in the future…responsible with himself and with others; he needs a good upbringing so that he can achieve all that he set himself out to do… it all begins right now as a young boy…. it is very important to me because his future depends on this).

Nery, one of the two married mothers in this study, revealed that family values are primary in a child’s life. She also described the consequences when a child does not have family values instilled in them:

Yo creo que eso es lo que los forja a ser un mejor individuo en el mañana… a ser una mejor persona, a encaminarse. Los valores familiares es lo primordial, porque sin eso el individuo no es nadie, se descarrila y uno los enseña [los valores] porque eso es lo que hace en el mañana un hombre hecho y derecho.
(I believe that it is [family values] what forge them to be a better individual tomorrow…to be a better person, to be on track. Family values are fundamental, because without them the individual is nothing, gets off track and, one teaches them [family values] because that is what helps him to become a well-made man).

Thus, the findings illustrate how fundamental family values are for Puerto Rican mothers. The results suggest that mothers instill the family values that their parents imparted in them, and that the family values are also elements that contribute in the present and future of their children. In addition, the participants recognized family values as an element that improves closeness and relationships in the family (microsystem) as well as social relationships out side of the family (e.g., mesosystem).

**Family Cultural Values promoted by Puerto Rican mothers**

In this second theme, mothers discussed the three dominant family values promoted by them: familism, respect and honesty. Participants described the significant role that these family values have for them as well as for their child’s education.

**Familism**

The first sub-theme, familism, was discussed by all the participants. As a core value that emphasizes family togetherness in Latino families, the mothers expressed the importance of family relationships in their child’s life. Additionally, Puerto Rican mothers reported the significance between family relationships/goals versus children’s education. Eight participants reported that for them family relationships/goals has equal priority with children’s education, while one indicated that the family is always first for her. The remaining mother commented that her child’s education is first before family relationships/goals.

**Importance of family togetherness**

In familism emphasis is placed on the family as a unit. The participants discussed the significance of family togetherness for their children as well as for themselves. In addition, the mothers expressed how family togetherness contributes to the academic area of their children. Thus, Lisa noted that family togetherness is fundamental for her family well-being, specifically for her child’s development:

Para mí la unión familiar es lo principal de una familia para que sea sana y que pueda seguir hacia delante. Yo trato de que estemos siempre juntos… para todo; vamos a comer todos juntos y siempre hay un espacio para nosotros hablar como familia donde contamos que nos paso en nuestros respectivos trabajos y en la escuela. Nosotros nos escuchamos, lo cual es bien importante para la salud mental de mi hijo y de nosotros como familia. También contribuye a que mi hijo sea un niño feliz y para que también sea un niño bien dispuesto y seguro de sí mismo. Nosotros, aquí en la casa, le enseñamos que él puede salir a fuera de este mundo y ser lo que él quiera ser porque le damos la seguridad como familia y como apoyo de él.

(For me, family togetherness is the main thing to be a healthy family and we can continue moving forward. I try to keep always the family together… for everything; we eat together
and there is always a space to talk as a family where we talk about what happened at our work and at school. We listen to each other, which is very important for the mental health of my son and us as a family. Also, it contributes to my son to be a happy boy as well as prepared and confident with himself. We, here at the home, teach him that he can go out into the world and be what he wants to be in the future, because we give him the safety as a family and support him.

Another participant, Nery, expressed the significance to demonstrate family togetherness nowadays to her child as well as relationships between family togetherness and child performance at school:

> Es lo más importante [unidad familiar] porque la familia debe ser unida y si yo quiero que crezca en un nucleó familiar sano y que tenga en su futuro una familia sana, pues él tiene que verlo en mi familia primero. Mi hijo tiene que ver esa relación unida y familiar en mi hogar. La estabilidad que tiene ahora lo ayuda a sentirse más seguro porque si no hubiese unión familiar el nene no me va a querer estudiar, se va a frustrar...se va a distraer y perderá el enfoque en su educación. (Family togetherness) it is the most important because the family must be close and if I want him to grow up in a healthy nuclear family and have a healthy family in the future, he has to see this in my family first. My son has to see the close family relationships in my home. The stability that my son has helps him to feel confident, because if there is not family togetherness my son would not want to study, he would feel frustrated....he would be distracted and would lose focus on his education).

On the other hand, Valery emphasized the specific activities that have been effective to improve her family togetherness, which has also contributed positively to her child’s development:

> Yo trato casi siempre de por lo menos dos horas /tres horas diarias de tratar de compartir todo en la casa...viendo T.V. a movie or something for him familiarize [share with the family] and until now it works. We are always united as a family; it is very important to have family support and feel that one is there when they need it.

Clara, who practices cohabitation, expressed the importance and role that her child has in their family context. She pointed out that effective communication between family members provide not only positive outcomes in family relationships, but also in her child’s education:

> La familia siempre debe estar unida, en las buenas y en las malas... en los problemas en el hogar y siempre. Nosotros siempre hemos estado unidos, y cualquier decisión que se toma, lo incluimos a él. Nosotros, todos en familia, nos sentamos, hablamos y compartimos......todo esto le da confianza al niño y si tengo confianza en mamá y en el hogar, pues voy a tener esta confianza también en lo académico...y esa confianza en el salón la demostraré también con la maestra y así el también se siente seguro con sí mismo. (The family must always be close, in good and bad things...with problems at home and always. We have always been united, and any decision that we make we include him. We, all in family, sit, talk and share...all of this gives confidence to the child and if I have confidence in mom and at home, I will also have confidence in the academic area... and
[speaking from the perspective of child] that confidence in the classroom I will also demonstrate with the teacher and thus [speaking as the mother], he will also have confidence in himself).

These results suggest that for Puerto Rican mothers family togetherness is the essential element for a child’s academic and personal development. The participants also reported that demonstrating family closeness in their homes is a predictor that their child will have a healthy family in the future.

Family relationships/goals versus child’s education

Familism is also characterized as a preference and commitment to the family group no matter the circumstances. Hence, all the Puerto Rican mothers discussed their commitment and preferences between family relationships/goals versus children’s education. Lisa was one participant who reported that her family relationships/goals and her child’s education have equal priority to her. She noted that both are necessary and influence her child’s life:

Para mi [familia y la educación] tienen igual importancia porque los asuntos académicos son importantes y las relaciones de nosotros como familia son importante. No se le puede dar mucha prioridad a las relaciones familiares y descuidar lo académico y ni se puede dar mucha prioridad a lo académico y descuidar lo familiar, porque una cosa va de la mano de la otra y ambas influyen en la salud mental de mi hijo y confianza que él pueda tener. Todo esto es como una cadena.

([Family and child’s academics] has the same importance because the academic matters are important and relationships [between all] of us, as family are important. We cannot give much priority to the family relationships and be neglecting of academics and nor can we give much priority to academics and neglect family, because one thing goes hand in hand with the other and both influence the mental health of my child and confidence that he might have. All of this is like a chain).

Consequently, Ana, with two young children, indicated that her family relationships and child’s education has the same priority, because from them her children learn to follow the right path in life:

Yo entiendo que debería dársesele importancia a las dos, no tener una prioridad, sino a la par. Para mí las dos cosas es lo mismo, la familia y la escuela porque de ahí es que ellos aprenden a desenvolverse en la vida.

(I understand that [it] must be both, we must not have one priority, but [both] at the same time. For me, the two things are the same, the family and the school, because they provide an environment for my children to cope with life).

In contrast to the prior participants, Valery stated that from her perspective, her child’s education comes first in her life. She also described that her point of view is because of her child’s future:

Para mí la educación del nene es primero, porque yo entiendo que él es el que va subiendo. Él es la generación nueva y que él tiene que ser alguien…algo que él tenga que decir. Me gusta más…sacar tiempo y estudiar con él que salir o resolver algún problema.

(For me, the education of my boy is first, because I understand that he is who is moving up. He is the new generation and he has to be someone…something that he has to say. I like… to take more time and study with him that go out or resolve some problem).
Through these participants’ quotes it is evidenced how in a child’s micro system, family relationships and child’s education have almost the same level of significance for these mothers. That it, the majority of Puerto Rican mothers reported that both elements work together for the wellbeing of their children; and that they do not place either one as a priority over the other.

**Respect**

All participants highlighted the fostering of other family values in their homes such as respect. They noted that respect is another significant value that influences their parenting practices as well as their child’s development. Thus, one of the participants, Ana, expressed in the following paragraph why she teaches the value of respect to her children as well as to which specific people her children have to demonstrate this value:

> El respeto es un valor importante porque yo entiendo que es lo mejor que los niños pueden tener, porque ¿si no respeta a las personas como van hacer las cosas y llegar a ser alguien en la vida? Siempre le digo “respeten a la maestras y a las personas que estén alrededor suyo”. Por lo menos, yo siempre les estoy hablando de eso a las dos niñas. (Respect is an important value because I understand that it is the best that children can have, because if they do not respect people how they will do the things and be someone in life? I always say “respect teachers and people around you”. At least, I’m always talking about this with my two children).

Another participant, Carla, reported that respect is a value that her children have to demonstrate to all kinds of people, but it has to come first from her children in order that they receive the same treatment:

> Yo les digo a mis hijos que tiene que respetar a los demás y a las personas mayores. Eso es muy importante. Ellos tienen que respetar primero para que los respeten. (I say to my children that they have to respect other people and elderly people. That is important. They have to respect first so others respect them).

Furthermore, Nery expressed that respect is part of her family group and she also shared her feelings about being disrespectful with someone:

> El respeto a los padres, a los adultos y a las demás personas se enfatiza mucho en casa. En casa… nos respetamos el uno con el otro como familia y el ser irrespetuoso con nosotros u otras personas es algo que no se enseña o tolera en nuestro hogar. (Respect towards parents, to adults and other people is emphasized a lot at home. In my home… we respect each other as a family and being disrespectful with us or with other people is something that is not taught or tolerated in our home).

Thus, respect seems to be a family value practiced every day for Puerto Rican mothers, which mothers emphasized at home as well as in the school context. They also visualize this value as a contributor to a successful future for their children.

**Honesty**

Several mothers shared the role that honesty, as a family value, has in the rearing of their children. They expressed the positive and negative consequences of teaching this value to their children. Lisa discusses below that honesty is expressed in our feelings, which also contributes to positive mother-child relationships:
Nosotros tenemos como otros valores la honestidad… es decir lo que sentimos. Por lo menos, al niño le enseñamos siempre a decir la verdad. Yo le digo “no importa lo que sea, lo más malo, siempre di la verdad, que si tú dices la verdad yo soy tu defensora y te protegeré” porque a mí no me gustan las personas que mienten. (We have as other values honesty…say what we feel. At least, we have always taught the child to tell the truth, I say “it does not matter what it is, even the worst thing, you [should] always tell the truth because if you tell the truth I will be your advocate and I will protect you” because I do not like people who lie).

Moreover, Ana reported the negative results of not being honest as well as reasons of why she promotes this value in her child:

La honestidad es un valor que tenemos como familia. Le explico a mi hijo, “tú no puedes mentir, porque si mientes puede empeorar el problema…siempre di la verdad”. El ser honesto es algo que le enseñamos para evitar problemas y porque quiero que continúe demostrando la honestidad a lo largo de su vida. (Honesty is a value we have as a family. I explain to my child “you cannot lie, because if you lie the problem can worsen…you should always tell the truth”. Being honest is something that we teach him to avoid problems and because I want him to continue demonstrating honesty throughout his life).

Thus, these findings suggest that honesty is another significant family value for Puerto Rican mothers with the intent of improving children’s development and future.

**Parents as models to instill family values**

All the participants shared how they transmit family values to their young children. Participants' discussion also included the family cultural value of familism, in some of their stories. Valery, illustrated in the following paragraph how she instills family values, specifically one regarding family togetherness to their children:

Lo que tú le das a demostrar a tu hijo y le enseñas a tú niño. Mi hijo también aprende los valores con la forma de cómo nosotros nos tratamos en casa, de cómo se familiariza uno con las demás personas y a aparte de que yo le hablo a cada rato sobre las cosas buenas y malas. También le hablo y demuestro en mi hogar sobre la importancia de mantener la unidad familiar… pues es un valor importante para mí y siempre tenemos que enfatizar nuestros lazos familiares como lo vital en nuestro hogar. (It is what you demonstrate to and teach to your child. My son also learn values according to the way we treat each other at our home, how we familiarize with other people and besides that, I talk to him, often, about the good and bad things. Also, I talk and demonstrate the importance of keeping the family togetherness in the home…. It is an important value for me and we have always emphasized our family ties as vital in our home).

Another participant, Clara, expressed in details how she teaches family values to her young child in the first grade:

Tú comienzas a inculcarlos [los valores] desde que [el niño] en la barriga…y luego cuando nacen continuas hablándole, explicándole y diciéndole como se tiene que comportar, que creencias debe de tener, que no tener, que hacer y no hacer. Es a través...
del modelo del hogar...del modelo del padre y de la madre (o con quien este criándose) que va aprender los valores familiares.

(You begin to instill [the family values] since [the child] is in the belly…and then, when he is born you continue talking, explaining and saying how they have to behave, what beliefs they must have, what beliefs they do not need to have, what to do and what not to do. It is through the example provided at home… the example of the father and mother (or the person raising the child) they learn family values).

Similarly, Lisa revealed the parent’s role to instill cultural values, where she also highlights the teaching of family closeness as another important family value:

Los aprende al ver como uno se comporta y él pues adopta eso mismos [valores], porque nosotros somos el ejemplo de él y por lo menos de mi esposo él ha adoptado unos valores y míos también. Nosotros somos una familia muy unida y yo estoy criando a mi hijo para que siempre nos vea como lo primordial en su vida… en todo momento. Es importante para mí que él tenga ese valor hacia la familia…para que siga esa línea de nosotros como familia…. donde él va aprendiendo e imitando a uno como padre.

(He learns [the family values] when he sees how one behaves and he adopts those ones [family values], because we are his example and at least, he has adopted values from my husband and me. We are a very close family and I am raising my son to always see us as paramount in his life…at the time. It is important that he has that worth for the family…he follows that line of our family …where he is learning and imitating one as a parent).

All the mothers reported that the family context is serving as the first model to instill family cultural values. Their stories illustrate that through their examples, interaction and communication; Puerto Rican children learn the main family values practiced by their parents.

**Contribution of teachers to children’s family values**

In the development of children’s family values, school context has a significant role. Hence, Puerto Rican mothers discussed the function that teachers play in the fostering of a child’s family values. Valery was one of the participants that stressed the benefits that teachers provide to her child. She also noted that teacher’s contribution to a child’s family values is not only the responsibility of teachers, but also of her as a parent:

Hasta el momento, las dos maestras que ha tenido, han fortalecido bastante [los valores] porque son bien pro- estudiante y le han dado el apoyo y el respaldo para seguir por la misma línea que en casa. Aunque eso también depende de la maestra y de los padres, pero hasta el momento las maestras que me han tocado con el nene hacen que hasta uno se involucren en actividades y todo y tú te sientes parte del grupo. Esto ayuda también a mejorar nuestra relación familiar.

(Until this moment, the two teachers [that my child] has had, have strengthened [the family values] enough because they are very pro-student and they have given him support and backing to continue, the same line as at home. Although that also depends on teacher and parents, but so far, the teachers that my child has had, they make [sure] that one [mothers] gets involved in activities and everything and you feel part of the group. It also helps to improve our family relationships).
Nery, one of the married mothers, provides in the following paragraph, a specific example of how a teacher has influenced her child’s family values. She also pointed out the specific value that the teacher promoted in her son:

A mi hijo le han tocado maestras excelentes, por lo menos en esta escuela le han inculcado muchas cosas buenas. Su maestra de primer grado fue muy buena. Ella me lo ayudó bastante en el desarrollo de sus valores. La maestra de primero le enfatizaba más en la conducta y en el respeto. A veces la maestra veía que él se enfogonaba cuando yo le decía algo y ella le decía “no, tú tienes que respetar a mamá, eso no se hace” y le enfatizaba mucho en eso…en el respeto y en ayudar a los demás.

(My child has had excellent teachers; at least in this school they have instilled many good things. My child’s first grade teacher was very good. She helped him a lot in the development of his values. His first grade teacher emphasized more in good behavior and respect. Sometimes the teachers saw him get mad when I said something to him and she said to him “No, you have to respect your mom, do not do that” and she emphasized a lot in that…to respect and to help others).

Another participant, Lisa, explained that the teacher helps to restate the family values that parents instill as well as teach new ones. This mother also reported that classmates at school contribute to a child’s family values in positive and negative ways:

Los maestros han ayudado a que él tenga otros valores familiares… la educación y la disciplina que hay en el salón…eso lo ha ayudado a él tener otra perspectiva de lo que son los valores porque yo le enseño aquí [en el hogar] unos valores pero en la escuela se reafirman los que yo le enseño, más le enseñan otros…más lo que él adopta de otros compañeros… buenos y malos, porque hay algunos [valores] que uno tiene que corregir como padre.

(The teachers have helped him to have other family values… education and discipline in classroom….that has helped him to have another perspective about what are the values because I teach him here [at home], but in school they are reaffirming the values I have taught him plus they teach him others…plus those he adopts from other peers…good ones and bad ones, because there are some [values] one has to correct as a parent).

Participants consider that teachers are crucial in the promotion of family values. Through behaviors and classroom rules, teachers help parents to reassert and expand family cultural values, which also contribute to family relationships.

Overall, all these findings support the vital importance that family values hold in Puerto Rican families. Hence, familism seems to be a determining factor in the success of young children’s academic achievement. The findings also suggest that the significance of family values in children is based in the positive examples and relationships that parents provide for their child.

**Discussion**

In this qualitative study, the researcher sought to examine the characteristics of family values such as familism among Puerto Rican families living on the island and its implications in the educational setting among young children. The present study was guided by Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological framework, which contributed to the understanding of the relationships between two settings: home and school. The prominent findings are consistent with
previous research, which evidenced the significant role that family cultural values play in Puerto Rican families.

A previous study with Puerto Rican families living in New York reported that familism is a family value retained by Puerto Ricans families (Rogler and Cooney, 1984). All the participants clearly stated that familism is still an important value for them. For Puerto Rican families living on the island, familism is a fundamental value practiced within their microsystem where the positive outcomes of this value are also reflected in the mesosystem (child’s education). Some participants reported that familism provides confidence, stability and healthy development in their child’s life, which also contributes to their academic achievement. Clara, one of the participants, pointed out that familism promotes confidence in her child’s interaction at home and school. This finding is consistent with previous research with Puerto Rican families living in New York, where it was found that familism has influence on the individual behavior present within and outside of the family context (Zayas and Palleja, 1988). Furthermore, the results indicated that Puerto Rican mothers affirmed that they instill familism as a predictor of success in their child’s academic achievement. Gamble and Modry (2008) found that Mexican mothers who promote familism in their pre-school children reported their children to have better performance at school. Valenzuela and Dornbush (1994) indicated that familism has a positive relation with academic success of Mexican American adolescents. From Bronfenbrenner’s theoretical perspective, the practice of cultural values, such as familism, is an empowering source to provide positive effects in the macrosystem of the family group. Thus, the findings that Puerto Rican mother’s state that familism is significantly associated with child’s success in school is consistent with previous research with other Latino families not living on the Island of Puerto Rico.

Among Puerto Rican families living in New York, familism is also a sense of mutual obligation to help and provide priority to family relationships without regards to circumstances (Rogler & Clooney, 1984). However, the findings for the current study provided a shift in the definition of familism for Puerto Rican families living on the island. Thus, findings indicated that, in regards to family relationships/goals and child education; most of the Puerto Rican mothers (8) are inclined to provide equal importance to both. Mothers reported that family relationships and child education have the same significance in their life since both work together to foster their child’s wellbeing. Only one participant reported having family relationships/goals as a higher priority in her life over education for her child, which provided another vision of familism among Puerto Rican families. Thus, at least for this sample of mothers, family relationships do not have an exclusive priority, although family relationships can have the same importance as child’s education, as was the case for the majority of mothers in this study.

The family cultural value of “respect” was promoted by Puerto Rican mothers in this study. The value of “respect” seemed be very significant to all participants. They see adopting respect not only a positive predictor of family relationships, but also in social relationships and in the school context. This finding is consistent with one study conducted with Puerto Rican families living on the island where the authors found that respect as a cultural value was promoted in families (Lucca-Irrizary & Pacheco, 1989). A study with Puerto Rican families living in New York also evidenced the promotion of respect (Gonzalez–Ramos, Zayas & Cohen, 1998). Therefore, the importance of this value is one recognized in both Puerto Ricans living on the island and those living in the mainland United States. Furthermore, Latino literature also evidence simpatía (nice) as another family value instilled by Latino parents (Griffith, Joe,
Chatham & Simpson, 1998). However, this value did not emerge in the findings of this study, but the researcher found honestidad (honesty) as another new family value promoted in Puerto Rican families. In Puerto Rican mothers honesty was noted as a family value that contributes positively to family relationship and future of childrens' lives. Thus, familismo (familism), respeto (respect) and honestidad (honesty) are the three family values promoted by Puerto Rican mothers living on the island.

Puerto Rican mothers also discussed how they instill family values to their children. All the participants were consistent in their responses stating that children learn family values from parent models. Through parents’ interaction and communication with their children they learn the significance of family values such as familism. Mothers also stated that they practice family closeness and togetherness as a value so that their children retain and carry these values in their lives. These findings are consistent with previous research which found that parenting behaviors in Latino families are based on values which shape individual behavior (Harwood, Miller and Lucca Irizarry, 1995). Thus, Puerto Rican mothers manifest family values through their parenting, which contribute to their behaviors and also influence the development of their children.

All participants also recognized the important function that the school context plays in child family values. They perceived the teachers as a meaningful component in the development and strengthening of family values. Some participants were more specific and stated that teachers contribute by promoting respect in their children and in them as parents, as well as encouraging family togetherness through different school activities. This finding is consistent with results from a study with primary school children in Chile where they found that the engagement of parents in school promotes parent-child relationships (Anabalon, Carrasco, Diaz, Gallardo and Carcamo, 2008). Mothers also described teachers as helping to reaffirm the family values that are taught at home for parents (exosystem); while it also benefits the microsystem (parent-child relationship). Thus, the mesosystem is working to improve and keep strong families. Therefore, for Puerto Rican mothers’ the school context not only contributes to the instilling of family values among young children, but also to positive family interaction.

Limitations and suggestions for future research

Although this study provides a unique contribution to family studies research with Puerto Rican mothers living on the island, some limitations are noted. First, bias may be present in the recruitment of participants, since the school from which participants were drawn was previously known by the researcher. Despite this potential for bias, some researchers state that in recruiting samples for qualitative research, one could choose places that facilitate the access to research participants meeting the criteria to participate (Daly, 2007). Second, the sample size was only 10 participants living in the east area of Puerto Rico, which avoids the broader experience across the island. However, in qualitative research a small number of people are acceptable in order to understand the depth of the phenomenon (Esterberg, 2002). Thus, the small sample of this study was adequate and achieved the aim to provide specific details about familism in Puerto Rico.

Future work in this area could address familism from a father’s perspective in order to learn the dynamics of father-child relationships and child education. In addition, young children and teacher perspectives could be included. In this study, all participants were born in Puerto Rico. Thereby, a similar study could also include data from Puerto Ricans living in the mainland.
Future research should continue to address this topic to extend its cultural relevance in Latino families.

In sum, despite these limitations, the study reported significant information about family values, specifically familism, which may prove useful to practitioners and educators working with Puerto Rican families. Professionals should note the specific roles that familism plays in child education and its influences on parenting. Puerto Rican families are the second largest Latino group in United States (Census Bureau, 2000). Thereby, to promote positive outcomes in family relationships and child development, professional study of familism among Puerto Rican families is imperative to help foster positive outcomes. Understanding the important role of familism could prove useful for therapists and educators in developing culturally appropriate approaches and treatments to intervene with Puerto Rican families. The study is also an important contribution to the current lack of literature that exists about familism in Puerto Rican families living on the island. Hence, this study is one of the first to examine familism and its implication in young children’s academic achievement.
References

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Appendix A: Letter of the school principal

May 26, 2010.

To: Miami University
Ohio, USA

Greetings!

I authorize the student Arelis V. Vellón Fernández, who is part of the program “Family and Child Studies” of the Miami University in Ohio, to develop the investigation “Familism in Puerto Rican Families” in our school, Villa Marina, during the month of August 2010.

I am committed to help this student to have an excellent experience, for the success of her investigation. If you have any question, feel free to contact me at (787) 737-4344.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
Mrs. María del C. Fernández
School Principal
Villa Marina School
Bahía Oeste St. C-2
Urb. Villa Marina
Gurabo, PR
Appendix B: Mother’s letter

MIAMI UNIVERSITY IN OHIO
Family and Child Studies Program

Dear: _________________________

I’m Arelis V. Vellón Fernández. I’m currently a graduate student in Family and Child Studies at Miami University in Ohio. As a part of my graduate studies, I am conducting a research project. I have selected Villa Marina School as a setting to select my research participants, where the principal of school allow me to use the school as a community resource to recruit the samples as well as to conduct the interview in the school context. This letter not proceeds from the teacher or your child’s school. I’m sending to you this letter through of school teacher as main contact to invitation you to this study, but your participation and this study in overall is not related to your child’s school in any way. Also, your participation in this study will not affect their child’s school work and any information collected will not be sharing with teachers or other people at the school.

My thesis topic is about family values in Puerto Rican families and its implication at school. My research will focus on interviewing married or cohabiting women with their oldest child at first to third grade at elementary school. I’m inviting you to be a participant in this research study, which will consist of participating in a one-on-one interview with me (taking approximately 45 min to one hour) and answering some questions related to your child your mother/child relationship, and family values.

The interview may be conducted at school (private room) or in your home. You will choose in what place you feel more comfortable. I will be available at school during the following day’s ___________, if you have any questions or you can also reach me at (787) 460-1551 or vellonav@muohio.edu. All the information you provide will be confidential. At the time of transcription your interview will receive a code number that will serve as interview’s identification in all the research process. Therefore, your name will be separate from your transcribed interview. Only the principal investigator will have access to information about inking code numbers to participant’s names. Although there are not any direct benefits to you expected from your participation, an overall potential benefit of this study that is expected will be providing a broader understanding about how the family values contribute in child development at school as well at home, which may prove useful for educators, researchers, and others interested in families. If you are interested in participating, please complete the information below and return the sheet to the classroom with your child by the __________.

Please understand that the researcher that expected risks is minimal. It is important to highlight that your participation in this research is voluntary and you can withdraw at any time without any penalty. At the end of the interview, every participant will receive a Wal-Mart gift card valued in $10.00 for participants in the study. I really appreciate your time and consideration. Please contact me if you have any questions (787-460-1551).

If you have any questions you can also contact my advisor:
Dr. Kevin Bush

Also, for questions concerning your rights as a research participant you may contact:
Office of Advancement of Research and
RESEARCH STUDY
Information to contact participants

________________________________                             _____________________________
Child’s name                                                  Grade
________________________________
Name of mother                                                Telephone

________________________________________________________
Days and hours to contact you                                  Date
Programa de Estudios de la Familia y el Niño(a)

Carta para las Madres

Estimada: ____________________

Mi nombre es Arelis V. Vellón Fernández y soy estudiante de maestría en el Programa de Estudios de la Familia y el Niño (a) en Miami University en Ohio. Como parte de mis estudios graduados, estoy llevando a cabo un proyecto de investigación y he seleccionado la escuela Villa Marina como lugar para seleccionar mis participantes, donde la directora de la escuela me ha permitido usar la escuela como un recurso comunitario para reclutar mis participantes y llevar a cabo las entrevistas. Esta carta no precede de la maestra ni de la escuela de su hijo(a) sino que es enviada (por mí) a través de la maestra de su niño(a) como principal contacto para hacerle a usted la invitación para participar en este estudio. Su participación tampoco está relacionada a la escuela o ejecución de su hijo. Además, toda la información recopilada no será compartida con maestros(as) u otro personal de la escuela.

El tema de tesis explora los valores familiares en familias puertorriqueñas y sus implicaciones en el escenario educativo. Mi investigación está dirigida a entrevistar mujeres cohabitando o casadas con su hijo(a) mayor entre primero, segundo y tercer grado. Por medio de esta carta, estoy invitando a usted a participar en esta investigación, la cual consiste en su participación en una entrevista individual conmigo. Durante la entrevista usted contestará algunas preguntas sobre su relación con su hijo(a) y valores familiares.

La entrevista podría llevarse a cabo en la escuela (en un salón privado) o en su hogar. Usted escogerá cuál lugar es más conveniente o cómodo para usted. Durante ________________ estaré en la escuela por si usted tiene alguna pregunta sobre su participación en la investigación. También puede contactarme al (787) 460-1551 o escribirme a vellonav@muohio.edu. Toda la información que usted provea será confidencial. Al momento de transcribir, su entrevista recibirá un número de código, el cual servirá para identificar su entrevista en todo el proceso de la investigación. Por lo tanto, su nombre estará separado de la transcripción de su entrevista. Solo el investigador principal tendrá acceso a la identificación de su nombre y número de código. El beneficio de este estudio será proveer un amplio entendimiento sobre cómo los valores familiares contribuyen en el desarrollo del niño(a) en la escuela y en el hogar.

Si está interesada en participar, por favor complete la información que aparece abajo y regresé la hoja al salón de clases en o antes del ________________. Por favor, entienda que esta investigación no anticipa ningún efecto mínimo para los participantes. Además es importante destacar que su participación en este estudio es voluntaria y puede retirarse en cualquier momento sin ser penalizada. Como participante, al final de la entrevista recibirá una tarjeta de regalo de Wal-Mart valora en $10.00 como agradecimiento por su participación. Agradeceré su tiempo y consideración. Por favor contácteme si usted tiene cualquier pregunta (787-460-1551).

Si usted tiene cualquier pregunta o preocupación puede también contactar:
Dr. Kevin Bush

Para preguntas relacionadas a sus derechos como participante de una investigación puede contactar:
Office of Advancement of Research and
ESTUDIO DE INVESTIGACIÓN
Información para contactar participantes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nombre del niño(a)</th>
<th>Grado</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nombre de la madre</td>
<td>Teléfono</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dias y horas para contactarle</td>
<td>Fecha de hoy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C: Consent form

MIAMI UNIVERSITY
INFORMED CONSENT FORM

FAMILISM IN PUERTO RICAN FAMILIES

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted through Miami University. The purpose of the study is to explore the family values among Puerto Rican families and its implications in the educational setting among children attending kindergarten through third grade. Your participation would be strictly voluntary, and you could stop participation at any time without any type of penalty. Also, it is important to emphasize that this study has no connection to their child’s schoolwork and will not affect their child.

Your involvement would consist of reading this letter, asking any questions to clarify understanding, and participating in a one-on-one interview about your child, mother-child relationship, family values and your child’s academic achievement. In the interview, an audio-recorder will be used and all the recordings will be transcribe in word processing program and then destroyed. All the information acquired will be kept confidential. The teachers and other school’s worker will not have access to the data collected. At the time of transcription your interview will receive a code number that will serve as interview’s identification in all the research process. Therefore, your name will be separate from your transcribed interview. Only the principal investigator will have access to information about linking code numbers to participant’s names. Furthermore, all the data collected of the present study will be only accessible by the researcher, advisor and thesis committee. In the future the researcher expects to publish the findings of this research in an academic journal and present the findings at conferences. Any presentation of the findings will not identify participants.

Although there are not any direct benefits expected to you for participating, you might find it enjoyable/interesting to reflect upon and talk about your family and child. Also, the findings might prove useful for researchers in understanding the role of families in the academic achievement of children among Puerto Rican families.

Please understand that this research only involves minimal risk, and the researcher does not anticipate any negative effects for participants.

It is important to highlight that your participation in this research is voluntary and you can withdraw at any time. You will not be penalized for it. At the end of the interview, every participant will receive a Wal-Mart gift card valued in $10.00 for participants in the study. If you have any questions or concern regarding the research project, please do not hesitate to contact:

Arelis V. Vellón Fernández (Graduate student)    Dr. Kevin Bush (Advisor)
Family and Child Studies    Associate Professor
(787)460-1551    (513) 529-0405
vellonav@muohio.edu    bushkr@muohio.edu
Also, if you have any questions related to your rights as a research participant you may contact:
Office of Advancement of Research and Scholarship
102 Roudebush
Miami University
(513) 529-3600
humansubjects@muohio.edu

Your signature in this document indicates your agreement with the following:

After I read, discuss and sign this consent form, I admit that I am agreeing to participate in this project, which includes: the use of audio-recorded and one-on-one interview. I acknowledge that I have received a copy of this informed consent form and I am 18 years of age or older.

____________________  _______________________
(Signature of participant)        (Date)

______________________________
(Printed name of participant)

______________________________  ________________________
(Signature of researcher/investigator)  (Date)
Los valores familiares y sus implicaciones en el escenario educativo

Usted ha sido invitada a participar en una investigación de Miami University en Ohio. El propósito de este estudio es explorar los valores familiares en familias puertorriqueñas y sus implicaciones en el escenario educativo entre niños(as) de Jardín de Infantes (kindergarten) a tercer grado. Su participación será estrictamente voluntaria. Usted puede detener su participación en la investigación en cualquier momento sin ser penalizada. Además, es importante enfatizarle que este estudio no tiene ninguna relación con la ejecución o escuela de su hijo(a), por lo cual no afectará el desempeño académico de su niño(a).

Su participación consistiría en leer esta carta, preguntar cualquier duda que tenga sobre la investigación y participar en una entrevista individual sobre la relación con su hijo(a), los valores familiares y el desempeño académico de su niño(a). Durante la entrevista, una grabadora será utilizada y la grabación será guardada en el programa Word para luego ser destruida la transcripción de la misma. Toda la información que provea será confidencial. Los maestros u otro personal escolar no tendrán acceso a la recopilación de datos y su identidad será protegida en todo momento. La transcripción de su entrevista recibirá un número de código, el cual servirá para identificar su entrevista en todo el proceso de la investigación. Por lo tanto, su nombre estará separado de la transcripción de su entrevista. Solo el investigador principal tendrá acceso a la identificación de su nombre y número de código.

El beneficio de este estudio será proveer un amplio entendimiento sobre como los valores familiares contribuyen en el desarrollo del niño(a) en la escuela y en el hogar. Además, solo el comité de tesis y la investigadora principal tendrán acceso a los datos que puedan identificar directa o indirectamente su participación, incluyendo esta hoja de consentimiento. Los resultados de esta investigación pudieran ser publicados en una revista profesional y/o presentados en conferencias profesionales manteniendo la confidencialidad de su participación.

Aunque no obtendrá un beneficio directo por su participación, la investigación le proveerá la oportunidad de reflexionar y hablar sobre la relación con su familia e hijo (a). También, los resultados serán útiles para que los investigadores entiendan el rol de las familias puertorriqueñas en el éxito académico de sus hijos(as).Tenga presente que la investigación no anticipa ningún efecto negativo para los participantes.

Es importante enfatizar que su participación en esta investigación es voluntaria y puede abstenerse de participar o retirarse del estudio en cualquier momento sin ser penalizada. Como participante, al final de la entrevista recibirá una tarjeta de regalo de Wal-Mart valora en $10.00 como agradecimiento por su participación. Si tiene alguna pregunta o duda en cuanto a la investigación puede contactar:

Arelis V. Vellón Fernández (estudiante graduada)     Dr. Kevin Bush (mentor)
Estudio de la familia y el niño(a)     Profesor
(787)460-1551     (513) 529-0405
vellonav@muohio.edu     bushkr@muohio.edu

Si tiene alguna pregunta sobre sus derechos como participante, puede contactar: Office of Advancement of Research and Scholarship
Su firma en este documento indica que usted está de acuerdo con lo siguiente:

**Después de leer, discutir y firmar este consentimiento informado, admito que estoy de acuerdo en participar en este proyecto el cual incluye: una entrevista individual y la grabación de mi voz en una grabadora. Reconozco que he recibido una copia de este consentimiento informado y que tengo 18 años o más.**

____________________________                ___________
(Firma del participante)                                             (Fecha)

____________________________
(Nombre del participante en molde)

______________________________            ________________________
(Firma del investigador)                                             (Fecha)
Appendix D: Demographic Information

Familism in Puerto Rican families

As a part of my research study, I will appreciate you can complete this demographic information. It will be used only for research purpose. If you have any doubts or questions, please feel free to ask me.

**ID number:** _______________________________ **Date:** ______________________________

*Mother’s Information*

1- What is your date of birth? _______________________________ **Gender:** ________________

2- What is your current age? ________years

3- Ethnicity: ______________________________

4- Which is your current relationship status? (Circle your response)

   *Single*    *Cohabitating*    *Married*    *Married for second time*    *Other:* ____________

5- For how long have you been in your current relationship status?
   ______________________________

6- What is your level of educational? (Circle your response)

   *Less than High School*    *High school*    *College (how many years?)*___________

   *Other* ______________________________

7- What is your current occupation? ______________________________

8- Which of the following best describe the socioeconomic status of your family? (Circle your response)?

   *Lower*    *Middle*    *Upper*

9- What town you live? ______________________________

10- Do you live in rural or urban area? ______________________________
**Husband’s Information**

1- What is the date of birth of your husband? __________________ Gender: ______________

2- What is the current age of your husband? ________ years

3- Ethnicity: ________________________________

4- What is the level of education of your husband? (Circle your response)

   *Less than High School*     *High school*     *College (how many years?)*

   Other __________________________

6- What is the current occupation of your husband? ________________________________

**Children Information**

1- What is/are your child(ren)’s date of birth?

   *PLEASE* in child # 1 provide the information of child that received the letter about the research.

   **Child #1** ______________Age:__________Gender:_______Ethnicity:___________

   Grade: ______________

   **Child #2** ______________Age:__________Gender:_______Ethnicity:___________

   Grade: ______________

   **Child #3** ______________Age:__________Gender:_______Ethnicity:___________

   Grade: ______________

   **Child #4** ______________Age:__________Gender:_______Ethnicity:___________

   Grade: ______________

   Other:
2- Actually, are you living with the father of your child number 1? (Circle your response)

Yes  No
Información Demográfica

Los valores familiares en familias puertorriqueñas

Como parte de mi estudio de investigación, yo apreciaré que usted pueda completar la siguiente información demográfica. Toda la información que provea será solamente para propósitos de investigación. Si tiene alguna duda o pregunta, no dude en permitirme saber.

Núm de ID: ____________________________ Fecha: ____________________________

I. Información de la Madre:

1- ¿Cuál es su fecha de nacimiento? ____________________________ Género:_______

2- ¿Cuál es su edad? _______ años

3- Etnicidad: __________

4- ¿Cuál es su estado civil? (Circule su respuesta)

Soltera         Cohabitando         Casada         Casada por segunda vez  Otro: ______________

5- ¿Por cuánto tiempo (meses o años) ha estado en su estado civil actual?

____________________

6- ¿Cuál es su nivel de educación? (Circule su respuesta)

Menos que cuarto año  Cuarto año  Grado universitario(¿ Cuantos años?) __________

Otra: ________________________________

7- ¿Cuál es su ocupación? ________________________________

8- ¿Cuáles de los siguientes enunciados describe mejor el estado socioeconómico de su familia

(Circule su respuesta).

Baja               Media               Alta

9- ¿Cuál es su pueblo de residencia? ____________________________

10- ¿Vive usted en área rural o urbana? _________________________
II. Información de su esposo

1.- ¿Cuál es la fecha de nacimiento de su esposo? ______________________ Género:_______

2.- ¿Cuál es la edad de su esposo? __________ años

3- Etnicidad: ______________

4- ¿Cuál es el nivel de educación? (Circule la respuesta)

Menos que cuarto año     Cuarto año     Grado universitario(¿ Cuantos años?) __________

Otra:___________________________

5.- ¿Cuál es la ocupación de su esposo? _________________________________

III. Información de su niño(a)

1.- ¿Cuál es la fecha de nacimiento de su (s) hijo (a/os/as)?
*POR FAVOR* en el espacio correspondiente a niño(a) #1 escriba la información del niño(a) que recibió la carta sobre la investigación.

Niño(a) # 1 ______________ Edad: _________ Género:_________ Etnicidad:_______
Grado: ___________________

Niño(a) # 2 ______________ Edad: _________ Género:_________ Etnicidad:_______
Grado: ___________________

Niño(a) # 3 ______________ Edad: _________ Género:_________ Etnicidad:_______
Grado: ___________________

Niño(a) # 4 ______________ Edad: _________ Género:_________ Etnicidad:_______
Grado: ___________________

Otro(a)

2.- ¿Actualmente está vivo con el padre de su hijo(a) número uno? (Circule su respuesta)

    Sí               No
Appendix E: Interview guide

Interview Guide

Before start the interview, I want to thank you for agreeing to participate in this research study. Through this study, I am hoping to learn more about family values and their implications in the educational setting among Puerto Rican families. I’m very interested in your viewpoint about this topic. There is not any right or wrong answers. I just want to hear about your own experiences.

1- Describing family values

   a- First, I would like to know what family values mean to you.

   b- What family values are most important to you?

   c- What family values are most important to your husband?

2- Family values in child

   a- Please describe your child’s family values. That is, what are important values to your child?

      POTENTIAL PROBES:

      i. Do you speak with your child about family values?

      ii. Does your child have the same family values as you and/or your husband? Describe

      iii. Is it important for you that your child has these family values? Why?

   b- How does your child learn her/his family values?

3- Mother/child relationship

   a- Please describe your relationship with your child

   b- What family values do you promote in your home or relationship with her child?

      POTENTIAL PROBES:
i. Do you think that family values have contributed in the manner that you discipline your child? How?

ii. Do you think that family values have contributed in the behavior of your child? How?

iii. How have family values strengthened your relationship with your child?

4- **Child’s education**

a- Please describe how your child is doing in school.

b- How important is your child’s academic success to you or your family?

**POTENTIAL PROBES:**

i. Does your child receive educational support from other family member?

ii. How important is academic success to your child?

b- In your experience within your child’s education, how has the school has contributed in the development or promotion of family values of your child?

**POTENTIAL PROBES:**

i. Do you think that family values promoted in your home are different or similar to those promoted at school? How?

5- **Family closeness at home and school**

a- How important is family togetherness or closeness for you?

**POTENTIAL PROBES:**

i. How has family togetherness contributed to your relationship with your child?

b- In your experiences, how has family togetherness helped in the academic achievement of your child?

**POTENTIAL PROBES:**

i. How you think that closeness with your child has contributed in your participation in the education of your child?
ii. Do you give more priority to family relationship than your child’s education? Why?

iii. Are family ties more important for you than children’s education?

c- Does school promote the parental involvement in child's education? How?

Conclusion

a- Is there anything else important that I didn’t ask and you feel is very important to share with me?

b- Would you like to add or express some comments/ experience about this topic?
Antes de comenzar la entrevista, quiero agradecerle su aceptación por participar en este estudio de investigación. A través de este estudio, quiero aprender más sobre los valores familiares en familias puertorriqueñas y sus implicaciones en el escenario educativo. Estoy muy interesada en conocer su punto de vista sobre este tema. A través de la entrevista no hay correctas ni incorrectas contestaciones; solo deseo escuchar su experiencia sobre el tema en sus propias palabras.

1- Valores familiares promovidos en el hogar y en la escuela

a- Primero, me gustaría conocer que significa para usted los valores familiares.

b- ¿Qué valores familiares son más importantes para usted?

c- ¿Qué valores familiares son los más importantes para su esposo?

2- Los valores familiares en el(la) niño(a).

a- Por favor, describa los valores familiares de su hijo. ¿Cuáles son los valores más importantes para su hijo?

**Preguntas secundarias**

   i- ¿Usted habla con su niño(a) sobre los valores familiares?

   ii. Piensa usted que su hijo(a) tiene los mismos valores familiares que usted o su esposo?

   iii ¿Es importante para usted que su niño(a) tenga estos valores familiares? ¿Porqué?

b- ¿Cómo usted piensa que sus niño(a) aprende los valores familiares?

3- Relación entre madre e hijo(a)

a- Describa como es la relación con su hijo(a).

b- ¿Qué valores familiares promueve usted en su hogar o en su relación con su niño(a)?
Preguntas secundarias

i. ¿Piensa usted que los valores familiares han contribuido en la manera en que disciplina su hijo(a)?

ii. ¿Piensa usted que los valores familiares han contribuido en el comportamiento de su hijo(a)?

iii. ¿Han fortalecido los valores familiares la relación con su niño (a)?

4- Educación del niño(a)

a- Por favor describa como su hijo(a) va académicamente en su grado.

b- ¿Cuán importante es el éxito académico de su hijo(a) para usted y su familia?

Preguntas secundarias

i. ¿Además de usted, recibe su niño apoyo en el área educativa de otro miembro familiar?

ii. ¿Cuán importante es el éxito académico para su hijo(a)?

c- En su experiencia sobre la educación de su hijo(a), la escuela ha contribuido en el desarrollo o promoción de los valores familiares de su hijo(a)?

Preguntas secundarias

i. Piensa usted que los valores familiares promovidos en su hogar son diferentes o similares a los promovidos en la escuela? ¿Por qué?

5-Cercanía familiar en el hogar y en la escuela

a- ¿Cuán importante es la unión o cercanía familiar para usted?

Preguntas secundarias
i. Piensa usted que la unión familiar ha contribuido en su relación con su niño(a)? ¿Cómo?

b-En su experiencia, ¿la unión o cercanía familiar ha ayudado en el desempeño académico de su hijo(a)?

**Preguntas secundarias**

i.-Piensa usted que la unión o cercanía familiar con su niño(a) ha contribuido en su participación de la educación de su niño(a)?

ii. Le da usted una mayor prioridad a las relaciones familiares que a la educación de su niño(a)? ¿Por qué?

iii. Son los lazos familiares más importantes para usted que el logro académico de su hijo(a)?

c-¿Piensa usted que la escuela promueve la participación de los padres en la educación de su hijo(a)?

**a- Conclusión**

a-Piensa usted que hay algo importante que yo no pregunte y usted siente que es muy importante compartir conmigo?

b- Le gustaría añadir o expresar algún comentario o experiencia sobre este tema conmigo?