

My research focuses on identifying the pre-existing family strengths and culturally relevant parenting practices that can effectively support Latino-origin children and adolescents from bicultural families in the U.S. My research interests began as a master's degree student teaching English as a Second Language in an elementary school in Mexico City. I noticed how some students yearned to spend time with their parents and this translated into them acting out in school. This made me realize how essentially necessary quality time and parental involvement are for an adequate emotional and academic development. The following year, during my clinical internship I worked mainly with preadolescents from underprivileged parts of Mexico City and encountered that same desire for parental involvement, just ostracized by distinct cultural and mainly socioeconomic barriers. I firmly believe that recognizing and building upon the inherent strengths deeply embedded within Latino culture is crucial for cultivating resilience and enhancing the overall well-being in the children and adolescents of this underserved population. Being the largest immigrant group in the U.S., presenting high prevalence of crime, substance use, truancy, and psychological disorders, there is surprisingly sparse culturally adapted evidence-based interventions for them, which is why I try to make a difference through my research.

I received a Ph.D. in Psychological Research from Universidad Iberoamericana in Mexico City. During the program I investigated the most influential parenting practices in managing internalizing and externalizing problem behaviors for underprivileged Mexican preadolescents. My dissertation resulted in three publications which identified parenting practices that were positively and negatively associated as well as the association anxious and avoidant attachment to parents has on internalizing and externalizing problem behaviors in Mexican preadolescents. As I thought on the clinical implications of my findings, I wanted to bridge the gap between the results from my research with my clinical experience, so I began my journey to transform my research into an evidence-based intervention.

During the last year of my PhD program, I came to The University of Texas at Austin as a visiting scholar to further my proficiency in quantitative analysis and to broaden my experience in the design and implementation of clinical trials. Through collaborating with Dr. Rubén Parra-Cardona I got involved with faith-based organizations to implement and quantify the efficacy of culturally adapted evidence-based parenting programs aimed at forming more effective parents, and ultimately bolstering the well-being of Latino-origin children and adolescents in these bicultural families.

My expertise in parenting research, clinical training, and field experience as a visiting scholar in Texas later channeled me into becoming project manager of two and senior data analyst for three NIH-funded projects. My ample experience as project manager includes recruitment, coordination in data recollection and treatment implementation as well as data analysis of two RCTs aimed at testing the clinical efficacy of two culturally adapted parent training interventions and one exploratory research grant exploring the well-being of U.S. citizen children living in Mexico after experiencing parental deportation.

Through quantitative analysis I have witnessed the influence of complex cultural dynamics for these families. I have found culture as a moderator for associations between

parenting practices and problem behaviors in Latino-origin youth. I have also addressed the unique cultural considerations and migratory vulnerability that shape parental capabilities and well-being of family members. I know strive to inform, develop and tailor culturally adapted evidence-based parent training intervention that are relevant, empowering, and effective in supporting the needs of Latino-origin children and adolescents. My work as project manager has resulted in seven publications ranging from community needs and obstacles of implementation, the clinical efficacy of a culturally adapted parent training intervention, up to the effects of experiencing a parental deportation in the psychological well-being of U.S. citizen children.

Currently, I am collaborating with multidisciplinary teams in the Americas to tackle youth drug use, childhood obesity, as well as adolescent truancy and academic failure through basic, applied and clinical efficacy research in Mexico; Additionally, I am collaborating in two studies examining the clinical efficacy of two culturally adapted parent training interventions aimed at bolstering youth psychological well-being and drug use prevention in Chile. Through these experiences I confirmed the importance of community engagement and collaboration in research, which is why I am dedicated to fostering partnerships with local academic, community and faith-based organizations, community leaders, and families themselves to ensure that my research is community-driven and addresses their most pressing concerns. By involving community members in the research process, I aim to empower them as agents of change and to co-create solutions that are contextually appropriate and meaningful.

During the first step of my research agenda, I aim to gain a comprehensive understanding of the culturally relevant factors in the eyes of Latino-origin youth, contributing to their well-being and adequate family functioning. I would then transform the findings into an evidence-based parent training intervention of which I could also test the clinical efficacy, further develop and tailor to their needs. By fostering collaboration, engaging with community stakeholders, and employing culturally sensitive methodologies, I aspire to contribute meaningfully to the field of social work and make a tangible difference in the lives of Latino-origin bicultural families in the United States and help children and adolescents from bicultural families thrive in their bicultural identities while navigating the challenges of acculturation and/or discrimination.

I am driven by a deep commitment to understanding and addressing the unique challenges faced by Latino-origin youth from bicultural families in the United States and Mexico. Being from a diverse background myself, with ample experience as a project manager for NIH-funded initiatives and drawing upon my training as a postmodern mental health counselor, I am eager to contribute to the research endeavors in order to promote the well-being of this underserved and marginalized population, advancing our understanding of Latino-origin bicultural families' well-being, and later bridging the gap between academic scholarship and clinical applications.

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