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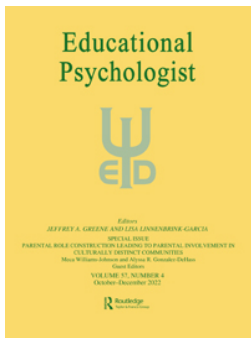
Parental Role Construction Leading to Parental Involvement in Culturally Distinct Communities.pdf

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INTRODUCTION

Parental role construction leading to parental involvement in culturally distinct communities

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ABSTRACT

The home environment, especially parental involvement in the learning process, plays a substantial role in cultivating beneficial student learning outcomes. As a special issue on parental involvement, the articles herein share new insights on parental role construction and parental involvement within diverse contexts. The central focus spotlights the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (HDS) model of parental involvement and more specifically the psychological construct of parental role construction. Special attention is given to sociodemographic and cultural differences that influence parent involvement in an increasingly diverse school population that offers a collective counter narrative to deficit approaches of parental involvement. The ideas and methods shared within the articles are also situated within other trends in parent involvement practices that include parents' role in supporting students' positive development, self-sufficiency in their academic learning and future decision-making, as well as how parents view their role amidst the increasing use of digital tools for at-home learning. Each article within the special issue considers the complexities of the context, alignment to parental role construction and involvement, and new trends and directions for research on parental involvement.

School success and student motivation can be influenced by factors outside of the school environment. The home environment, especially parents' involvement in the learning process, is also consequential to cultivating overall motivation and more specifically self-regulation, life-long learning, and critical thinking for independent living (Blondal & Adalbjarnardottir, 2009; Gonzalez-DeHass et al., 2005; Pomerantz et al., 2007). An abundance of studies show that parental involvement is essential to educational outcomes (Cheung & Pomerantz, 2012; Hill & Taylor, 2004; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). Parental involvement is often described as specific acts family members contribute to helping students, such as home-based involvement (e.g. assisting with homework) or school-based involvement (e.g. attending parent-teacher conferences or volunteering for field trips) (Epstein, 1996; Jaynes, 2005). The COVID-19 crisis helped to heighten awareness of the importance of parental involvement in the schooling process, as families were frequently expected to facilitate remote learning. The interdependence of support outside of school buildings became overwhelmingly apparent, as school personnel and parents were consumed with working through our shared dilemma of the instructional disruption with school closings.

Furthermore, students who come from historically disadvantaged communities are frequently a point of concern when attempting to secure parental involvement in

children's educational experience (Weir, 2020). Educational leaders and teachers remain unclear on ways to increase parental involvement in schools from parents from diverse cultural groups (Cureton, 2020). Even though the benefits associated with parent involvement are widely acknowledged, educators still know little about what factors influence parents' actions to become engaged in their children's schooling (Anderson & Minke, 2007), making low in-school parental involvement a common problem among school districts across the nation (Antony-Newman, 2019; Kim, 2009). Despite attempts to increase parents' presence in school buildings, school officials often contemplate why they remain unsuccessful in reaching families and maintaining authentic relationships with parents.

Unfortunately, a common theme within research literature on parental involvement is that families from culturally distinctive and low socioeconomic backgrounds are described through a deficit lens. Far too many studies conducted with families within culturally distinctive communities report these families as part of the problem specific to low-achievement and in need of remediation rather than acknowledging the strengths of these communities and identifying other barriers to parent involvement and student achievement (Ishimaru et al., 2016; Roberts, 2020). A shift in perspective is needed in how we approach the examination of parent involvement across families. Greater

attention to the psychological constructs that motivate parent involvement is essential to exploring parents' decisions to engage in schools (Reed et al., 2000). Specifically, parental role construction, or the valued activities parents feel are critical to undertake on behalf of their children, is an important factor in parents' motivation to be involved. Exploring parental role construction among diverse groups of parents offers a counter narrative on the absence of parental involvement among families from low SES backgrounds and/or historically disadvantaged groups. Thus, the special issue aims to disentangle the multifaceted approaches parents use in academic socialization (Hill et al., 2018) based on their beliefs and behaviors to positively influence their children's well-being and scholastic pursuits. Toward this end, we first present a definition of parental involvement and describe the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (HDS) model, which serves as the primary theoretical grounding for this special issue. We then turn to a discussion of the specific goals and themes of the special issue, highlighting the ways in which the five articles and commentary address these themes.

Parent involvement and the HDS model

Parent involvement has been traditionally defined to encompass a range of activities parents undertake on behalf of their children's growth and learning (Fan & Chen, 2001). How parents choose to be involved will be influenced by how parents see their role and which activities they feel are critical to undertake on behalf of their children (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995). Situated within a psychological perspective, the HDS model explains why parents choose to be involved, the decision making within specific forms of involvement, and how parental involvement influences academic outcomes. To address each component, the HDS model outlines five levels to illustrate antecedents that motivate actions that influence student response (see Figure 1). In Level 1 the HDS model illustrates four criteria at the basis of formulating decisions toward involvement (1) parental role construction for involvement (Do parents believe there is a duty to be involved in academic endeavors?) (2) parental efficacy for involvement (Do parents believe they know how to make a difference?), (3) parental perception of invitations (Do parents believe the school welcomes their involvement?), and parental perception of invitations to involvement from the child (Do parents believe their children need and or want their involvement?), and (4) life context variables (Do parents believe they have the knowledge, skills, and time to assist with academic activities?). Family culture within this component identifies parents' perceptions of their daily realities, beliefs, customs, and values reflected or excluded within activities (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2010). Level 1.5 indicates factors that shape parents' choices of involvement, such as home-based or school-based activities. Level 2 of the HDS model suggests a process of related actions to contribute to students' academic socialization. As the illustration indicates, (1) encouraging progress (2) modeling school-related skills (3) reinforcement

of learning (e.g., practicing skills), and (4) instruction (e.g., working through homework concerns). Level 3 of the model focuses on the students' interpretations of parental behaviors employed in Level 2 (e.g., monitoring completed homework). Level 4 details the development of attributes for independent and self-reliant learners as part of the scaffolding from parents' involvement (e.g., students' personal sense of efficacy for succeeding in school). Level 5 addresses students' development toward achieving academic goals.

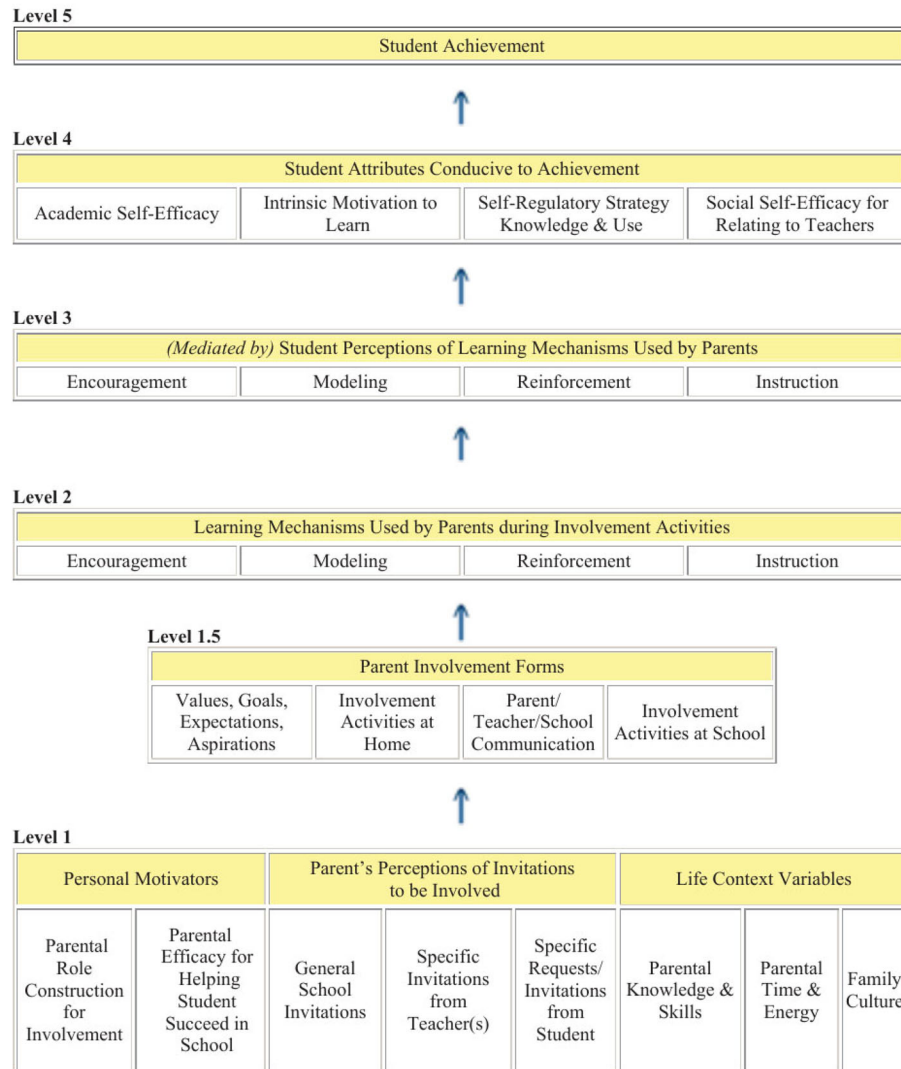
We acknowledge that other models in the literature by Epstein (2010) and Jeynes (2005) also conceptually map elements of parental involvement. In this special issue we focus on the HDS model to emphasize the psychological underpinnings of parental behaviors that lead to academic achievement. Within all the models, it is important to note that parent involvement is often framed with a narrow definition of "parent." The typical model for conceptualizing family involvement, despite enormous variability in family structures, is that of a two-parent, economically self-sufficient nuclear family with a working father and homemaker mother (Olivos, 2006). More current perspectives must be sensitive to the composition of today's families where primary caregivers may include single parents, stepparents, and extended family members. Parents represent a broader group of primary caregivers rather than only biological parents. As such, one cannot fully distinguish the mechanisms behind parents' involvement decisions and their choices of parental involvement activities without considering the broader picture of family structure, social policies and ethnic or cultural background (Huntsinger & Jose, 2009; Roberts, 2020). This conceptualization of family culture, including variations in the composition of the family, is included in the HDS model as a distal underlying factor that shapes family involvement (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). However, limited descriptions are available on differences in family culture and its implications to the other variants in parents' involvement.

Culture and studying parental involvement

An important factor that influences student performance is the learner's background (Cheung & Pomerantz, 2012; Cross et al., 2019; Huntsinger & Jose, 2009). Attention to the association of cultural background when exploring parents' actions toward involvement is limited in current literature. While the parental involvement literature is currently growing, there exists an obvious disconnect toward understanding cultural background and actions among parents to contribute meaningful exploration on parental involvement. In this special issue, we frame cultural background in terms of ethnically linked beliefs, values, expectations, and traditions around education. The term "cultural background" is used to describe the context of one's life experience as shaped by membership in groups based on ethnicity, race, gender, religion, socioeconomic status and social class, and other forms of social-cultural distinctions (Cross et al., 2019). Several studies suggest that ethnicity is an important predictor of parental expectations for children's academic

Why is parent involvement important?

Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler Model of the Parental Involvement Process



Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, 1997, 2005, 2010.

Figure 1. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model of the parental involvement process.

achievement and their academic future (Ji & Koblinsky, 2009; Kim, 2009). Previous studies also document differences between parents in their level of educational involvement based on ethnicity (Cheung & Pomerantz, 2012). More in-depth studies suggest cross-cultural differences in parental involvement are influenced by external forces, such as cultural beliefs about education and changes in beliefs after migrating to another cultural setting (Cureton, 2020; Huntsinger & Jose, 2009).

Parental role construction: A central construct for parental involvement

Using the well-established HDS model, the articles in this special issue explore *parental role construction* as a psychological

construct that supports motivators and goals that evolve into parental involvement. Not all parents believe their involvement at school is necessary and part of their responsibility as a parent (Anderson & Minke, 2007). The parental involvement process suggests that parents' choices and decisions to action are based on several constructs drawn from their own ideas and experiences as well as on other constructs growing out of environmental demands and opportunities (see Figure 1). Hoover-Dempsey et al.'s (2005) later research precisely describes the saliency of motivators toward parental involvement indicating that role construction as well as parental efficacy beliefs appear among all ethnically diverse socioeconomic groups and within all school levels. As such, the articles in this special issue aim to specify how role construction is displayed

within the parental involvement paths of parents of various cultural groups.

Parent role construction as a construct illustrates the process parents navigate in deciding when, how, and what level of involvement they will maintain as part of their responsibility in their child's academic development (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). Integral to defining parental role construction is the concept of agency and how parents evaluate their resources to determine when and how they can participate. The intensity in the level of involvement is often guided by how parents view their role in supporting their children's academic endeavors. How much parents communicate with teachers or how frequently parents visit schools or assist with homework are some parental involvement behaviors that are largely driven by parent's role construction (Cheung & Pomerantz, 2012).

Role construction for parents can also extend beyond the schooling years for their children. As an identity concept, the behaviors of parenting are consistently evolving throughout an individual's lifetime (Hill et al., 2018; Murray et al., 2014). But unlike other identity formation roles, parental role construction is not solely based on personal growth because it also evolves as the child grows and develops. Parents continue to be largely influential in their children's major life decisions concerning employment and family decisions (Eccles & Harold, 1993). Specific to their children's academic pursuits, parents begin their journey by academically socializing their child's development and crafting parental roles that would lead toward later self-sufficiency (Hill & Tyson, 2009).

Goals of the special issue

Increased attention on family culture within parental involvement and student learning is gaining ground within the field of education. Scholarship within culturally distinct communities, as well as immigrant and refugee families, is exposing potential ways to examine holistic efforts within family involvement (Antony-Newman, 2019; García Coll et al., 1996; Hill & Taylor, 2004). As such, the goals of this special issue are to examine and discuss the psychological concepts and sociological contexts of parental involvement among culturally distinct groups as well as explore shifts within parental involvement as children become more independent. More specifically we explore the HDS model, in particular, parental role construction, to advance theoretical assumptions on what "parents construe as important, necessary and permissible" (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997, p. 4) as actions needed to assist their children in an increasingly diverse society. Inclusive within our discussion on diverse contexts, we also give attention to parental involvement within the digital landscape. With the growing reliance of online learning within educational spaces, it is timely to explore how parents view the expectations and their role within the digital terrain. Lastly, the special issue provides an opportunity for current researchers in the field to share evidence-based practices to inform the methods and approaches used to examine parental role construction and parental involvement, more broadly.

Therefore, this issue's emphasis builds on current knowledge of parental role construction with clear consideration of distinct cultural groups' perspectives, voices, and advocacy. The commentary of the special issue, by Dr. Nancy E. Hill, further describes the need for a more inclusive conceptualization of parental involvement to capture the complexity and nuance of outcomes that are important to families and our diverse society. Providing a guide to exploring major concepts and themes across the articles, the commentary weaves the focus on involvement as an extension of parenting and the ideologies parents conceive to support their children. Together the articles and commentary infer that while parents' roles may change as their children age, parental goals and values are consistent as they see themselves as guardians to encourage developmental steps that will promote responsible, resourceful, and resilient young adults. Thus, the articles in this special issue focus on the following questions:

- a. What are the values, beliefs, and goals of parents that shape role construction and how does cultural social context influence their action for parental involvement?
- b. How can the use of technology change or influence parental involvement actions to create opportunities for meaningful learning outcomes for students?
- c. How do parents encourage their children to be self-sufficient and resilient in both their academic learning and future decision-making?

The objective is to broadly investigate how researchers examine the psychological constructs leading to parental involvement as well as discuss differences among groups, settings and actions that have received insufficient consideration in the parent involvement literature, specifically in educational psychology. We additionally include the importance of technology in shaping positive home-school relationships while tackling the growing call for how parents simultaneously help kids become more self-sufficient. Each theme below responds to the questions and provides examples to explain facets that compliment parental role construction. As we discuss the themes, we also highlight the ways in which the articles included within this special issue align with these three themes.

Building trust through socio-cultural sensitivity

As stated earlier, parental role construction describes how parents envision their duties and goals toward their children's achievement yet overlooks parents' protectionist impulses and other social-psychological factors that intervene in parents' involvement (Bower & Griffin, 2011). Evidence is lacking on how the HDS model captures the ways parents from culturally diverse backgrounds work with schools or object to practices that address children's particular needs and potentialities (Reed et al., 2000). In other words, parental role construction leading to involvement also includes potential risks, threats, and emotions that parents take into consideration when attempting to achieve

their goals. We identify these actions as an advocacy factor and argue for its importance in understanding how and why parents move to action.

A timely example is school outcomes of first- and second-generation immigrants, or children protected under Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival (DACA) status in the United States, who are often marginalized with reference to mainstream U.S. society. Many first- and second-generation families experience limited resources and other associated lower SES factors. The lack of visibility and barriers with communication between schools and parents often leads school officials to describe these parents as uninvolved (Olivos, 2006). Yet, research indicates that parents are involved in ways schools do not recognize or see as problematic (Antony-Newman, 2019; Hill & Taylor, 2004; Jeynes, 2005; Lawson, 2003; López et al., 2001). Parents from marginalized groups move with caution as a response to their concern for bias, perceptions of power, or lack thereof, and uncertainty of unfair judgments (Antony-Newman, 2019; Furrer & Skinner, 2003). McWayne et al. (2022/[this issue](#)) and Williams-Johnson and Fields-Smith (2022/[this issue](#)) dive deeply into diverse parents' expectations of education and difficulties establishing trust to build sustainable relationships. Specifically, McWayne et al. (2022/[this issue](#)) describe the concerted efforts of early childhood programs within Latine/x communities to demonstrate positive outcomes and stronger relationships with parents and teachers. Conversely, Williams-Johnson and Fields-Smith (2022/[this issue](#)) detail how the emotional effects of enduring inequalities of racism and anti-blackness uniquely shape parental role construction among a growing population of Black homeschoolers. In discussing homeschoolers, the authors expand the definition of parental involvement for academic engagement. Furthermore, the authors establish conceptual consideration for advancing parental involvement to include emotions.

In an effort to build trust between schools and families, Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2005) acknowledge the burgeoning need for schools to respect and respond to differences in family culture and economic circumstances to galvanize the significance of parental support for student learning. To bridge a relevant example to Hoover-Dempsey's concern, Yamamoto et al. (2022/[this issue](#)) describe a Chinese cultural model of learning to illustrate Chinese immigrant family approaches to involvement in supporting children's learning and education in the United States. By outlining the sociocultural context of living with an immigrant status, the authors describe the challenges faced by a rapidly growing population of families that schools will need to navigate. Chinese immigrant parents' high expectations and greater involvement in home-based involvement compared to in school involvement is likely an adaptive response to their immigrant status (Ji & Koblinsky, 2009).

Parental role construction and the digital learning environment

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the role of the digital learning environment and the need for parents to actively engage in this environment. However, this shift to remote

learning took place among what were already escalating rates of digital learning during summer learning, home-schooling, and virtual schools, thereby exposing a need to reconsider parental involvement and role construction within the HDS model to include digital environments and digital forms of communication. Gonzalez-DeHass et al. (2022/[this issue](#)) detail ways in which parents are expected to facilitate a digital learning environment to promote academic engagement during at-home learning. Parents' shift to a more active facilitator role is distinct yet relevant to the HDS model on parental involvement. These researchers examine how parents see their role in the shift to more online learning and identify concerns that exist at the intersection of parents, students' digital learning environments, and schools and teachers, taking into account variations across diverse cultural and socioeconomic groups. Digital technologies are also referenced by other articles in this special issue. They are seen as a preferred tool for family-school communication with Chinese immigrant parents that utilize written formats and offer a familiar mode of communication as used in their countries of origin (Yamamoto et al., 2022/[this issue](#)). The widespread availability of communication technologies also offers an affordable and easy way for college students and their parents to stay in contact and facilitate positive family relationships (Dotterer, 2022/[this issue](#)).

While technology is seen as a more convenient tool for reaching parents and other stakeholders outside of schools, we must increase our awareness of those families within a lower socioeconomic status who may have limited access to some resources, live in rural and remote areas, work multiple jobs, experience challenges with language barriers, or may be involved in ways that schools do not notice. Within this special issue, we address concerns with technology and our increased reliance on technological tools to encourage parental involvement. Used effectively, educational technology may also bridge ongoing communication that shows sincere interest in parents' concerns and builds trust to sustain relationships between schools and parents.

Students becoming self-sufficient

In recent years, trends in the parent involvement literature have moved toward emphasizing that parental involvement will be more effective when it supports students' autonomy, self-regulated learning, independent problem-solving, and self-determination (Cheung & Pomerantz, 2012; Gonzalez-DeHass, 2020; Grolnick, 2009; Katz et al., 2011). In this special issue, we advance the discussion of parental involvement to illustrate that parents are constant facilitators in their children's lives. From birth, children rely on parents to provide for their care and safety (Hill & Taylor, 2004). As children grow, parents assist in their developmental process to navigate toward greater independence. Dotterer (2022/[this issue](#)) describes the evolving nature of parental role construction as children age and become more independent. There are changes in the nature of parental conceptions of

their duties and responsibilities to support children's self-sufficiency. In an insightful contribution to the special issue, Dotterer details differences across racial/ethnic groups in adolescent years as well as the differences in parental role when students transition to college. It is sensible to note ways parental involvement evolves as well as how parents view their roles in teaching their children responsibility, time management, social skills, setting boundaries and self-advocacy, as these skills are considered building blocks to future self-sufficiency. To further advance the concept of role construction, Gonzalez-DeHass et al. (2022/[this issue](#)) also describe the increasing rates of online learning to illustrate the complexities and dilemmas for parents who are managing competing demands. How parents' view their role as their child's facilitator to support and provide structure while also encouraging greater self-sufficiency and responsibility in digital learning spaces is a fitting conversation that intersects across all economic and cultural backgrounds.

While there are intersections between the goals of schools and parents, it is critical to indicate that parents' roles and their future goals for their children are distinct from schools. Hill (2022/[this issue](#)) elaborates within the commentary that parents perceive their roles from multiple perspectives and their actions for academic involvement is largely considered a part of their parenting. Socio-cultural factors and economic differences are influential in actions parents pursue to achieve their goals. A compelling factor of parental role construction is how parents perceive their roles to give their children what they believe will allow them to thrive in later years when parents are no longer available to care for them. How parents encourage advocacy, autonomous, self-directed, and resilient life-long learning is also critical to understanding their parental involvement.

Conclusion

The five articles and commentary by Dr. Nancy E. Hill purposefully address the overdue conversation on parental involvement in educational psychology and the complexity of diverse experiences among the students we study. The HDS model provides a framework to identify antecedents to parental involvement behaviors, however there is more work needed to critically examine how families encounter nested systems of inequalities and its impact on the involvement behaviors. As such, the mission of the special issue is to extend what we know about factors outside of school walls that influence student motivation and academic progress, like family support in parental involvement. By diving into a rigorous discussion on what drives parental involvement and examining parental role construction, we explore racial, cultural, and economic inequalities parents consider when advocating for educational expectations. We offer this special issue to open avenues for future research examining how a more comprehensive understanding of parents' role construction might encourage parental involvement and build trust for stronger home-school partnerships.

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