

DEEPENING UNDERSTANDING OF PARENTS' ROLE CONSTRUCTION FOR  
INVOLVEMENT IN THEIR CHILDREN'S EDUCATION

By

Manya Catrice Whitaker

Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty of the  
Graduate School of Vanderbilt University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

in

Psychology

August, 2008

Nashville, Tennessee

Approved:

Professor Kathleen V. Hoover-Dempsey

Professor Bethany Rittle-Johnson

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work would not have been possible without the continued support of my advisor and mentor, Dr. Kathleen Hoover-Dempsey. She has been amazingly available and encouraging since day one. Her investment in my work and dedication to my success is inspiring and heart warming. I am also grateful to Christa Green for getting me started on the right track, providing statistical help when necessary, and helping me see the end of the road even when obscured by my tears. In addition, I would also like to recognize Dr. Bethany Rittle-Johnson for her superb advice, comments, and insight into my thesis.

I am especially indebted to Representative Tommie Brown, and the faculty and staff at my favorite school, especially Ms. Lee Ann Burk for welcoming me graciously into her school. Lastly, I would be remiss if I did not mention Mary Knaff, Dr. Dorothy Williams, and Ms. Sadye McCain for responding to countless emails and remaining supportive throughout this process. Thank you all for all you have done.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	ii
LIST OF TABLES.....	iv
LIST OF FIGURES.....	v
Chapter	
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Purpose of the study.....	11
Summary and hypotheses.....	12
II. METHODS.....	15
Participants.....	15
Measures.....	17
III. RESULTS.....	24
Descriptive analyses.....	24
Research question 1.....	25
Research question 2.....	27
Research question 3.....	28
IV. DISCUSSION.....	32
Implications.....	35
Limitations.....	36
Conclusions.....	37
APPENDICES.....	38
REFERENCES.....	49

## LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1.	Summary of Zero-Order Correlations and Descriptive Statistics for Variables.....	24
2.	Regression Analyses for Testing Mediation.....	29
3.	Hierarchical Regression Analyses for Variables Predicting Partnership-Focused Role Construction.....	30
4.	Hierarchical Regression Analyses for Variables Predicting Parent-Focused Role Construction.....	30

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler Model of Parental Involvement.....	5
2. Hypothesized model expanded from the Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler model of parental involvement.....	11
3. Mediation model.....	13

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

A growing body of evidence supports the need for parental involvement in populations at risk for low academic achievement (e.g., Hao & Bonstead-Bruns, 1998; Lee & Bowen, 2006; Reese, 2002; Trumbull, Rothstein-Fisch, & Hernandez, 2003). Within that group are ethnic minorities, students from low-income households, and those whose first language is not English (Moles, 1993; Murry et al., 2004). While interventions are continuously implemented to close the achievement gap between at-risk students and their more advantaged peers, little work has been done in these populations investigating the development of parents' ideas, beliefs, and attitudes regarding their roles in supporting their children's school learning. Since role construction for involvement in schools has been identified as a motivator for involvement behaviors (e.g. Green, Walker, Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997; Sheldon, 2002), understanding its development may be essential to increasing parental involvement in populations most in need.

Parental involvement is a term used to describe a parent's participation in his or her child's education, in the home, the school, and community (Epstein, 2001; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997; Jeynes, 2005, 2007). Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997) described home-based involvement as including such activities as helping with homework, discussing school events or class issues with the child, providing enrichment activities pertinent to school success, and communicating with the teacher (in person, by

phone, in email or written notes). School-based involvement includes such activities as attending field trips, participating in parent-teacher conferences, serving on school administrative committees, attending children's school events, and volunteering in the classroom. Such parental behaviors—at home and at school—have been associated with stronger academic achievement among children and adolescents, as well as increases in student attributes conducive to success, including improved attendance and behavior, stronger self-regulatory skills, and higher educational goals (Eccles & Harold, 1993; Grolnick & Slowiaczek, 1994; Kaplan, Liu, & Kaplan, 2001; Zellman & Waterman, 1998).

Parental involvement has been found to benefit parents and teachers as well. For example, investigators have found that when given suggestions for involvement by teachers, parents may experience increased efficacy for helping their children learn (Epstein, 1986; Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler, & Brissie, 1992; Hoover-Dempsey, et al., 1995). Further, teachers who invite parental involvement are often perceived by parents as better teachers, and report relatively high levels of teaching efficacy and support from parents (Epstein, 1986; Greenwood & Hickman, 1991; Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler, & Brissie, 1987; Ross & Gray, 2006).

In the past few decades, special attention has been paid to the influence of parental involvement on the academic achievement of students at risk for low levels of school success. For example, Desimone (1999) found that the widely used model of parent involvement behaviors developed by Epstein (1986) was a better predictor of parent involvement for White, Asian, and middle-income students than for Hispanic, Black, and low-income students. Specifically, she found that school-level involvement

(PTO meeting attendance, classroom volunteering), student-parent discussion about academics, and student-parent discussions about post-high school plans were all better predictors of student achievement for White and middle-income students than for Asian, Black, Hispanic, and low-income students. Further, she found that contact with the school alone (in isolation of other school involvement behaviors), was more important for explaining achievement for Hispanic, low and middle-income, and White students than for Asian and Black students.

These families are of major concern in public schools because the achievement gap between advantaged and disadvantaged groups persists, despite small gains by some minority groups (U.S. Department of Education, 2005). Although the gap closed slightly in the 1980s, at-risk students continue to score lower than their more advantaged counterparts on achievement tests in reading, writing, mathematics, and science (Jeynes, 2003, 2007). Many social scientists have argued that in disadvantaged areas in particular, parental involvement in supporting children's education may be especially important because of high family dissolution rates, numerous single-parent or two working-parent families, and unique social pressures on children (Crane, 1996; Green, Blasik, Harshorn, & Shatten-Jones, 2000, Green, 2001).

One construct known to influence parents' decisions about involvement in their children's education is role construction. Role construction is a cognitive concept derived from role theory, which defines a role as a socially constructed set of duties, rights, obligations, and expected behaviors that correspond with varied positions in varied social contexts (Biddle, 1986; Maccoby, 1980). Within the parent involvement literature, role construction refers to a parent's beliefs about what he or she is supposed to do in relation



to his or her children's education (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, 1997; Hoover-Dempsey, et al., 2005; Walker, Wilkins, Dallaire, Sandler, & Hoover-Dempsey, 2005).

Three major patterns of parental role construction have been identified (Hoover-Dempsey & Jones, 1997): parent-focused, school-focused, and partnership-focused. Parent-focused and partnership-focused role constructions reflect an active role construction for involvement, whereas a school-focused role construction is an indication of passive involvement beliefs and behaviors. In this study, I examined the two forms of active role construction through questionnaires related to beliefs and behaviors suggesting that the parent is primarily responsible for the child's school success (parent-focused), and beliefs and behaviors suggesting that a parent-school partnership of parent and teacher(s) is primarily responsible for the child's school success (partnership-focused).

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995, 1997, 2005) examined parental role construction in some depth as one predictor of parental involvement in their model of the parental involvement process. As noted in Figure 1, the first level of the model suggests that parental involvement is motivated by psychological constructs (parental role construction for involvement in a child's education and parental self-efficacy for helping the child learn), contextual constructs (invitations to involvement from school, teacher, and child), and family life context variables, including skills and knowledge, time and energy for involvement, and family culture.

**Level 5**

Student Achievement
---------------------

**Level 4**

Student Attributes Conducive to Achievement			
Academic Self-Efficacy	Intrinsic Motivation to Learn	Self-Regulatory Strategy Use	Social Self-Efficacy Teachers

**Level 3**

Mediated by Child Perception of Parent Mechanisms			
Encouragement	Modeling	Reinforcement	Instruction

**Level 2**

Parent Mechanisms of Involvement			
Encouragement	Modeling	Reinforcement	Instruction



Parent Involvement Forms			
Values, goals, etc.	Home Involvement	School Communication	School Involvement

**Level 1**

Personal Motivation		Invitations			Life Context		
Parental Role Construction	Parental Efficacy	General School Invitations	Specific School Invitations	Specific Child Invitations	Knowledge and Skills	Time and Energy	Family Culture

*Figure 1.* The Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler Model of Parental Involvement (1995, 2005)

While role construction has been identified as a major contributor to parents' involvement in their children's education (Green, et al., 2007; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, 1997, 2005), it has not been deconstructed to reveal the varied personal and social-contextual contributors supporting its development. One goal of this study was to examine the contribution of specific, theoretically grounded personal and social-contextual variables to parents' role construction for involvement in their children's education.

Because role theory (e.g., Biddle, 1980; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997) suggests that individuals' understanding of their roles within the varied groups of which they are a part (e.g., family, extended family, workplace) are socially constructed, it also suggests then that further understanding of parents' role construction for involvement might well be supported by examination of important social contexts related to parents' experiences with schools. In particular, Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2005) suggested that parents' experiences with schools (during childhood, when they themselves were students and may have experienced their own parents' involvement, and their experiences as parents when their own children are or have been in school) are likely to influence the development of personal role construction for involvement in children's schooling.

In this study, to assess parents' experiences with and attitudes toward school, I adopted two lines of inquiry. The first was an examination of parents' valence toward school--his or her attraction to or general disposition toward schools, based on his or her prior personal experience with schools (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2005; Walker et al., 2005). Valence toward school generally consists of the thoughts, emotions, and behaviors associated with schooling that have been derived from the parent's personal experience

with school settings (again, both in childhood and in parenthood, with reference to the parent's own children) and with others in varied social settings insofar as they incorporate attention to schooling and parents' roles in their children's schooling.

The second line of inquiry was an interview intended to elicit additional information from parents regarding their experiences with schools as a student and as a parent. Biddle (1986) suggested that expectations for one's own and others' behavior in a given setting are learned through experience, and that people are aware of the expectations they and other members of the setting hold for the behavior of other members. In order for a role to be assumed and enacted according to established group expectations, an individual must use personal experience to develop expectations about the role, share those expectations with other group members, and decide upon behaviors supportive of those expectations. The interviews—focused on information pertinent to the development and enactment of expectations for one's role as parent of a child in school—provided detailed information about early and contemporary experiences that influence parents' understanding of their roles in relation to education, and thus, their decisions about their own involvement in their children's education.

The present study also used Bandura's (1977) work on self-efficacy to provide the link between parents' valence toward school and role construction beliefs, in particular, a partnership-focused role construction. A partnership-focused outcome was chosen because efficacy theory suggests that people are likely to repeat behaviors in which they excel and find rewarding. In an educational context, warm feelings about schools and teachers (as assessed by the valence scale; see Appendix C) are likely to increase parental desire to recreate the experiences that led to positive emotions, and thus, establish a

partnership-focused role construction. It is therefore illogical to think that parents who view schools and teachers positively would *not* want to engage in such emotionally rewarding interactions and instead, take sole responsibility of their child's education, creating a parent-focused role construction. Conversely, negative feelings about schools and teachers would decrease the likelihood of developing partnership or parent-focused role constructions, as these parents are disinclined to be involved in any educational activities, and possess a school-focused role construction (not measured in this study).

The hypothesis that self-efficacy mediates the relationship between valence and partnership-focused role construction is derived from the belief that behavior is regulated through personal experiences of affirmation or negation (Bandura, 1977). Positive attitudes toward school are not enough to elicit partnership-focused role constructions. Previous experiences help create a sense of personal efficacy for helping children learn that is critical to the development of parental role construction beliefs. A strong sense of efficacy for helping the child may be more rewarding than the warm feelings obtained through interactions with schools and school personnel, and could very well decrease the likelihood of a partnership-focused role construction in favor of parent-focused beliefs. A lower sense of personal self-efficacy for helping the child learn, in addition to positive educational attitudes, seems likely to motivate parents to seek a more collaborative, partnership-focused relationship with the teacher, in which parental personal efficacy need not be very strong.

Another perspective pertinent to understanding the development of parents' role construction is offered by self-construal theory. Self-construal is a cognitive concept describing the thoughts and emotions that guide an individual's understanding of self,

and the relationships between the self and others (Geertz, 1975). This perspective suggests that the development of self is strongly motivated by the social context in which a person participates. Environments that revere communication, mutual obligations, and collaboration, are generally quite supportive of the development of partnerships and communities (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). In general, such environments encourage the development of interdependent self-construal. In contrast, a social context that esteems unique personal attributes and individual recognition generally supports the development of independence and individualism (Fiske, 1991), thus generally encouraging the development of independent self-construal.

Because self-construal contributes to the development of an individual's schema for interpersonal relationships---and because such schemata use past experiences to guide the evaluation of current events and shape behaviors in regard to future events and roles (Markus & Wurf, 1987)--this construct may offer information important for understanding parents' beliefs about teacher and parent roles in education, and the behaviors parents expect of themselves and teachers consistent with those beliefs.

The last concepts examined in this study are parents' contextual invitations to involvement. Contextual invitations to involvement are included in the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995, 1997, 2005) model of the parental process (see Figure 1), as further motivators of parents' decisions about involving themselves in their children's education. Parent's perceptions of specific invitations to involvement were included in the present study because of their demonstrated significance in parents' decision-making about the extent and type of involvement in which they engage. They were also included because they are logically likely to be most influential in the developmental of parental role

construction beliefs. Two types of contextual invitations to involvement were examined for potential links with parental role construction: parents' perceptions of specific invitations to involvement from the teacher, and parents' perceptions of specific invitations to involvement from the child.

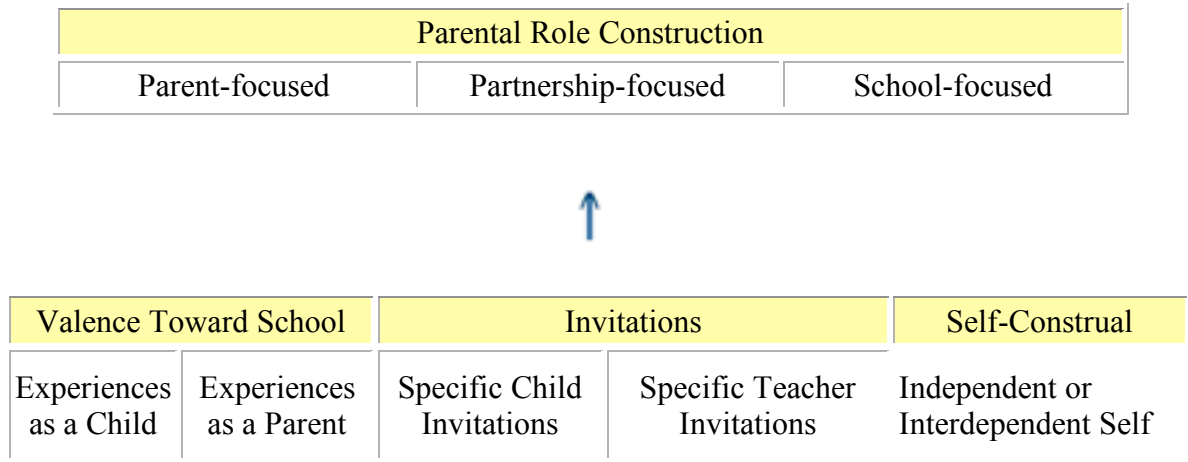
Parents' perceptions of invitations from the teacher incorporate the frequency and variety of specific invitations to involvement a parent perceives receiving from the child's teacher(s). Specific invitations to involvement often focus on activities and opportunities in the home (e.g. helping a child study or reviewing homework) and, similarly, opportunities and activities related to the support of the child's education in the school (e.g. volunteering in the classroom, chaperoning a field trip). Specific teacher invitations may also include encouraging parents to visit the classroom and to contact the teacher regularly; some such invitations have been positively related to students' academic achievement (Epstein, 1986, 1991; Grolnick et al., 1997). All types of invitations above have been positively linked to parents' decisions about involvement (Green et al., 2007).

Similar to parents' perceptions of specific invitations to involvement from the teacher, child invitations refers to parents' perceptions of specific invitations to involvement from the child. Invitations to involvement from the child may be influenced by characteristics such as child age, difficulty and success with schoolwork, and the value the child places on parental assistance (Dauber & Epstein, 1993; Eccles & Harold, 1993). In all its varieties, specific invitations to involvement from the child are quite influential in parents' decisions to become involved in their children's learning (Green et al., 2007; Grolnick & Slowiaczek, 1994; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997).

## Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate how parents’ personal experiences with education, the efficacy derived from those experiences, and self-construal, in conjunction with contextual invitations to involvement, foster specific beliefs, attitudes, and values related to the creation of beliefs regarding one’s parental roles in helping one’s children succeed in school. It sought to answer specific questions, consistent with Figure 2:

1. Does valence toward schools predict parents’ role construction?
2. Does self-construal function as another personal contributor to parental role construction?
3. Does self-efficacy mediate parents’ valence toward schools and partnership-focused role construction for involvement?



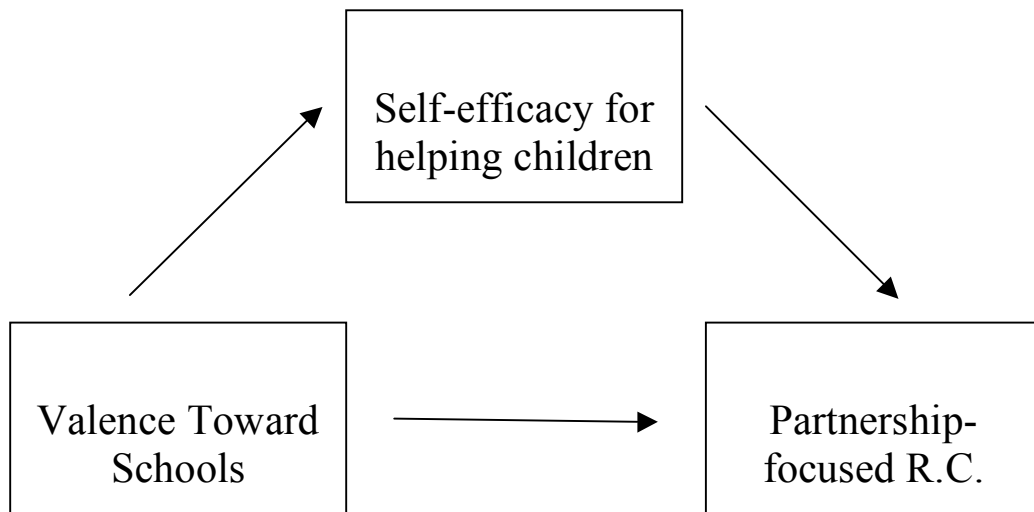
*Figure 2.* Expanded from the Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler Model of Parental Involvement (1995, 2005)



### *Summary and Hypotheses*

I hypothesized that parents' valence toward school would be related to parents' role construction activity beliefs and patterns. Specifically, I expected more (rather than less) positive valence toward school to be associated with parent reports of active role construction, either parent-focused or partnership-focused. I also hypothesized that parents' self-construal would be related to role construction beliefs. Specifically, I expected that interdependent self-construal (reflecting beliefs that the individual is part of a larger, more important whole, e.g., family and school as a community) would be related to partnership-focused role construction, and independent self-construal (reflecting beliefs that parents and schools have independent, rather than collaborative, roles to play in supporting children's education) would be related to parent-focused role construction for involvement in the child's education.

I also expected that reported self-efficacy would mediate the relationship between valence toward school and a parent's partnership-focused role construction (Figure 3). While a positive or negative experience with schools and involvement are likely to influence parents' role construction for involvement in their own children's education, experiences alone do not determine the specific type of role construction developed. Rather, emotions associated with varied experiences (in this case, related to a sense of efficacy for helping one's children succeed in school) are also implicated in the development of a role construction and the consequent behaviors that role guides (Bandura, 1977; Brewer & Treyns, 1981).



*Figure 3. Mediation Model*

I further expected self-efficacy to be more strongly linked with parent-focused role construction than with partnership-focused role construction. I expected this because a stronger sense of efficacy for helping the child learn is likely to help the parent feel capable of effectively instructing and supporting his or her child’s learning without the teacher’s assistance, while a lower sense of personal self-efficacy for helping the child learn seems likely to motivate parents to seek a more collaborative, partnership-focused relationship with the teacher.

I also expected that contextual invitations to involvement (from students and teachers) would continue to be most influential in predicting parent’s active role construction, both parent and partnership-focused. I expected this because previous research, in addition to role theory, emphasizes the importance of the social context in helping an individual define his or her role with reference to specific settings and tasks.

Finally, I expected that patterns in the interview data would offer further understanding and support for findings observed in analyses of the quantitative data,

especially in regard to the influence of valence, self-construal, and contextual invitations to involvement on parents' role construction.

## CHAPTER II

### METHODS

#### *Participants*

Parents of kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade students enrolled in a public elementary school in a medium-sized urban area in the mid-South participated in this study. After permission was obtained from the district and school to contact parents of all students in these grades, letters describing the study and seeking informed consent to participate in the study were sent home with students to approximately 350 parents. Ninety-two parents (26.3% response return rate) chose to participate. Consistent with general demographic characteristics of the school (e.g., 88% of the school's students were African American; 81% of the school's students received free or reduced lunch), the sample included primarily parents of African American students (81.8%), and smaller numbers of parents of White (15.6%) and Hispanic (2.2%) students (other ethnic groups constituted 1.1% of the sample). Eighty-nine percent of the 92 participating parents were mothers. Forty-eight percent of the full sample reported yearly family incomes between \$20,000 and \$50,000; 41.6% reported incomes below \$20,000 and 10.1% reported annual income above \$50,000. Nine percent of the parent sample did not obtain a high school diploma or GED; 21% reported high school graduation, 47% reported some post-secondary experience, and 13% reported a Bachelors degree.

In order to recruit parents willing to participate in the interview regarding varied experiences with schooling, parents were asked on their returned surveys to indicate if

they agreed (or did not agree) to be contacted for a possible interview once they had returned the completed questionnaire to school. Thirty-three parents who responded to the survey stated that they would be willing to speak to a researcher about their experiences with schools. Unfortunately, 26 of these parents could not be reached by telephone after repeated efforts and did not respond to written requests concerning possible interview times. Among the seven parents who agreed to participate in an interview by telephone, three did not return repeated phone calls to set an interview time. The remaining four parents agreed to an interview appointment time and completed the interview. Because the number of interviewees was so much lower than the 20% I had hoped for, I decided to ask similarly situated parents whose elementary children attended an after-school program in which I tutored if they would agree to participate in an interview about their experiences of involvement and schooling. Because these parents lived in an urban area much like the one served by the study school, I believed that the additional information they provided on parents' perspectives would offer useful additions to information from interviewees at the study school. Four parents agreed, and gave informed consent to participate in an interview. Thus, I interviewed a total of eight parents: all were female; five were African-American and three were White; all had at least some post-secondary school experience; six had annual incomes between \$20,000 and \$50,000 (incomes of the other two interviewees were above \$50,000).

## *Measures*

Measures for the study were adopted from scales related to parent involvement and other constructs included in the study (e.g., Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1992; Singelis, 1994; Walker et al, 2005).

### *Role Construction*

I adapted Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's (2005) scales assessing parent-focused (six items) and partnership-focused (nine items) role construction (see Appendix A). Parent-focused role construction included beliefs and behaviors suggesting that the parent is primarily responsible for the child's school success (sample item, belief: "It is my job to explain tough assignments to my child"; sample item, behavior: "I check over my child's homework"). Partnership-focused role construction includes beliefs and behaviors suggesting that a parent-school partnership is primarily responsible for the child's school success (sample item, belief: "Conferences with the teacher are helpful to me"; sample item, behavior: "I contact the teacher if I have questions about schoolwork"). The questionnaire employs three different response scales, each using a Likert-type scale of 1 – 6, with 6 representing strongest standing, 1 representing weakest standing on the role construction category assessed.

Higher scores indicate relatively strong standing in the role construction category, while lower scores indicate relatively weaker standing in that role construction category. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2005) reported alpha reliabilities of .62 for parent-focused and .72 for partnership-focused role construction. Alpha reliabilities for the scales with this sample were .65 (parent-focused role construction) and .66 (partnership-focused role construction). Although lower than desired, the reliability levels were deemed acceptable.

(Reliability figures may have been lower than desired simply because the relationship between beliefs and behaviors in several domains of human functioning is often less positive than anticipated.)

### *Self-Constraint*

The 18-item Self-Constraint Scale developed by Singelis (1994) was used to assess participants' independent and interdependent self-construal (see Appendix B). Singelis developed the scale to assess the extent to which individuals hold independent and interdependent views about themselves and their interactions with others. He reported alpha reliabilities for the scale across several studies that ranged from the high .60s to the middle .70s (Singelis, 1994). He suggested that these reliability levels were satisfactory, considering the wide range of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors assessed by the scale. Both scales employed a 6-point scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (6). In both instances, higher scores represent stronger standing on the specific type of self-construal assessed. The independent self-construal scale used in this study included seven items (sample item: "I enjoy being unique and different from others in many respects"); alpha reliability for the scale with this sample was .60. The interdependent self-construal scale included 11 items (sample item: "It is important for me to get along well with others"); alpha reliability for this scale with this sample was .65. Each participant received two scores (independent and interdependent) calculated by adding individual ratings and dividing by 7 and 11, respectively, to give the mean score for the scale.

### *Experiences with Schools*

Valence toward School. This scale (see Appendix C) assesses the parent's attraction to or general disposition toward schools, based on his or her prior personal experiences with schools. The scale employs a 6-point Likert-type response format in which respondents are asked to rate their experiences while a student related to selected perspectives on elements of schooling (e.g., I liked/disliked school; my teachers ignored me/cared about me). Each of the elements is on a continuum; one end is anchored by negative experience, the other by positive experience (e.g., My school: 1 = disliked, 6 = liked; My teachers: 1 = ignored me, 6 = cared about me.) Higher scores indicate a stronger attraction or valence toward school; lower scores indicate lower attraction toward school. Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler (2005) and Walker et al. (2005) reported an alpha reliability of .84 for the scale; alpha reliability with the present sample was .93.

Personal and Vicarious Experiences with Schools. To supplement the valence scale, I developed a 19-question interview designed to examine parents' past and current experiences with schools (see Appendix D for full interview format). Questions intended to examine parents' past experiences with schools included such items as "What kinds of things did your parents do to help you in school?" "When you had a problem in school, did your parents encourage you to talk to your teacher about it or to talk to them?" and "Did your parents discuss their views on education with you?" Items focused on parents' experiences with schools in relation to their own children included such items as "Do you attend school events, parent teacher conferences, or volunteer at the school? Or do you restrict your behaviors to helping with homework, checking school assignments, etc?" and "If your child has a problem in school, do you encourage your child to talk to their



teachers instead of you?” Questions intended to assess parents’ evaluations of their experiences with schools included such items as “Do you think your schooling experiences influence how you behave in relation to your child’s education?” and “Do you think attending college is necessary to be successful in life?” In general, the interview items were intended to elicit parents’ perceptions of the education system and their personal experiences with parent involvement, as well as a sample of their own involvement behaviors as related to their children’s education, and their expectations regarding their children’s education. Interview data were examined for information that would enrich or deepen understanding of patterns observed in the quantitative measures.

*Parental Self-Efficacy for Helping the Child Learn*

I used the seven-item Parents’ Perception of Parent Efficacy Scale (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1992; see Appendix E). Drawn from the literature on personal efficacy and teacher self-efficacy, the scale was developed during a study of relationships among teacher and parent efficacy and parent involvement in elementary schools (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1992). Administered to 390 public elementary students’ parents, reported alpha reliability for the scale was .81. Subsequent adaptations of the scale have yielded similar alpha reliability levels (Green et al., in press; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2005). In the present study, alpha reliability for the scale was .82.

This scale assesses parents’ general beliefs about their abilities to influence children’s school outcomes and beliefs about their effectiveness in influencing children’s school learning. It includes questions such as, “I know how to help my child do well in school” and “If I try hard, I can get through to my child even when he/she has trouble understanding something.” Items are scored on a 6-point scale ranging from strongly

agree (1) to strongly disagree (6). The total possible scores range from 6 to 36, where higher scores reflect higher efficacy.

#### *Parents' Perceptions of Specific Invitations to Involvement from Teacher*

To assess parents' perceptions of teacher invitations to involvement, I used the six-item scale reported in Walker et al., (2005; see Appendix F), which was developed during a three-year study of the parental involvement process (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2005). To create the measure, researchers identified six common involvement behaviors that represent home-based activities (e.g., communicating with the child about the school day, helping the child with homework, supervising the child's homework) and school-based activities (e.g., helping out at the school, communicating with the teacher, attending special events at the school). The measure assesses parents' perceptions of specific invitations from the teacher(s) in these representative areas of parental involvement. The scale employs a six-point Likert-type response scale (1 = never; 2 = 1 or 2 times; 3 = 4 or 5 times; 4 = once a week; 5 = a few times a week; 6 = daily); higher scores represent parental perceptions of more invitations to involvement from the teacher. Alpha reliability reported by Walker et al. (2005; see also Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2005) was .81; reliability for the present sample was also .81.

#### *Parents' Perceptions of Specific Invitations to Involvement from Child*

To assess parents' perceptions of specific child-initiated invitations to involvement, I used a 6-item scale, also reported by Walker et al. (2005; see Appendix G), including child requests for parental involvement in six relatively common home-based and school-based involvement activities (e.g., "My child asked me to help explain something about his or her homework;" "My child asked me to help out at school"). The

scale employs a six-point Likert-type scale (1 = never; 2 = 1 or 2 times; 3 = 4 or 5 times; 4 = once a week; 5 = a few times a week; 6 = daily); higher scores represent parental perceptions of more specific invitations to involvement from the child. Alpha reliability reported by Walker et al. (2005; see also Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2005) was .81; alpha reliability with the present sample was .76.

## CHAPTER III

### RESULTS

Data obtained through survey questionnaires were analyzed consistent with research questions and hypotheses posed in the study. Interview data were examined for further information regarding parents' experiences with school, ideas about personal self-efficacy for helping their children learn, indications of self-construal, and perceptions of invitations to involvement.

#### *Descriptive Analyses*

Overall, descriptive results (see Table 1) for the present sample were similar to patterns observed in previous research (e.g., Green et al., 2007; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2005). Parents in this sample generally recorded stronger parent-focused ( $M = 5.47$ ,  $SD = .61$ ) than partnership-focused ( $M = 4.56$ ,  $SD = .59$ ) role construction, and participants reported more specific invitations to involvement from children ( $M = 4.09$ ,  $SD = .95$ ) than from teachers ( $M = 3.49$ ,  $SD = 1.31$ ). Parent-focused and partnership-focused role construction were positively related ( $r = .45$ ,  $p < .01$ ), suggesting that parents may use these active forms of role construction somewhat interchangeably.

Table 1: Summary of Zero-Order Correlations and Descriptive Statistics for Variables

(N=91)	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.
1. Partnership-focused Role Construction	1												
2. Parent-focused Role Construction	.463**	1											
3. Interdependent Self-construal	.212*	.084	1										
4. Independent Self-construal	.165	.035	.011	1									
5. Valence Toward School	.342**	.174	.013	.064	1								
6. Self-efficacy	.225*	.402**	.029	.254*	.272**	1							
7. Teacher Invitations	.429**	.211*	.121	.093	.266*	.020	1						
8. Child Invitations	.487**	.477**	.043	.097	.356**	.252*	.550**	1					
9. Family Income	.059	-.040	.041	.033	-.009	.061	-.041	-.102	1				
10. Spouse Hours of Work/Wk	-.081	-.058	-.030	.206	.077	.092	-.022	-.039	.315*	1			
11. Spouse Education	-.004	.016	-.093	-.044	-.292*	.038	-.085	-.088	.348**	.243	1		
12. Hours of Work/Wk	.090	.022	-.019	-.245*	.249*	-.051	-.037	-.049	.308**	-.074	.181	1	
13. Education	.173	.128	-.006	.049	.242*	.185	.057	.033	.445**	-.141	.334**	.196	1

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Valid N	91	92	91	92	91	91	91	91	89	65	69	90	92
Mean	4.563	5.471	4.021	4.002	5.104	5.063	3.495	4.093	3.978	2.923	2.522	2.922	2.968
SD	.591	.611	.571	.781	.914	.719	1.31	.950	1.815	.924	.868	.927	1.063
Possible Range	1-6	1-6	1-6	1-6	1-6	1-6	1-6	1-6	1-7	1-4	1-5	1-4	1-5
Actual Range	2-6	1-6	2-5	1-5	2-6	3-6	1-6	1-6	1-7	1-4	1-5	1-4	1-5

Consistent with expectations, partnership-focused role construction was positively related to valence toward school ( $r = .34, p < .01$ ), self-efficacy ( $r = .22, p < .05$ ), and interdependent self-construal ( $r = .21, p < .05$ ); it was also positively related to specific child invitations ( $r = .48, p < .01$ ) and specific teacher invitations ( $r = .42, p < .01$ ), suggesting that current invitations from both sources may play an important role in shaping or supporting parents' partnership-focused role construction. Parent-focused role

construction, on the other hand, was linked to fewer study constructs: self-efficacy ( $r = .40, p < .01$ ), as expected, was strongly linked to parent-focused role construction, as were specific invitations from the child ( $r = .47, p < .01$ ), and from the teacher ( $r = .21, p < .05$ ). Contrary to expectations, however, neither valence toward school or independent self-construal was related to parent-focused role construction. Also interesting was the finding that neither type of role construction was linked to family demographic variables. Independent self-construal was positively related, as expected, to self-efficacy ( $r = .25, p < .05$ ), but interdependent self-construal was not; neither type of self-construal was related to teacher or child invitations to involvement. Finally, parents' valence toward schools was positively related to self-efficacy ( $r = .27, p < .01$ ), as well as specific child ( $r = .35, p < .01$ ) and teacher invitations ( $r = .21, p < .01$ ). The latter findings suggest, interestingly, that parents' valence toward schools may be influenced in part by parents' current experience of specific child and teacher invitations to involvement.

*Research Question 1: Does valence toward school predict parents' role construction?*

To understand what variables contribute to the development of parents' role construction for involvement, I conducted two hierarchical regression analyses. The first analysis in which partnership-focused role construction was the outcome of interest, data were analyzed in two steps. The first step consisted of parents' contextual invitations to involvement from teacher and child. The second step contained the variables of interest in the present study: valence toward school, self-efficacy, and interdependent self-construal. The second regression analysis was the same as the first, except

interdependent self-construal was replaced by independent self-construal, and parent-focused role construction was the outcome.

The results of regression analyses indicated that parents' valence toward schools, perceptions of efficacy, self-construal, and teacher and child invitations taken together accounted for a significant 30% of the variance in parents' partnership-focused role construction (adjusted  $r^2 = .30$ ,  $F[2, 88] = 8.76$ ,  $p < .001$ ; see Table 3 ). Similarly, the predictors (substituting independent role construction for interdependent role construction) accounted for a significant 28% of the variance in parent-focused role construction (adjusted  $r^2 = .28$ ,  $F[2, 88] = 8.11$ ,  $p < .001$ ; see Table 4), In neither analysis was valence toward school a significant contributor to parents' role construction, though it was better at predicting partnership-focused role construction ( $\beta = .155$ ,  $p = .114$ ) than parent-focused ( $\beta = -.062$ ,  $p = .530$ ).

Despite the failure to find a significant contribution of valence to parental role construction, examination of interview data offered interesting examples of ways in which parents' early experiences of their own parents' involvement seemed to influence the development of their own role construction. Parents' interview responses to a question asking whether their experiences with school and involvement influenced their decisions about involvement in their own child's education indicated that their experiences with school as a child and their observation of parental involvement behaviors greatly influence their beliefs about their roles in their own children's education. Some mothers spoke of specific involvement behaviors (e.g. "My mom was special. We went over words, did sentences, scrabble spelling, every activity you can think of. I do those with my son. I am getting to be just like my mom"), while others

spoke about the importance of parental support (e.g. “My parents were always ‘just do your best, whatever that is. I will take it as long as it’s your best’. And I think I kind of do that with my children. Whatever their best is, I take it. My parents didn’t push me into a profession. They kind of let me choose. And so I am like that too”). The active role constructions present in the interview sample seemed to be influenced by generally positive educational experiences (e.g., “Overall I had a great experience and I think it was the teachers;” “I had a positive experience. My parents were just very supportive;” “My tutor made it positive because that was that one on one time”).

*Research Question 2: Does self-construal function as another personal contributor to parental role construction?*

Contrary to expectations, regression analyses demonstrated only a marginal contribution of interdependent self-construal to the development of a partnership-focused role construction ( $\beta = .176$ ,  $p = .06$ ), and an insignificant contribution of independent self-construal in parent-focused role constructions ( $\beta = -.085$ ,  $p = .360$ ).

Although interviewed parents were not asked specifically about their self-construal, several parents’ comments reflected valuing a collaborative, partnership-focused role in their child’s schooling, and these ideas appeared in some instances to be grounded in part in principles of interdependent self-construal. For example, one parent with extremely high partnership-focused role construction ( $M = 5.67$ ) and interdependent self-construal beliefs ( $M = 5.18$ ) noted that “You have to let your child build that trusting relationship with the teacher or authority figures at the school. I love for him to be able to go to the principal and let him know there’s an issue. And then let me know as soon as they can and then I can join.” Another mother expressed similar sentiments: “My



husband and I both feel you got to have involvement. It's a three way process. It's teacher, it's student, it's also the parents at home monitoring what's going on". Interestingly, one parent voiced beliefs that were very consistent with an independent self-construal ( $M = 5.29$ ) and a parent-focused role construction ( $M = 6.00$ ): "I leave nothing up to his teacher simply because I have no confidence in her ability. I monitor everything. In terms of his school assignments, his work, and even making sure he gets each concept beyond what they teach because like I said, I don't feel very confident in what they do".

*Research Question 3: Does self-efficacy mediate parents' valence toward schools and partnership-focused role construction for involvement?*

I conducted mediational analyses to examine the role of self-efficacy as a potential mediator of the relationship between valence toward school and partnership-focused role construction. Although valence toward school, self-efficacy, and parent-focused role construction were positively related, mediation analyses did not support the hypothesis that self-efficacy mediates the relationship between valence toward school and partnership-focused role construction ( $t = 2.94, p < .01$ ; Table 2).

Table 2: Regression Analyses Testing for Mediation (n = 90)

Model	<i>F</i>	Adj <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	$\beta$	<i>t</i>
1. Valence (predicting partnership-focused role construction)	11.76***	.11	.342	3.43***
2. Valence (predicting self-efficacy)	7.10**	.06	.272	2.67**
3. Self-efficacy (predicting partnership-focused role construction)	4.75*	.04	.225	2.18*
4. Mediation Model	6.90**	.12		
valence			.303	2.94**
self-efficacy			.143	1.39

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

#### *Other Contributors to Parental Role Construction*

Regression analyses (Table 3) for partnership-focused role construction indicated that specific child invitations was the only individual variable significant in predicting partnership-focused role construction ( $\beta = .28, p < .05$ ). Specific invitations from the teacher invitations was the next most influential predictor, although it was not significant in the equation. Analyses of parent-focused role construction (Table 4) suggested that specific invitations from the child was again a significant contributor to the prediction ( $\beta = .43, p < .001$ ; self-efficacy was also significant in the equation (beta = .33,  $p < .001$ ). Specific teacher invitations did not contribute to the prediction.

Table 3: Hierarchical Regression Analyses for Variables Predicting Partnership-Focused Role Construction (n = 90)

Variable	<i>F</i>	Adj <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β
Step 1	8.76***	.301			
Teacher Invitations			.095	.049	.209
Child Invitations			.177	.070	.284*
Step 2					
Valence			.100	.063	.155
Self-efficacy			.085	.079	.102
Interdependent Self-construal			.176	.092	.170

Note.  $R^2 = .258$  for step 1:  $R^2$  change = .43 for step 2. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

Table 4: Hierarchical Regression Analyses for Variables Predicting Parent-Focused Role Construction (n = 90)

Variable	<i>F</i>	Adj <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β
Step 1	8.105***	.283			
Teacher Invitations			-.003	.051	-.007
Child Invitations			.276	.073	.427***
Step 2					
Valence			-.042	.066	-.062
Self-efficacy			.288	.085	.333***
Independent Self-construal			-.067	.072	-.085

Note.  $R^2 = .214$  for step 1:  $R^2$  change = .69 for step 2. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

Interview data however, suggested that teacher invitations to involvement are influential in parents' decisions about involvement. For instance, one parent said "His teacher calls me once a week every Friday letting me know if he had a good week. If there is something we need to work on, she will let me know. I love it! I look forward to those now because if there is something I need to be doing, I know about it and can do it". Another parent emphasized the importance of invitations in her busy schedule: "I do after-school activities, PTA, all of them. I have to work, so I have limited time, but if they give me advanced notice, I am there! If I can't make time to come in, the teacher is understanding and she will send papers home for me to grade. I appreciate that". Parents' responses to multiple questions about their involvement behaviors reflected their fondness of constant communication and explicit instructions for involvement (e.g. "We leave notes to each other in his folder and there are usually suggestions for what I can do with him at home"). These sources of information were critical to parents' understanding of the school and teacher's expectations of parental involvement, and in parents' understanding of how to effectively support their child's education.

## CHAPTER IV

### DISCUSSION

Although parental role construction has been identified as a major contributor to parents' decision making about involvement in their children's education, little is known about the personal and contextual factors that engender the development of a particular role construction. Theory and prior research suggest there are experiential and contextual factors to consider when thinking about parents' development of role construction for involvement in their children's education. Parents' perceptions of, responses to, and understanding of their own experiences with schools (as a child, and in relation to their own children's education), in addition to their self-construal, may create schemata that shape their understanding of education, their relationship to schools, and their ideas about their roles in their children's education. Those schemata, in conjunction with an invitation-rich social context, may support the development of a set of expectations, perceived responsibilities, and behaviors that define a parent's role construction for involvement in their children's education.

Consistent with these theoretical and empirical observations, this study examined the contribution of specific variables to the development of parents' role construction for involvement in their children's education: two known personal psychological motivators of involvement (valence toward schools; self-efficacy), one newly introduced personal-cultural variable theoretically related to the development of either partnership-focused or

parent-focused role construction (self-construal), and two known contextual motivators of involvement (specific invitations to involvement from the child; specific invitations to involvement from the teacher).

The role of experience as a major contributor to the development of an active role construction was clear in correlation analyses and particularly, in interviews. Positive valences toward schools make parents more receptive of the idea of parental involvement, and render them more likely to be active in their children's education. In particular, parents with positive schooling experiences and involved parents are more inclined to build partnerships with others in an effort to enhance their own children's education. Particularly important to a positive educational experience is the creation of supportive academic relationships. Relationships with teachers, parents, other students, or tutors can often be children's first encounter with an academically-oriented partnership, and may serve as a model for later partnership behaviors in similar contexts. Research suggests that parents' own successful school experiences may give parents the competence and confidence to navigate the educational system and interact with school personnel (Manz, Fantuzzo, & Power, 2004). That confidence and competence are critical in parents' decisions about if and how to be involved in their own children's education.

Interestingly, self-efficacy did not mediate the relationship between experiences with school and partnership-focused role construction. The most logical and theoretically grounded explanation is one of proximal and distal relationships. Though experience is a source of personal efficacy, role theory suggests that the current social environment is more influential in a person's role development than past experiences. In the present

study, contextual invitations to involvement are representative of the social context of parental involvement and are the *proximal* motivators of active role constructions. Previous experiences with schools however, are the *distal* motivators of engagement in children's education, and are therefore less accessible to parents when thinking about involvement behaviors, and are less relevant in the current social context. It is therefore reasonable that current contextual invitations to involvement would supercede feelings of efficacy derived from past experiences.

Also important in the present study was the belief that the ways in which an individual interacts with his or her social environment will influence his or her decisions about becoming involved in his or her children's education. The study did not find significant evidence that self-construal is an influential contributor to parents' development of active role constructions for involvement in their children's education. The lack of support could be due to an error in methodology. The measures used to assess self-construal were adapted from disciplines outside of psychology and were likely too general to detect self-construal beliefs within an academic context. Scales with questions specifically related to beliefs, behaviors, and attitudes in an academic context would probably yield more relevant and detailed responses.

Despite the disappointing performance of self-construal in regression models, correlational analyses did find a small but significant relationship between interdependent self-construal and partnership-focused role construction. People possessing an interdependent self-construal are strongly motivated by the social context to find a way to fit in with relevant others, to create and fulfill mutual obligations, and, in general, to become an integral part of the broader community (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). It

follows then, that parents who hold these goals would be likely to possess a partnership-focused role construction that emphasizes the joint efforts between home and school in helping their child succeed.

Hierarchical regressions suggest that, consistent with role theory, invitations to involvement function not only as predictors of parents' involvement decisions about becoming involved, but also as contributors to active parental role construction. Child, more than teacher invitations, are crucial in creating the social context role theory suggests encourages the development of attitudes and behaviors consistent with external expectations of involvement. In other words, without invitations, parents are largely unaware of the need and/or desire of their involvement in their child's education, and thus, are not motivated to create an active role construction.

### *Implications*

By elucidating the cognitive and emotional processes motivating parents' role construction for involvement, this study has two specific implications for research in parental involvement. First, while previous research suggests that students from higher SES families have more involved parents (Finders & Lewis, 1994; Moles, 1993; Young, 1999), the present study supported other work that has demonstrated that parents' resources did not influence their involvement decisions in which parents' self-reported level of resources was unrelated to all types of involvement (Anderson & Minke, 2007). Indeed, though the sample was 41.6% low-income, the present study found no correlations between family income and other motivators of involvement (Table 1), nor any differences in responses of interviewees between economic levels or educational experience. Instead, data suggests these parents are more involved not because of their



economic status, but because of their positive experiences with, and personal-cultural inclinations toward school. Such a reason helps explain the association between high SES parents and educational attainment. A parent who believes school is not only valuable, but also enjoyable, is likely to attend college, obtain a well-paying job, and encourage such beliefs and behaviors in his or her children (Jeynes, 2007). Conversely, parents of low SES have experiences consistent with Rutter's (1990) transactional framework, which suggests that early misfortune can set in motion a series of events that tend to perpetuate difficulty. The specific relationship between SES and active role construction is likely more complex than this study suggests, and thus offers a useful avenue for future research.

Second, in the present study, the contribution of self-construal to parents' active role constructions was generally insignificant, but hypotheses were validly grounded in theory. Small correlations suggest there is a relationship between parents' beliefs about interpersonal relationships and their consequent ideas about involvement. Further, interview data supported this finding in which interdependent parents spoke of their desire to work with teachers, and independent parents preferred sole responsibility for their child's education. To better understand the contribution of self-construal to parents' ideas about active role constructions, future work should use contextually relevant measures, and consider including school-focused role construction as an outcome, as theory supports its association with independent construal beliefs.

### *Limitations*

Though highly informative, this study had its limitations. Because the methodology consists of self-report surveys and interviews, it is important to be careful

when generalizing results to the larger population. It is often the case that people who choose to complete surveys and/or interviews about parent involvement are the parents who are involved in their child's education, thereby biasing the sample. In addition, the sample used for this study was primarily mono-cultural and not as economically diverse as desired. Further, the subset of the sample who participated in interviews was small and not entirely representative of the larger sample as interview participants had on average, more educational experience. A more ethnically, financially, and experientially diverse sample is encouraged in future work.

### *Conclusions*

The present study integrates self-construal, self-efficacy, and role theory in the hopes of deconstructing parental motivation for involvement in children's education as defined by parental role construction. Individuals who possess beliefs that are consistent with the social expectations of their child's school often enjoy a social advantage in which they are knowledgeable of the parental role and prepared to meet school standards of parent involvement.

As gathered from interviews, parents with partnership-focused role constructions possessed interdependent self-construals that encourage the development of partnerships with not only school personnel, but also the larger school community including other students, parents, and community members. The present study suggests that the combination of supportive academic experiences and an interdependent self-construal may lend a parent to both want to be involved in their child's education, and to possess the interpersonal inclination to establish a family-school partnership.

## Appendix A

### Parental Role Construction (Beliefs and Behaviors within Parent-focused and Partnership-Focused Categories)

#### Instructions to respondent

Please respond to each statement using the indicated scale. Please think about the current school year as you consider each statement.

#### Response format

The questionnaire employs three different response scales, each using a Likert-type scale of

1 – 6, with 6 representing strongest standing, 1 representing weakest standing on the role construction category assessed. The two response scales included:

- *Never to Daily* (1 = never, 2 = once or twice this year, 3 = four or five times this year, 4 = once a week, 5 = a few times a week, 6 = daily); *Instructions*: Please indicate how often you have done the following in the current school year.
- *Disagree very strongly to agree very strongly* (1 = disagree very strongly, 2 = disagree, 3 = disagree just a little, 4 = agree just a little, 5 = agree, 6 = agree very strongly); *Instructions*: Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

#### Items

##### Parent-focused role construction, items and response scales (6 items)

*(Response scale: never to daily)*

Helped my child study for tests or quizzes.

I check over my child's homework.

*(Response scale: disagree very strongly to agree very strongly)*

It's my job to explain tough assignments to my child.

I make it my business to stay on top of things at school.

I keep an eye on my child's progress.

It's my job to make sure my child understands his or her assignments.

##### Partnership-focused role orientation, items and response scales: (9 items)

*(Response scale: never to daily)*

Exchanged notes with my child's teacher.

Contacted the teacher if I had questions about schoolwork.

I get advice from the teacher.

*(Response scale: disagree very strongly to agree very strongly)*

It's important that I let the teacher know about things that concern my child.

Conferences with the teacher are helpful to me.

I know what's going on at school.

I like to spend time at my child's school when I can.

I find it helpful to talk with the teacher.

My child's teacher knows me.

## Appendix B

### Self-Construal

#### INSTRUCTIONS

This is a questionnaire that measures a variety of feelings and behaviors in various situations. Listed below are a number of statements. Read each one as if it referred to you. Beside each statement write the number that best matches your agreement or disagreement. Please respond to every statement. Thank you.

1=STRONGLY DISAGREE

4=AGREE SOMEWHAT

2=DISAGREE

5=AGREE

3=SOMEWHAT DISAGREE

6=STRONGLY AGREE

#### Independent Items (7 items):

I enjoy being unique and different from others in many respects.

I can talk openly with a person who I meet for the first time.

I do my own thing regardless of what others think.

I am comfortable disagreeing with people I've just met.

I am comfortable with being singled out for praise or rewards.

Being able to take care of myself is a primary concern for me.

I try to do what is best for me, regardless of how it affects others.

#### Interdependent Items (11 items):

I avoid arguments even when I strongly disagree with others.

I will sacrifice my self-interest for the benefit of the group.

I take my family into consideration when making decisions.

I feel good when I cooperate with others.

If a family member fails, I feel responsible.

My relationships with others are more important than my own accomplishments.

My happiness depends on the happiness of those around me.

I will stay in a group if they need me, even when I am not happy with the group.

I respect decisions made by the group.

It is important for me to get along well with others.

I usually go along with what others want to do, even when I would rather do something else.

## Appendix C

### Valence Toward School

#### Instructions

People have different feelings about school. Please mark the number on each line below that best describes your feelings about your school experiences when you were a student.

#### Items

My School:	disliked	1	2	3	4	5	6	liked
My Teachers:	were mean	1	2	3	4	5	6	were nice
My Teachers:	ignored me	1	2	3	4	5	6	cared about
My school experience:	bad	1	2	3	4	5	6	good
I felt like:	an outsider	1	2	3	4	5	6	I belonged
My overall experience:	failure	1	2	3	4	5	6	success

## Appendix D

### Personal and Vicarious Schooling Experiences (Interview)

#### Instructions to respondent

Thank you for agreeing to do this interview. What's going to happen is that I am going to ask you about 19 questions about your experiences with schools as a student and as a parent. Please feel free to say as much as you want in your response to any question and remember that there are no right or wrong answers. This is really about your experiences, beliefs, and opinions.

For this first section, I want you to think about your childhood experiences in school. When you answer, try to think about on average or in general, instead of thinking about extreme situations. For example, if I ask how often your parents talked with your teachers, try and think about during an average semester as opposed to when something special happened like you got in trouble or you were doing extremely well academically. Does that make sense? And if there is ever a time when the question isn't clear, just let me know and I will do my best to clarify.

Remember that you can refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and you can stop the interview at any point if you feel uncomfortable or anything like that.

Ready? OK, remember that these first few questions are about when you were a child.

#### When you were a child....

1) Did your parents attend school events, parent teacher conferences, or volunteer at the school?

**If yes**, how often? 1-2x a year, 3-4 times a year, or 5+ times a year?

**If no**, why not?

2) Did your parents initiate communication with your teachers (call them, visit them, send notes to them)? Or did they wait for teachers to contact them?

If yes, how often? 1-2x per week, 1-2x per month, or -2x per year?

If no, why do you think they didn't do that?

3) Did your parents leave the education process up to your teachers? Was work something to be done and discussed only at school? Or did your parents help you with school assignments and monitor your progress?

**If yes**, what did they do to help you? Did they prefer to be the ones who helped you or did they encourage you to ask anyone for help?

**If no**, why do you think they didn't help?

4) When you had a problem in school, did your parents encourage you to talk to your teacher about it or to talk to them?

**If teacher,** why do you think they did that?

**If them,** how did your parents solve problems? Did they contact the school? Just talk with you about how you could fix the problem?

5) When your parents got letters or phone calls from teachers, did they often disregard teacher suggestions and do what they thought was best? Or did they do what the teacher suggested? For example, if the teacher sent home instructions about how they could help you study for a test, did your parents follow their instructions or do what they thought was best?

**What kinds of advice would they accept and what kinds of things did they prefer to do their own way?**

6) Did your parents discuss their views on education with you?

**If yes,** what were their views?

7) Overall, did you have a positive or negative experience with schools as a child?

**What made it positive or negative?** The teachers, the administrators, the other students?

8) Are there any specific negative experiences your parents went through with your school or teachers that stand out in your memory? For example, if there was a situation where your parents argued with teachers or any other school official?

**Are there any specific positive experiences?**

9) Can you think of any ways your parents were involved in your schooling that you haven't already mentioned? Like coaching a sports team or working at school fundraising events or anything else?

Alright, well we are halfway done! The next set of questions are about the things you believe and do as a parent. Again, try and think about on average and not in extreme situations. OK?

As a parent...

10) Do you attend school events, parent teacher conferences, or volunteer at the school? Or do you restrict your behaviors to helping with homework, checking school assignments, etc?

**If yes,** how often? 1-2x a year, 3-4 times a year, or 5+ times a year?

**If no,** why not?

11) Do you initiate communication with your child's teachers? Or do you wait for the teacher to contact you?

**If yes,** how often? 1-2x per week, 1-2x per month, or 1-2x per year?

**If no,** why not?



12) Do you leave the education process up to your child's teachers? In other words, do you think schoolwork is for school and home is time for family? Do you help your child with school assignments and monitor their progress?

**If yes,** what do you do to help your child? Do you prefer to be the one who helps or do you encourage them to ask anyone for help?

**If no,** why not?

13) If your child has a problem in school, do you encourage your child to talk to their teachers instead of you?

**If yes,** why is that?

**If no,** how do you solve problems? Do you contact the school? Just talk with your child about how he or she can fix the problem?

14) When you get letters or phone calls from teachers with suggestions about how you can help, do you take their advice or do you pretty much do what you think is best for your child?

**What kinds of advice do you accept and what kinds of things do you prefer to do your own way?**

Great. Just a few more questions and we are all done! For the last few questions, I just want to know your opinion about education in general. These questions are about how you feel now given all of your experiences with schools both as a student and as a parent.

15) Do you think that the type of work you do or have done has affected the types of things you do and don't say to teachers? For example, if you are used to working in a job where you are encouraged to be creative, be a leader, express your opinions, you will be more likely to be comfortable doing the same with teachers and principals.

16) Do you think most people have a positive or negative academic experience in school?

**Why is that?**

17) Do you believe attending college is necessary to be successful in life?

**Why or Why not?**

**Do you expect your child to attend college?**

18) Do you think you have similar views as your parents' on education?

**What beliefs do you share and what beliefs do you not share?**

19) Lastly, do you think your schooling experience influences what you believe and do in relation to your child's education?

**If yes, how so?**

**If no, why not?**

Alright, I am done with my questions. Do you have any questions for me? About anything at all? This study? Why I asked what I asked? Anything?

Thank you so much. I really appreciate you taking the time to do this for me. If you have questions later and want to contact me, feel free to use the information on the consent form.

## Appendix E

### Parental Self-Efficacy for Helping the Child Succeed in School Scale

#### Instructions to respondent

Please indicate how much you AGREE or DISAGREE with each of the following statements. Please think about the current school year as you consider each statement.

#### Response format

All items in the scale use a six-point response format (disagree very strongly to agree very strongly): 1 = Disagree very strongly; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Disagree just a little; 4 = Agree just a little; 5 = Agree; 6 = Agree very strongly.

#### Items

1. I know how to help my child do well in school.
2. I don't know if I'm getting through to my child.
3. I don't know how to help my child make good grades in school.
4. I feel successful about my efforts to help my child learn.
5. Other children have more influence on my child's grades than I do.
6. I don't know how to help my child learn.
7. I make a significant difference in my child's school performance.

## Appendix F

### Parents' Perceptions of Specific Invitations for Involvement from the Teacher

#### Instructions to respondent

Please indicate HOW OFTEN the following have happened SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THIS SCHOOL YEAR.

#### Response format

All items in the scale use a six-point response format (never to daily): 1 = never; 2 = 1 or 2 times; 3 = 4 or 5 times; 4 = once a week; 5 = a few times a week; 6 = daily.

#### Items

1. My child's teacher asked me or expected me to help my child with homework.
2. My child's teacher asked me or expected me to supervise my child's homework.
3. My child's teacher asked me to talk with my child about the school day.
4. My child's teacher asked me to attend a special event at school.
5. My child's teacher asked me to help out at the school.
6. My child's teacher contacted me (for example, sent a note, phoned, e-mailed).

## Appendix G

### Parents' Perceptions of Specific Invitations for Involvement from the Child Scale

#### Instructions to respondent

Please indicate HOW OFTEN the following have happened SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THIS SCHOOL YEAR.

#### Response format

All items in the scale use a six-point response format (never to daily): 1 = never; 2 = 1 or 2 times; 3 = 4 or 5 times; 4 = once a week; 5 = a few times a week; 6 = daily.

#### Items

1. My child asked me to help explain something about his or her homework.
2. My child asked me to supervise his or her homework.
3. My child talked with me about the school day.
4. My child asked me to attend a special event at school.
5. My child asked me to help out at the school.
6. My child asked me talk with his or her teacher.

## REFERENCES

- Anderson, K.J. & Minke, K.M. (2007). Parent involvement in education: toward an understanding of parents' decision making. *The Journal of Educational Research*, *100*, 311-324.
- Bandura, A. (1977). Self-efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behavioral change. *Psychological Review*, *84*, 191-215.
- Biddle, B.J. (1979). *Role theory: Expectations, identities, and behaviors*. New York: Academic.
- Biddle, B.J. (1986). Recent developments in role theory. *Annual Review of Sociology*, *12*, 67-92.
- Brewer, W.F., & Treyens, J.C. (1981). Role of schemata in memory for places. *Cognitive Psychology*, *13*, 207-230.
- Crane, J. (1996). Effects of home environment, SES, and maternal test scores on mathematics achievement. *Journal of Education Research*, *89*, 305-314.
- Dauber, S.L., & Epstein, J.L. (1993). Parents' attitudes and practices of involvement in inner-city elementary and middle schools. In N.F. Chavkin (Ed.), *Families and schools in a pluralistic society* (pp. 53-71). Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Desimone, L. (1999). Linking parent involvement with student achievement: Do race and income matter? *Journal of Education Research*, *93*, 11-30.
- Deutsch, M. (1967). The disadvantaged child and the learning process. In M. Deutsch (Ed.), *The disadvantaged child*. (pp. 39-58). New York: Basic Books.
- Eccles, J.S., & Harold, R.D. (1993). Parent-school involvement during the early adolescent years. *Teachers College Record*, *94*, 568-587.
- Epstein, J.L. (1986). Parents' reactions to teacher practices of parent involvement. *Elementary School Journal*, *86*, 277-294.
- Epstein, J.L. (1991). Effects on student achievement of teachers' practices of parent involvement. In S.B. Silvern (Ed.), *Advances in reading/language research: A research annual: Vol. 5. Literacy through family, community, and school interaction* (pp. 261-276). Greenwich, CT: JAI.
- Epstein, J.L. (2001). *School, family, and community partnerships: Preparing educators*

*and improving schooling.* Boulder, CO: Westview.

- Finders, M., & Lewis, C. (1994). Why some parents don't come to school. *Educational Leadership, 51*, 50-54.
- Fiske, A.P.(1991). *Structures of social life: The four elementary forms of human relations: Communal sharing, authority ranking, equality matching, market pricing.* New York, NY: Free Press.
- Geertz, C. (1975). On the nature of anthropological understanding. *American Scientist, 63*, 47-53.
- Green, L.R., Blasik, K., Hartshorn, K., & Shatten-Jones, E. (2000). Closing the achievement gap in science: A program to encourage minority and female students to participate and succeed. *ERS Spectrum, 18*, 3-13.
- Green, C. L. & Hoover-Dempsey, K. V. (2007). Why do parents home-school? A systematic examination of parental involvement. *Education and Urban Society, 39*, 264-285.
- Green, S.R. (2001). Closing the achievement gap: Lessons learned and challenges ahead. *Teaching and Change, 8*, 215-224.
- Greenwood, G.E., & Hickman, C.W. (1991). Research and practice in parent involvement: Implications for teacher education. *Elementary School Journal, 91*, 279-288.
- Grolnick, E.S., Benjet, C., Kurwoski, C.O., & Apostoleris, N.H. (1997). Predictors of parent involvement in children's schooling: A multidimensional conceptualization and motivational model. *Child Development, 65*, 237-252.
- Grolnick, W.S., & Slowiaczek, M.L. (1994). Parents' involvement in children's schooling: A multidimensional conceptualization and motivational model. *Child Development, 65*, 237-252.
- Hao, L., & Bonstead-Bruns, M. (1998). Parent-child differences in educational expectations and the academic achievement of immigrant and native students. *Sociology of Education, 71*, 175-198.
- Hoover-Dempsey, K.V., Bassler, O.C., & Brissie, J.S. (1992). Explorations in parent-school relations. *Journal of Educational Research, 85*, 287-294.
- Hoover-Dempsey, K. V., Bassler, O. C., & Brissie, J. S. (1987). Parent involvement: Contributions of teacher efficacy, school socioeconomic status, and other school characteristics. *American Educational Research Journal, 24*(3), 417-435.

- Hoover-Dempsey, K.V., Bassler, O.C., & Burrow, R. (1995). Parents' reported involvement in students' homework: Strategies and practices. *Elementary School Journal, 95*, 435-450.
- Hoover-Dempsey, K.V. & Sandler, H.M. (1995). Parental involvement in children's education: Why does it make a difference? *Teachers College Record, 97*, 310-331.
- Hoover-Dempsey, K.V., & Sandler, H. (1997). Why do parents become involved in their children's education? *Review of Educational Research, 67*, 3-42.
- Hoover-Dempsey, K.V., Walker, J.M.T., Jones, K.P., & Reed, R.P. (2002). Teachers Involving Parents (TIP): Results from an in-service teacher education program for enhancing parental involvement. *Teaching and teacher education, 18*, 843-867.
- Hoover-Dempsey, K.V., Walker, J.M.T., Sandler, H.M., Whetsel, D., Green, C.L., Wilkins, A.S., & Closson, K. (2005). Why do parents become involved? Research findings and implications. *The Elementary School Journal, 106*, 105-130.
- Jeynes, W.H. (2003). The effects of black and Hispanic twelfth graders living in intact families and being religious on their academic achievement. *Urban Education, 38*, 35-57.
- Jeynes, W.H. (2005). The effects of parental involvement on the academic achievement of African American youth. *The Journal of Negro Education, 74*, 260-275.
- Jeynes, W.H. (2007). The relationship between parental involvement and urban secondary school student academic achievement: A meta-analysis. *Urban Education, 42*, 82-110.
- Kaplan, D.S., Liu, X., & Kaplan, H.B. (2001). Influence of parent's self-feelings and expectations on children's academic performance. *Journal of Education Research, 94*, 360-370.
- Lareau, A., & Benson, C. (1984). The economics of home/school relationships: A cautionary note. *Phi Delta Kaplan, 65*(6), 401-404.
- Lee, J.S. & Bowen, M.K. (2006). Parent involvement, cultural capital, and the achievement gap among elementary school children. *American Educational Research Journal, 43*, 193-218.
- Maccoby, E.E. (1980). Sex roles. In *Social development: Psychological growth and the parent-child relationship* (pp. 232-233). New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Manz, P.H., Fantuzzo, J.W., & Power, T.J. (2004). Multidimensional assessment of



- family involvement among urban elementary students. *Journal of School Psychology, 42*, 461-475.
- Markus, H., & Kitayama, S. (1991). Culture and the self: Implications for cognition, emotion, and motivation. *Psychological Review, 98*, 224-253.
- Markus, H., & Wurf, E. (1987). The dynamic self-concept: A social psychological perspective. *Annual Review of Psychology, 38*, 299-337.
- Moles, O.C. (1993). Collaboration between schools and disadvantaged parents: obstacles and openings. In N.F. Chavkin (Ed.), *Families and schools in a pluralistic society* (pp.21-49). Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Murry, V.M., Kotchick, B.A., Wallace, S., Ketchen, B., Eddings, K., Heller, L., & Collier, B. (2004). Race, culture and ethnicity: Implications for a community intervention. *Journal of Child and Family Studies, 13*(1), 81-99.
- Reese, L. (2002). Parental strategies in contrasting cultural settings: Families in Mexico and “El Norte”. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly, 33*(1), 30-59.
- Ross, J.A. & Gray, P. (2006). School leadership and student achievement: The mediating effects of teacher beliefs. *Canadian Journal of Education, 29*, 798-822.
- Rumelhart, D.E. Schemata: The building blocks of cognition. In R.J. Spiro, B.C. Bruce, & W.F. Brewer (Eds.), *Theoretical issues in reading comprehension: Perspectives from cognitive psychology, linguistics, artificial intelligence, and education* (pp. 38-58). Hillsdale, NJ:Lawrence Erlbaum, 1980.
- Rutter, M., Quinton, D., & Hill, J. (1990). Adult outcomes of institutional-reared children. In L. Robins & M. Rutter (Eds.), *Straight and devious pathways from childhood to adulthood* (pp. 135-157). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sheldon, S. (2002). Parents’ social networks and beliefs as predictors of parent involvement. *The Elementary School Journal, 102*(4), 301-316.
- Singelis, T.M. (1994). The measurement of independent and interdependent self-construals. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 20*, 580-591.
- Singelis, T.M., & Sharkey, W.F. (1995). Culture, self, and embarrassability. *Journal of Cross Cultural Psychology, 26*, 622-644.
- Trumbull, E., Rothstein-Fisch, C., & Hernandez, E. (2003). Parent involvement in schooling—According to whose values? *The School Community Journal, 13*, 45-72.
- U.S. Department of Education. (2005). *Nation’s Report Card Shows Continued Progress-*

*General*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved February 18, 2008, from <http://www.ed.gov/nclb/accountability/achieve/report-card.html>.

Walker, J.M.T., Wilkins, A.S., Dallaire, J.R., Sandler, H.M., & Hoover-Dempsey, K.V. (2005). Parental involvement: Model revision through scale development. *Elementary School Journal, 106*, 85-104.

Young, M.D. (1999). Multifocal educational policy research: toward a method for enhancing traditional educational policy studies. *American Educational Research Journal, 36*, 677-714.

Zellman, G.L., & Waterman, J.M. (1998). Understanding the impact of parent school involvement on children's educational outcomes. *Journal of Educational Research, 91*, 370-380.