

## ABSTRACT

Title of Document:                   DEFINING AND ASSESSING PARENT  
EMPOWERMENT AND ITS RELATIONSHIP  
TO ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT USING  
THE NATIONAL HOUSEHOLD  
EDUCATION SURVEY: A FOCUS ON  
MARGINALIZED PARENTS

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Marginalized parents experience multiple and complex challenges in terms of social isolation, exclusion, and powerlessness. This empirical study investigated the effects of parent empowerment on academic outcomes using a large national representative sample and should provide insights about the importance of parent empowerment in education and counseling. Further, the study investigated the effect of the intersectionality of race/ethnicity, home language and income on parent empowerment. This first attempt at analyzing intersectionality in the context of parent empowerment may provide some guidance for future researchers in addressing the complex nature of intersecting identities. This study was a correlational study that used data from the Parent and Family Involvement Survey of the National Household Education Surveys (PFI-NHES: 2007) to investigate the relationship between parent empowerment and academic achievement as measured by parents' reports of

students' grade point average(GPA). Using multiple linear regression and logistic regression, the findings of the current study demonstrated that some aspects of parent empowerment were related to children's academic achievement, namely, parents' competence, self-determination, community belonging, and community participation. Interestingly, parents' sense of meaning and consciousness were not related to children's academic achievement. Moreover, intersections of race/ethnicity, home language and income were also related to parent empowerment. The results are significant in that they provide empirical information for school counselors, teachers, administrators and counselors for working with parents. Furthermore, these data may begin to provide support for the conceptual framework of parent empowerment provided this study in order to guide future research and practice.

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PARENTS

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## Dedication

I dedicate my dissertation to my mother who is illiterate and have sacrificed her entire life for the family as a single mother and who inspired me to research this theme for my dissertation.

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I would like to express my very great appreciation to my adviser, Dr. Julia Bryan, for tremendous mentorship that supported and empowered me to accomplish this dissertation. As a mentor, she helped me grow and develop my potential. Without her help, I cannot imagine completing my doctoral studies in the United States.

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## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

### **Background and Context**

The educational and developmental outcomes for low-income students, students of color, and foreign-born students/immigrant students who are English Language Learners (ELL) are frequently dismal. Many low-income parents are less likely to have a college degree, which is related to high rates of unemployment and lack of access to economic, education, social, medical, and mental health resources (Noguera, 2002). Low-income and students of color are more likely to attend schools with lower resources, frequent school staffs turnover and higher unqualified teachers (Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera, 2010; Lee, 2005). According to the National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP, 2010), 62% of African American students, 63% of Hispanic students, 62% of American Indian students, 32% of Asian students, and 29% of White students live in low-income families. Further, low-income students are likely to live in neighborhoods with concentrated poverty that is reflected in a lack of public resources, economic investment, and political power (Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera, 2010; Lee, 2005). Therefore, they easily are frequently exposed to violence that may influence behaviors and coping skills in classrooms (Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera, 2010). Moreover, adverse conditions in poor neighborhoods influence students' health, safety, and well-being, all which impact academic and developmental outcomes. Indeed, students living in poor neighborhoods are likely to get less opportunity to participate in afterschool programs that can help decrease the detrimental impact of poverty on students' intellectual, emotional and physical development (Wood, 2003).

The sociocultural categories or statuses of race, ethnicity, class, and language often intersect with many students falling in multiple categories. These statuses frequently result in marginalization, limited and unequal social power, and lack of empowerment in institutions such as schools. In this study, the term marginalized refers to students and parents from racial/ethnically diverse or low-income backgrounds, or those who are English Language learners (ELL). Marginalized students are typically at the fringe of schools often experiencing poor academic, behavioral, and social outcomes and a lower quality of education than non-marginalized students, even in high-quality schools (Bemak & Cornely, 2002).

Marginalization includes exclusion from the dominant culture and feelings of powerlessness and isolation (Bemak & Cornely, 2002; Kagna et al., 2004). Individuals may be marginalized due to a single sociocultural factor such as race/ethnicity or due to intersections of class, race/ethnicity, and English language proficiency (Bemak & Cornely, 2002). However, marginalized memberships occur not simply because of these sociocultural factors, but from the dominant cultural views of White-middle class norms that result in racism, discrimination and unequal social systems. Marginalized members may experience exclusion from social networks, resources, and information (Kagan et al., 2004). Bemak and Cornely (2002) defined marginalized families as those that are “consistently ‘unreachable’ to schools and remain distant and removed” (p. 323) In this study, *marginalized parents* refers to parents from racial/ethnically diverse, or low-income backgrounds, or those who are English Language learners (ELL) who may because of these identities experience feelings of powerless, isolation, and exclusion when relating to school personnel in their children’s schools.

The intersection of sociocultural factors such as income, race/ethnicity, and English language proficiency compound marginalization and powerlessness for persons. Social class coupled with race and English language proficiency play critical roles in explaining educational inequality (Noguera, 1996). Approaches to schooling and counseling that only focus on a single sociocultural factor such as income, race, or language, fail to account for the lived experiences of those at the neglected points of the intersection (Blanchett, Linger, & Harry, 2009; Cholewa & West-Olatunji, 2008). It is not possible, for example, to understand low-income parents' experiences by simply exploring low-income factors, without considering their ethnicity and/or race. The experiences of low-income White parents who are native English speakers may be different from those of low-income Hispanic parents who have limited English proficiency. Class, race, and English proficiency are markers of marginalization. Class, race, and language barriers are intricately intersected with one another and a singular focus on any of these factors may mask the hardships faced by those bearing two or more markers of marginalization (Hindman, 2011).

Schools may tend to perpetuate systemic inequalities and maintain racial and class hierarchies resulting in opportunity and achievement gaps (Storer et al., 2012). Further, schools may utilize deficit models toward low-income and marginalized parents who are interested in their children's education (Bemak & Chung, 2008; Bryan, 2005). Utilizing a deficit lens, school personnel may try to fix parents according to the dominant cultural views of the middle class and Whites, putting them into a monobox rather than accepting their diverse cultures (Bemak & Chung, 2008). Parents who are marginalized in the schools experience social exclusion and isolation, exclusion from key decisions about

their children, lack of social networks and resources that disempower them and ultimately affect the quality of their children's education. Therefore, a growing need exists for approaches to counseling and education that focuses on empowering parents in schools and in their children's education (Bryan & Henry, 2008; Cooper & Christie, 2005; Delgado-Gaitan, 1991).

Power is an essential issue in the concept of empowerment in that power is related to increasing an individual's power (Whitley, Kelly & Campos, 2011). Moreover, power and powerlessness play a critical role in the lives of low-income, racial/ethnic minority, and ELL parents and their children. Indeed, individuals from low socioeconomic contexts often find themselves in powerless positions in society. Powerlessness is not an individual problem, but originates from the way society is structured by the powerful to devalue or deny resources and opportunity to members of "have-not" groups (Staples, 1990, p.32). Social systems generally operate in ways that maintain or construct power for dominant or the most powerful groups (Staples, 1990). Power plays a critical role in obtaining privilege and substantial cultural, social and economic resources that allow the powerful to get what they want (Staples, 1990). Therefore, it is crucial to understand issues of power and powerlessness that are associated with low-income and minority parents' ability to control their own actions, capacity to affect public life, and access to decision-making (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991; Gutierrez & Lewis, 1999; McWhirter, 1991).

Empowerment addresses the issues of power and powerlessness that contribute to individual, family, or community problems of low-income and marginalized/minority parents and affect helping relationships (Biron & Bamberger, 2010; McWhirter, 1991; Person & Reid, 2003). Moreover, the intersectionality and marginalization of parents in

schools demands the need for parent empowerment for better education of students from low-income, racial/ethnic, and limited English proficiency backgrounds (Cooper & Christie, 2005; Delgado-Gaitan, 1991; Jasis & Ordóñez-Jasis, 2004; Toumbourou & Gregg, 2002; Vincent, 1996). This understanding is essential for school counselors who seek to involve parents from low-income and racial or ethnic minority groups who are typically marginalized in schools.

School counselors must be able to collaborate with parents to help them become empowered in the educational success of children (Lee, 2005). Indeed, school counselors are in a critical position to play a pivotal role in ensuring school-family collaboration and reciprocity for parents (Bemak & Cornely, 2002). Even though some schools intend to involve parents through promising parent involvement programs, many marginalized parents are still excluded from or marginalized in their children's schools (Bemak & Cornely, 2002). A parent empowerment model may provide counselors with a framework to help create programs and interventions that facilitate empowerment for marginalized parents in schools. However, despite the emergence of empowerment as one of the critical factors in counseling and education (McWhirter, 1991; Ratts & Hutchins, 2009), few articles or studies exist that address the conceptualization of empowerment including definitions, components, processes, or interventions. Parent empowerment is a process and outcomes in which parents who lack power in schools increase their power in order to gain access to resources and information, get their voices heard in schools, become advocates for their children and take action to get a better education for their children. Empowering parents is a critical strategy to realize justice, equity and access in education. School counselors play a pivotal role in helping marginalized parents become empowered.

Therefore, a parent empowerment framework may provide schools the tools needed to help create conditions for marginalized populations to become involved in schools. School counselors may serve as facilitators, collaborators, leadership trainers, and liaisons facilitating empowerment process.

### **Conceptual Framework**

In a variety of disciplines, such as community psychology, social work, rehabilitation, management, nursing and health, empowerment has long been a key concept. Within some of the disciplines, effort has been made to develop empowerment frameworks to guide research, practice and intervention. Researchers have examined the components of empowerment differently for specific contexts and populations. Specifically in counseling, despite the current popularity of empowerment, the construct is not well defined. The lack of precise definition and consistent measurement of empowerment in the prior literature may be an obstacle to applying it to empirical research and empowerment practice (Cattaneo & Chapman 2010; Zimmerman & Warschausky, 1998). Endeavors to develop cohesive definitions and components of empowerment from the extant literature will provide an integrated empowerment framework with consistent terms, operational definitions, and components for application to parent empowerment research.

A synthesis of the empowerment literature points to four key components of personal empowerment: consciousness, competence, sense of meaning, and self-determination (Becker, Kovach & Gronseth, 2004; Butts, Vandenberg, DeJoy, Schaffer, & Wilson (2009); Gutierrez & Lewis, 1999; Hur, 2006; Koren, DeChillo, & Friesen, 1992; Spreitzer, 1995; Peterson & Speer, 2009). Unlike community

empowerment, personal empowerment is embedded in individualistic actions rather than cooperation and community actions (Speer, 2000). Some components in the personal empowerment literature such as advocacy, connection, and impact seem more pervasive and relevant to the community empowerment literature. A synthesis of the empowerment literature revealed two main components of community empowerment: community belonging and community participation (Banyard & Laplant, 2002; Boehm & Staples, 2004; Itzhaky & McWhirter, 1991; Schwartz, 2000; Speer & Peterson, 2000; Wiggins et al., 2009; Zimmerman, 1990). These empowerment components represent an empowerment framework that can be used in a particular context and with a particular population. This empowerment framework derived from an extensive review of extant literature on empowerment can be applied to parent empowerment.

Researchers are conducting an increasing number of empirical studies of parent empowerment with a variety of empowerment-based programs. However, few studies were conducted using quantitative measures of parent empowerment and few of those were in relation to outcome variables including academic outcomes. Most parent empowerment studies examine empowerment using interviews and observation. Second, in many cases, parent empowerment is not multifaceted, but measured as a single factor. Third, little consistency exists in definitions and quantitative variables used to measure parent empowerment. Efforts to develop a parent empowerment framework should consider the need for measures that include both personal and community components. A clear definition and components of parent empowerment should be established to guide measurement of parent empowerment. A need also exists for studies that examine the

relationship of empowerment to outcome variables such as academic outcomes to demonstrate the importance of empowerment.

Parent empowerment allows parents to increase the power that controls their situations and influences schools for a better education for their children. Especially, parent empowerment in school settings enables parents to advocate for their children through engaging in school reforms or systemic change activities (Cooper & Christie, 2005). Parent empowerment is a process and outcome in which parents who lack power in schools increase their power to gain control over their lives and take action for their children. Parents develop both personal and community empowerment; that is, they increase consciousness, their sense of meaning, self-determination, competence, community belonging, and participation in community and school. In the proposed study, this parent empowerment framework will provide a cornerstone to investigate the relationship of parent empowerment to academic achievement.

Many articles explore parent empowerment conceptually rather than empirically (Cochran, 1992; Vincent 1996). Moreover, there is little consensus about the operational components of parent empowerment or the instruments used to measure parent empowerment (Griffith, 1996; Goldring & Shapira, 1993; Toumbourou & Gregg, 2002). Some researchers perceive parent involvement and parent empowerment interchangeably, in some cases using parent involvement items to assess parent empowerment and vice versa. Furthermore, few empirical studies exist that examine the relationship between parent empowerment and academic achievement or academic-related outcomes (Griffith, 1996; Goldring & Shapira, 1993; Toumbourou & Gregg, 2002). Yet, parent empowerment especially for marginalized parents should enhance students' academic

performance and other academic related outcomes (Griffith, 1996; Goldring & Shapira, 1993; Toumbourou & Gregg, 2002). However, it is possible that the relationship between parent empowerment and academic achievement may be affected by intersectionality. Parents with multiple marginalized identities may benefit less from empowerment than others.

The scant empirical evidence of parent empowerment and its effects on academic-related outcomes may be due to the fact that parent empowerment frameworks are not yet fully developed. Moreover, none of the existing studies examine parent empowerment using large nationally representative samples. Cattaneo and Chapman (2010) suggested that longitudinal data methodology may be effective to examine empowerment considering the dynamic and complex nature of empowerment. This lack of empirical evidence about the relationship between parent empowerment and academic achievement is problematic because a number of important planning and intervention benefits could emerge through further exploration and understanding of these relationships. Further, an empirical study to investigate effects of parent empowerment on academic outcomes using a large national representative sample may provide evidence and justification of the importance of parent empowerment in counseling.

### **The Purpose of the Study**

This study drew on the theoretical and empirical research on empowerment across a variety of disciplines and on family and parent empowerment research to develop a parent empowerment framework that defines parent empowerment in school settings. The overarching goal was to provide a parent empowerment framework to guide this study

and future parent empowerment research, and ultimately, to help school counselors design and facilitate empowerment interventions with families.

More specifically, the purpose of the study was to assess parent empowerment and its relationship to academic achievement and examine how intersectionality moderates the relationship between parent empowerment and academic achievement. Data from the Parent and Family Involvement Survey (PIF) of the National Household Education Surveys 2007 (PIF-NHES: 2007) were used to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the relationship of parent empowerment to academic achievement after controlling for demographic variables?
  - a. What is the relationship of parent personal empowerment (i.e., consciousness, sense of meaning, competence, and self-determination) to academic achievement after controlling for demographic variables?
  - b. What is the relationship of parent community empowerment (i.e., community belonging, and community participation) to academic achievement after controlling for demographic variables?
2. How does intersectionality relate to parent empowerment?
  - a. How does parent empowerment vary based on intersections of parents' race/ethnicity, home language, and income?

### **The Significance of the Study**

Parents of marginalized students experience multiple and complex challenges in terms of social isolation, exclusion, and powerlessness. Schools interact with them using deficit models, rather than transforming and systemic approaches. The empowerment

approach may help parents of marginalized students develop their power in schools to influence their children education. Empowering parents of marginalized students is likely to increase students' academic achievement. Although abundant references to empowerment exist in the counseling literature that endorses the view that parent empowerment is a critical factor in helping marginalized parents, the literature reveals a paucity of empirical studies and few clear and consistent theoretical frameworks to guide empowerment research and practice.

This study is one of the few studies that examined the relationship of parent empowerment on academic achievement and the only one to examine this relationship using a national educational data set. The parent empowerment framework utilized in this study will guide future researchers who wish to investigate the effects or outcomes of parent empowerment in empirical studies.

The results of this study have implications for school counselors, teachers, and in administrator practice and preparation. The results of this study are informative for school personnel, counselors of all specialties, and other proponents of parent empowerment. Given that some aspects of parent empowerment are related to academic achievement, then school counselors and other school staff could use this information to implement parent empowerment programs to enhance the success of all students in schools. The results of this study also inform teacher, administrator, and school counselor educators to attend to roles and strategies to facilitate parent empowerment. The parent empowerment framework may help enhance parent empowerment interventions by focusing on specific aspects of parent empowerment in terms of consciousness, sense of meaning, competence, self-determination, community belonging, and community

participation. Moreover, despite emerging discussions of intersectionality, few studies examine intersectionality using quantitative methods. This first attempt at analyzing intersectionality in the context of parent empowerment may provide some guidance for future researchers in addressing the complex nature of intersecting identities.

### **Definitions**

**Low-income.** It includes the family that has less than twice the federal poverty threshold (National Center for Children in Poverty [NCCP], 2010). According to NCCP, 53% of children in low-income families have parents who are employed as part-time or unemployed (NCCP, 2010). Further, 87% of parents have less than a high school degree and 52% of children live with a single parent (NCCP, 2010).

**Marginalization.** There is no operational definition but a conceptual definition exists in the literature. Vera and Speight (2003) identified marginalization as a process of social injustice, of being expelled from the dominant culture and social life (Vera & Speight, 2003). Moreover, Rodriguez, McMeal, and Cauce (2008) defined it as “ the social process by virtue of which individuals, groups, or communities are excluded from the center (of society) or relegated to the periphery or margins of “a center” on the basis of some characteristics (e.g., race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation) (p. 224). Marginalization is a multilayered concept in that a variety of groups can be marginalized from the dominant social systems due to class, race or ethnicity, language, and disabilities (Bemak & Cornely, 2002; Kagan et al., 2004). Critical to understanding marginalization are the culture and context determining privilege and prejudice (Rodriguez, McMeal, & Cauce, 2007). Marginalized people are likely to be excluded from social networks and accessible resources and experience systemic barriers (Kagan et al., 2004). In addition,

they can sometimes internalize the oppression they experience by blaming themselves, resulting in low self-esteem, drug and alcohol abuse, and relationship problems (Ratts & Hutchens, 2009). People who are marginalized often have limited or substandard resources available to them especially in education, health services, and housing (Kagan et al., 2004).

**Marginalized families.** Bemak and Cornely (2002) identified marginalized families as having a history of alienation and disengagement from schools. The marginalized are viewed as consistently “unreachable” to schools and remain distant and removed due to negative experiences with schools, lacking certain interpersonal skills needed to advocate for their children (Bemak & Cornley, 2002, p. 323). Marginalized families mention two or more of the following characteristics: “psychologically unavailable to both themselves and others because of current stressors; fear of violence as a concern, low-income or drop in income that contributes to a sense of depression and hopelessness; highly stressful lives due to financial pressures, lack of certain life skills and possibly overwhelmed at times by childrearing; lack of job security, little opportunity for career advancement; alcohol or substance abuse, or both, repeated exposure to racism and discrimination; unemployment, English as a second language; menial or low-paying jobs” ( Bemak & Cornley, 2002, p. 323).

**Community.** Community “refers to the group with which the individual identifies in the attempt to gain control” (McWhirter, 1991, p.223). It may include groups such as ethnic groups, the neighborhood, single mothers or a number of other reference groups, as well as educational settings such as schools (Maton, 2008; McWhirter, 1991).

**Empowerment.** Empowerment is “a process, a mechanism by which people, organizations, and communities gain mastery over their affairs” (Rappaport, 1987, p. 122). It is related to being aware of the power dynamics, developing and exercising the power for gaining some control over their lives and influencing others in their community (McWhirter, 1997). Also, it is the process to increase personal, interpersonal and political power to take action and control over their lives (Gutierrez, 1990).

**Personal empowerment.** At the personal level, empowerment includes that a person gain mastery and control over their lives (Gutierrez & Lewis, 1999).

**Community empowerment.** Maton (2008) defined it as “a group-based, participatory process through which marginalized oppressed individuals and groups gain greater control over their lives and environment, acquire valued resources and basic rights, and achieve important life goals and reduced societal marginalization” (p. 5).

**Parent empowerment.** Parent empowerment refers to increased personal, interpersonal, and political powers in order to gain control over their lives and improve their children’s education by personal and community empowerment. It is a process and outcomes in which a parent who lacks power in schools increases power in order to gain accessible resources and information, have their voices heard, advocate for their children and take action for better education, developing consciousness, meanings, self-determination, competence, connecting or belonging to and participating in schools and communities.

**Power.** Power is related to the abilities that get what one needs, influence what others think, feel, act or believe and influence the distribution of the resources in a social system such as a family, an organization, a community or a society (Vincent, 1996).

**Powerlessness.** Powerlessness refers to “deprivileged status, devaluation, and discrimination with respect to operating in people’s lives and perpetuating a complex system of domination that influences the entire structure and culture of the society” (Harlye, 2009, p. 129). Powerlessness occurs in the multiple aspects/identities of people’s lives including race, ethnicity, gender, family, sexual orientation, class, disability, and religion (Harly, 2009). Power relation is so complicated that it may be changed by situations and relationships (Vincent, 1996). Indeed, the dichotomous assumption of the powerful and the powerless may overlook the systems or structures that influence the interaction between them (Vincent, 1996).

**Intersectionality.** Hill-Collins (2000) defined intersectionality as “particular forms of intersecting oppression, for example, intersections of race and gender, or of sexuality and nation” (p. 18). Intersectionality focuses on the experiences of groups that hold multiple disadvantaged statuses and experiences simultaneously (Cole, 2009). The concept of intersectionality stems from the work of gender theorists or feminists who describe the consequences of multiple memberships in disadvantaged statuses (Cole, 2009). People with multiple memberships are more likely to experience discrimination, so called “double jeopardy” (Shaw, Chan, & McMahon, 2012, p. 83).

### **Summary**

Low-income status, race/ethnicity, and English Language Learners (ELL) are more likely to be related to higher rates of unemployment, lower resources, and poorer schools and neighborhoods, factors that all influence students’ academic and developmental outcomes. Moreover, intersections of class, race or ethnicity, and language often consolidate marginalization and powerlessness in society and schools. In

order to understand marginalization and intersectionality, it is important to recognize the deficit and dysfunctional model utilized with marginalized students and parents in schools defined by White-middle class norms. Marginalized parents may experience social isolation and exclusion that disempower them and ultimately, affect the quality of their children's education. Empowering parents will help them gain resources and information, have their voices heard, advocate for their children, and take action for better education. Moreover, ultimately, parent empowerment should affect their children's education outcomes. Therefore, it is critical to assess the relationship of parent empowerment to academic outcomes to guide the parent empowerment process and practices and validate the importance of parent empowerment in school settings.

## **CHAPTER 2: Review of Literature**

In this chapter, the literature pertaining to parent empowerment is reviewed from the following perspectives: the challenges and experiences of parents of marginalized students, the relationships between marginalization and intersectionality and marginalization, definitions and components of general empowerment including personal and community empowerment, definitions and components of parent empowerment, and the relationship of parent empowerment to academic related outcomes. Drawing on the literature and relevant research on empowerment in a variety of disciplines, empowerment is defined and the components of personal and community empowerment are discussed . The research related to parent empowerment including parent involvement, parent education, and the relationship of parent empowerment to key counseling and education variables (multicultural competency, social justice advocacy and school-family-community partnership) are also discussed. In this chapter, the general empowerment literature, as well as existing research on family empowerment and parent empowerment, are used as a foundation to expand definitions of parent empowerment and to describe its components. These expanded definitions and components of parent empowerment guide this empirical study. Finally, research on the relationship of parent empowerment to academic related outcomes is discussed.

### **Challenges and Experiences of Parents of Marginalized Students**

Recently, there has been a growing call for cultural sensitive and empowering approaches in working with marginalized parents (Cooper & Christie, 2005; Catalano &

Hawkins, 1997; Kumpfer, Alvarado, Smith, & Bellamy, 2002). Traditionally, in working with students and parents, schools utilize the norms of middle-class and White parents to evaluate parents from low-income, racial/ethnic minority, and ELL backgrounds (Cooper, 2009). Ignorance of cultural sensitivity and diversity and a focus on “Anglo” parenting attitudes and techniques not only decrease the presence of culturally diverse parents in schools, but also help to disempower them in the process of educating their children (Cooper, 2009; Wood & Baker, 1999). Low-income, poorly educated, and racial/ethnic minority students and students who have parents with limited English proficiency are more likely to be hindered from participating and engaging in schools. Many of these families lack human and social capital in terms of education, basic life skills, and employment experience, as well as less tangible resources such as social networks and access to civic institutions (Fass & Cauthen, 2008). These families are more likely to experience schools as unwelcoming and to feel excluded in schools (Bryan & Henry, 2008; Harry, Klinger, & Hart, 2005).

Moreover, marginalized students are more likely to have low academic performance, high frequencies of disciplinary referrals, and be over-represented in special education (Blanchett, Klinger & Harry, 2009; Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera, 2010). For instance, Bryan, Day-Vines, Griffin and Moore-Thomas (2012) studied teachers’ disciplinary referral patterns to school counselors due to students’ disruptive behavioral in the classroom, and found that the odds of English teachers referring African American students to school counselors were almost three times more than White students (Bryan, Day-Vines, Griffin & Moore-Thomas, 2012). The negative perceptions of these students by teachers may have originated from cultural insensitivity and embedded prejudices

toward low income and marginalized students and may contribute to disproportional student referrals that may result in low academic achievement (Bryan et al, 2012).

The experiences of parents from low income and racially and ethnically diverse backgrounds and their children in schools emphasize the need to adapt culturally responsive approaches to working with parents. Further, it is important for schools to help parents who may be marginalized to feel empowered to address systemic inequities at schools and advocate for their children. Discussions of marginalization and intersectionality may help expand school personnel's understanding of the experience of marginalized parents in schools.

### **Marginalization and Intersectionality**

Persons can experience situations of marginalization within society including school due to a single sociocultural factor such as class, race, and English barriers. Moreover, marginalization can be compounded by intersectionality. In order to understand marginalization, it is critical to consider that intersecting identities of race/ethnicity, class, and language may enhance the complexity of persons' experiences of marginalization both quantitatively and qualitatively. For instance, low income parents of color may experience increased marginalization relative to a low income parent who is White and speaks English as a first language. Hancock (2007, p.65) contended that intersectionality is linked to marginalization, saying, "Intersectionality challenges us to contemplate what it means to have a marginalized status within a marginalized group." Therefore, marginalization is related to intersectionality in that multiple memberships in marginalized groups can produce interlocking marginalization. Intersectionality may help

school and mental health professionals understand the doubly marginalized experience of populations with intersectional memberships (Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008).

### **Intersections of Class, Race, and Language and Marginalization in Schools**

Patricia Hill-Collins (2000) defined intersectionality as “ particular forms of intersecting oppression, for example, intersections of race and gender, or of sexuality and nation” (p. 18). Inevitably, the quality of students’ and families’ experiences in urban schools is affected by the intersection of class, race/ethnicity, culture, and language (Blanchett, Lingner, & Harry, 2009). When moving beyond a singular focus on race, class, culture, or limited English proficiency, it is important to focus on how multiple positionalities in marginalized groups influence students’ and parents’ educational experiences. Parents who differ from the mainstream in terms of race/ ethnicity, class, and language, that is, who differ from parents who are White, affluent or middle class, who speak English, are often excluded or marginalized in schools (Auberbach, 2004; Noguera, 2002). Therefore, it is not surprising that low-income parents, parents with limited English proficiency, or parents of color may perceive themselves as powerless, worthless, and isolated in school situations (Bemak, Chi-Ying, & Siroskey-Sabdo, 2005; Charles, 2005).

The intersections of sociocultural factors may contribute significantly to the negative experience in schools (Cholewa & West-Olatunji, 2008). For example, low-income and students of color are more likely to be excluded from schools and perceived as disadvantaged and deficient, in comparison with White schoolmates (Noguera & Akom, 2000). The confluence of low-income status, race or ethnicity, and limited English proficiency results in social isolation and marginalization with multiple combinations of

social, economic, and political problems (Bemak & Cornely, 2002). Schools need to be aware of how the intersection of multiple positionalities, such as parents' socioeconomic status, minority status, and language, are constructed to produce marginalization in schools (Sil, 2007). Marginalization may be perpetuated when schools privilege White and middle-class norms and families in schools (Chambers & McCready, 2011). Students and families who are economically, socially, or culturally marginalized may not have a voice at schools (Birenbaum-Carmeli, 1999). Many low-income and ethnic minority parents and those who speak English as a second language experience their voice as ignored and experience the exclusion of their children (Crozier, 2001). Moreover, marginalized parents are less likely to have knowledge about social networks and resources to guide their children's education (Auerbach, 2004). Therefore, marginalized parents and their children are more likely to face intuitional barriers, lack of resources and social networks, and discriminatory tracking, which result in them experiencing frustration and alienation from school systems that perpetuate marginalization (Auerbach, 2002).

Schools must recognize that deficit and dysfunctional models may reproduce institutional racism, discrimination, and social exclusion in schools, and should be aware that intersections of cultural, socioeconomic, racial and language factors affect students' academic achievement and educational opportunities. The racial discrimination and stereotyping that students of color suffer are deeply permeated in the school, resulting in unequal education, so it is not surprising that a racial achievement gap exists in schools (Noguera & Akom, 2000). Marginalization that results because of intersectionality is associated with the risk of negative student outcomes in schools such as low achievement,

frequent suspensions, and behavioral difficulties (Cholewa & West-Olatunji, 2008; Noguera & Akom, 2000).

Notably, low-income status by itself does not always automatically result in achievement gaps in schools (Blanchett, Lingner, & Harry, 2009). Social structures and school structures perpetuate inequality and oppression in ways that reinforce the advantages and welfare of the most powerful (Staples, 1990). The structure of society and schools such as negative or deficit models contribute to the fact that low-income and minority populations experience institutional racism, discrimination, social exclusion, and bureaucratic resistance (Auerbach, 2002; Blanchett, Lingner, & Harry, 2009). Negative views such as blaming the victim may perpetuate extraordinary life challenges for low-income, and minority people (Harry, Klingner & Hart, 2005). For example, the stereotype of the neglectful and incompetent African American parent is deeply situated in the belief system of school personnel (Harry, Klingner, & Hart, 2005), and the “dysfunctional parent image” weaved together by race and culture and socioeconomic statures are deeply rooted in schools and in the society at large (Harry, Klingner, & Hart, 2005, p. 110). Therefore, understanding intersectionality and marginalization are keys to understanding the experiences of parents in schools.

### **Marginalization and Empowerment**

Empowerment focuses on reversing marginalized individuals’ lack of power in society (Maton, 2008). Empowerment is critical for marginalized parents to become involved in their children’s education. When empowered marginalized parents feel confident, they are more likely to remain involved their children’s education. The concept of empowerment is associated with facilitating access and control over valuable resources

and information for marginalized populations (Cattaneo & Chapman, 2010; Cochran, 1992). Moreover, Maton (2008) identified empowerment as the process through which marginalized populations gain resources, take control over their lives, and reduce societal marginalization in community settings. Lopez, Schribner, and Mahitivanichcha (2001) examined marginalized parents due to their migrant status using qualitative approaches over a five-month period. Through interviews and observation, the study examined what factors help marginalized parents become involved in schools and their children's education. The researchers found that one of the critical factors for increasing marginalized parents' involvement in schools is empowerment.

### **Empowerment**

The literature and research on empowerment, its definitions and components, is used as a conceptual framework to guide this study of parent empowerment. The following sections include a review of the theoretical and empirical literature on empowerment. The section begins with a discussion of power in parent-school relationships followed by an examination of the definitions, research, and components of empowerment. Further, empirical literature on empowerment and parent empowerment across disciplines is synthesized to establish a framework for parent empowerment. Finally, research on the relationship of parent empowerment to academic related outcomes is discussed

### **Power in the Relationships between Schools and Marginalized Parents**

Understanding power is critical to understanding the concept of empowerment, because empowerment is related to awareness of, understanding, developing, and

exerting power (McWhirter, 1991). Moreover, power is an essential factor in relationships between schools and parents (Cooper, 2009; Cooper & Christie, 2005; Delgado-Gaitan, 1991). Little social or political power and unequal access to resources prevent individuals, families, and organizations from gaining social and economic goods, perpetuating their feelings of powerlessness (Gutierrez, DeLois, & Glenmayer, 1995). The unequal power structure in society promotes inequality and inequity, which prevent marginalized populations from getting resources and information (Gutierrez, DeLois, & Glenmayer, 1995; Harly, 2009). Yet, powerless or oppressed people are likely to internalize their oppression, that is, blame themselves for their oppression in society (Auerbach, 2004; López & Mahitivanichcha, 200; Noguera, 1996). Therefore, individuals' powerlessness is ignored and overlooked in society and in schools.

True partnerships with parents for educational success entail educators acknowledging and validating parents' views and ultimately, sharing power (Cooper & Christie, 2005). Powerful parents typically have access to resources and social networks and exert influence over schools (Noguera, 2002). However, working-class or low-income parents of color are often denigrated to a powerless position within schools (Cooper & Christie, 2005). Schools have more power than low-income and minority parents, even though, in some cases, schools may seek to share the power with parents (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991). Schools may easily blame parents for poor achievement, even though the problem is rooted in unequal educational opportunities or systemic issues (Abrams & Gibbs, 2000).

Efforts to embrace educational opportunity, equity, and excellence in the public school system, must redefine equitable power-sharing with parents across levels of race,

social class, and language proficiency (Kainz & Aikens, 2007). Schools need to create equitable school initiatives and accessible organizational structures (Cooper, 2009). In order to do so, it is necessary for schools to make the paradigm shift to sharing power with parents, so that low-income and marginalized parents feel empowered in their children's schools (Abrams & Gibbs, 2000).

### **Defining Empowerment**

There has been a growing interest in applying empowerment perspectives in the counseling field (Bemak & Chi-Ying, 2005; Bryan & Holcomb-McCoy, 2010; Hipolito-Delgado & Lee, 2007; Lee, 1991; McWhirter, 1991; 1997; Ratts & Hutchins, 2009). However, little consensus exists about the definition, process, and components of empowerment. Researchers' use of the term empowerment varies and its definition is inexplicit (Addi-Racah & Arviv-Elyashiv, 2008; Cooper & Christina, 2005). Indeed, in many cases, it seems that they are using the term empowerment to merely mean self-efficacy or some related term, but empowerment is multifaceted and its essence cannot be captured by a single component.

Empowerment helps people increase power at the personal, interpersonal, political, and economic levels in order to take action to gain more control over the conditions of their lives (Bohem & Staples, 2004). McWhirter (1991) defined empowerment as individuals' increasing their awareness of power, developing the skills and capacity for controlling their lives, exercising their control, and supporting others in their community. The definition draws on operationalized components such as awareness of power dynamics, skill development, control over one's life, and community participation (McWhirter, 1991). Zimmerman (1995) stated that empowerment is a

psychological state characterized by trust in one's ability to influence others, feelings of control, and a critical awareness of the environment. On the other hand, some researchers define empowerment as democratic participation and self-determination (Itzhaky & Schwartz, 2000).

Empowerment is a multi-dimensional and multi-level construct that is conceptualized in diverse ways as occurring within the psychological, political, and social dimensions and at the individual or personal, interpersonal, organization, and community levels (Hur, 2006) as following table 1. Researchers and practitioners may focus on either personal or community levels of empowerment; others may focus on both personal and community levels of empowerment. While researchers operationalize empowerment, Zimmerman (1990) emphasized psychological empowerment encompassing contextual factors in terms of social, cultural, and political contexts. Empowerment includes developing a sense of psychological empowerment so that empowerment may be considered psychological empowerment at the individual level. Zimmerman and colleagues (Israel, Schulz and Checkoway, 1992; Zimmerman, 1990, 1995) presented psychological empowerment components comprising intrapersonal, interpersonal, behavior components. As a single component, empowerment is similar to psychological empowerment in its focus on psychological experience. Recently, researchers have made efforts to extend empowerment to the community level. Some authors mentioned that empowerment has gone beyond the traditional psychological constructs encompassing collective or community levels. For instance, Boehm and Staples (2004) intended that empowerment operate at both personal and collective levels. In regards to family empowerment, Koren, DeChillo and Friesen(1992) operationalized

empowerment at the family, service system and community/political levels. Specifically, in the counseling literature, authors stressed that empowerment should include personal and community components in the empowerment process (McWhirter, 1991; Hipolito-Delgado & Lee, 2007; Holcomb-McCoy & Bryan, 2010).

Notably, empowerment is seen as occurring at the personal, the interpersonal, and the political levels. At the personal level, individuals develop personal power in ways that recognize and identify the power they already have (Gutierrez & Lewis, 1999). At the interpersonal level, people increase their ability to influence others (Gutierrez & Lewis, 1999). At the political level, empowerment is comprised of social action and social change through transferring power between groups in society (Gutierrez & Lewis, 1999).

Empowerment is also conceptualized with respect to intrapersonal, interactional, and behavioral components. The intrapersonal component includes perceived control and competence to influence social and political systems important to them (Zimmerman, Israel, Schulz, & Checkoway, 1992). The interactional component is related to knowledge about resources and understanding one's environment (Zimmerman, Israel, Schulz, & Checkoway, 1992). The behavioral component includes taking action to exercise influence on the social and political environment through participating in the community and activities (Zimmerman, Israel, Schulz, & Checkoway, 1992).

Boehm and Staples (2004) identified empowerment as operating at the personal and collective levels. Personal empowerment relates to perceived personal ability, capacities, skills, and mastery with increased levels of self-determination, participatory competencies, and critical consciousness (Boehm & Staples, 2004). Collective empowerment refers to taking joint action to achieve shared goals and objectives by

drawing resources within the community and by influencing organizations and groups (Boehm & Staples, 2004).

Zimmerman and Warschausky (1998) also presented empowerment at the individual and community levels. At the individual level, empowerment includes perception of personal control, participation with others, and critical awareness. At the community level, empowerment refers to collective action to improve the community and the connections among community organizations and groups through equal access to resources, and community involvement. Within community empowerment, individuals work together to exert control over policy decisions or to improve the quality of life. According to Speer and Hughey (1995), “Individuals are empowered to the extent they understand that their own access to social power exists through organization, through the strength of relationships among individual members in that organization, and through active participation in their organization” (p. 737). Moreover, McWhirter (1997) indicated that empowerment includes connectedness with community and support for the empowerment of others.

Although many definitions of empowerment exist, a number of common themes can be identified in the literature. First, empowerment refers to both process and outcomes (Boehm & Staples, 2004). As a process, empowerment is related to developing power in ways that individuals participate in the decision-making process of groups or community organizations and take action with others. The outcomes are consequences or products of the process such as gaining access to community resources and information and changing school policies or curriculum. Second, empowerment operates at both the personal and community levels. Personal empowerment refers to increased personal

power such as consciousness, sense of meaning, self-determination, and competence. Community empowerment refers to connecting with others, developing a sense of belonging, and participating in schools and community in order to take joint action and influencing institutions and organization. In order to help marginalized populations, both personal and community empowerment should be considered (Hur, 2006; McWhirter, 1991; Robins, 2002).

Table1

*Levels of Empowerment*

<i>Authors</i>	<i>Levels of Empowerment</i>	<i>Professional Disciplines</i>
Zimmerman (1990); Zimmerman (1995); Zimmerman, Israel, Scholuz & Checkoway(1992)	Psychological: intrapersonal, interpersonal, behavioral	Community Psychology
Boehm & Staples(2004)	Individual, Collective	Community Psychology
Peterson & Reid(2003)	Psychological	Community Psychology
Israel, Checkoway, Schulz, & Zimmerman, 1994	Individual, organizational, community	Health Education
Koren, DeChillo & Friesen(1992)	Family, service system and community/political levels	Rehabilitation Psychology
Gutieerez & Lewis(1992)	Personal, Interpersonal , Political level	Social Work

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Zimmerman & Warschausky (1998)	Individual, community levels	Rehabilitation Counseling
McWhirter, 1991; Hipolito-Delgado & Lee, 2007; Holcomb- McCoy & Bryan, 2010	Personal, Community level	Counseling

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Below, the research on empowerment across disciplines is reviewed and then synthesized to arrive at an integrated and cohesive framework of empowerment comprising the common components of empowerment. The framework of general empowerment is used to expand the discussion of parent empowerment and arrive at an integrated framework of parent empowerment to guide research on the relationship of parent empowerment to academic outcomes.

### **Research on Empowerment across Multiple Disciplines**

A variety of studies on empowerment have been conducted across disciplines, but no integrated comprehensive empowerment framework exists regarding the definition and components of empowerment. Moreover, empirical studies across or within disciplines reveal that empowerment constructs are used in a variety of ways for a variety of purposes without consistency. A review of the studies on empowerment across a number of disciplines and highlighted some differences and similarities in how empowerment is defined, measured, and studied across studies. A comprehensive framework is needed that integrates and synthesizes empowerment constructs, generates

common empowerment definitions, and expands the research on empowerment in counseling and other disciplines.

**Community psychology.** Most theoretical conceptualizations of empowerment across disciplines originated from Zimmerman (1990, 1995) and Rappoport (1987). Rappoport (1987) defined empowerment as a process by which people gain mastery over their affairs at every level: with people, with organizations, and with communities. Zimmerman and colleagues defined psychological empowerment and constructed components with respect to intrapersonal, interpersonal, and behavioral components (Peterson & Zimmerman, 2004). Recently, in studies from the community psychology discipline, empowerment focuses on community-based empowerment. Researchers' efforts to construct and measure community empowerment have increased, with their recognition of the limitations of empowerment at the individual level (Peterson & Zimmerman, 2004; Peterson, Vowe, Hughey, Reid, Zimmerman & Speer, 2006).

Studies of the impact of sense of community (Hughey, Peterson, Lowe, & Oprescu, 2008; Peterson & Reid, 2003), community participation (Florin & Wandersman, 1990), and sense of belonging (Bohem & Staples, 2004; Speer, 2000) regarding empowerment were conducted in relation to community empowerment; the authors insisted that these community factors should be components of community empowerment. For instance, Peterson and Reid (2003) indicated that citizen participation plays a key role in increasing empowerment. Their study examined the relationship between participation in substance abuse prevention activities, neighborhood sense of community and alienation, awareness of neighborhood substance abuse problems, and psychological empowerment. They measured competence, efficacy, and control as indicators of

empowerment. Their findings showed participation in substance abuse prevention activities directly influenced psychological empowerment through awareness of neighborhood substance abuse problems.

Other researchers in community psychology (e.g., Banyard & Laplant, 2002) have examined the association of childhood trauma or maltreatment to empowerment. Banyard and Laplant (2002) surveyed 255 female undergraduate students to explore the relationships between a history of child maltreatment and components of intrapersonal, interpersonal, and behavioral empowerment. In this study, measures of empowerment included silencing self, self-esteem, generalized self-efficacy, desirability of control, perceived control, social action, and community connection. In the bivariate relationships, higher levels of child maltreatment were associated with lower levels of intrapersonal empowerment, and hierarchical regression revealed that maltreatment in childhood predicted psychological empowerment after controlling for family environment. Individuals who experienced trauma or maltreatment reported lower levels of empowerment in terms of lower self-esteem and self-efficacy, lower sense of control, greater silencing of self in relationships, and less connection to community.

Some studies of community-based empowerment have examined the effects of organizational characteristics such as organizational leadership, opportunity role structure, social support, and group-based belief systems in community organizations on empowerment (Peterson & Speer, 2000). Peterson and Speer (2000) examined the relationships between organizational leadership, opportunity role structure, social support and group-based belief systems on psychological empowerment. Psychological empowerment in community organizations was assessed by measures of political efficacy,

perceived competence, internal locus of control, and desire for control. An electoral association, 127 members of a service-agency collaborative, and a pressure group in the Midwestern United States participated in the study. The results showed that higher organizational leadership and social support were correlated with a low desire for control.

**Social work.** In social work practice, research on empowerment has been heavily influenced by Gutierrez (1990)'s definition. Gutierrez (1990) defined empowerment as the "process of increasing personal, interpersonal, or political power so that individuals can take action to improve their life situations" (p. 149). The definition includes the importance of increasing political power in social systems and working together. The studies of the social work practice emphasize empowerment process and techniques. Gutierrez (1990) identified the empowerment process in terms of increasing self-efficacy, developing group consciousness, reducing self-blame, and assuming personal responsibility for change. Further, Gutierrez and colleagues (Gutierrez, 1995; Gutierrez, DeLox & Glenmayer, 1995) developed critical consciousness as one component of the empowerment process that consists of group identification, group consciousness, and self and collective efficacy. In addition, Gutierrez (1995) examined the effects of ethnic consciousness on empowerment. Using the experimental method, 78 Latino undergraduate students were randomly assigned to a control group and two to treatment groups. Empowerment was measured by participation in Latino-oriented activities such as cultural activities, community involvement, and political activities. One treatment group focused on developing ethnic identity and the other on consciousness-raising. Both the participants in the ethnic identity and consciousness-raising groups scored significantly higher than the control group on empowerment.

When it comes to measurement of empowerment, Speer and Peterson (2000) developed a popular measure of empowerment in the context of social work settings. The empowerment scale focuses on the community organizing context and comprises cognitive, emotional and behavior components of empowerment based on Guterriez's (1995) empowerment process and intrapersonal, interpersonal, and behavioral components of empowerment based on Zimmerman's (1995) empowerment framework.

**Rehabilitation counseling and psychology.** The empowerment of persons with disabilities has been explored in the rehabilitation counseling and psychology discipline. Bolton and Brookings (1996) used a multifaceted definition of empowerment for persons with disabilities and constructed measures of empowerment focused on the interpersonal component of empowerment. Bolton and Brookings' (1996) study provided a 20-item taxonomy comprising characteristics of empowered persons with disabilities. Despite the existence of the empowerment construct in the rehabilitation literature, a review of the literature reveals a paucity of empirical investigations on empowerment. Drawing on Bolton and Brookings (1996)' framework, Tschopp, Frain, and Bishop (2009b) developed four measurement concepts of self-advocacy, self-efficacy, competence, and self-perceived stigma. Tschopp, Frain, and Bishop (2009a) examined the effects of empowerment on work-related issues in the rehabilitation of adults with disabilities. Regression analysis was conducted to examine the effects of empowerment on work-related issues such as the importance of work, satisfaction with work, control over work, and interference of disability among 70 adults with disabilities. In this study, empowerment scales assessed self-efficacy, self-advocacy, and stigma. The results showed that the empowerment levels of individuals with disabilities predicted satisfaction

with work, control over work, their work situations, and perceived interference of the individual's disability. Empowered individuals are more likely to have confidence in their ability to control their work situation and to be satisfied with adapting their work situation to their disabilities.

In another study, empowerment had effects on work status, adjustment to disability, functional ability, and quality of life (Frain, Tschopp, & Bishop, 2009b). Using multiple regression analysis, data were collected from 114 people with disabilities to examine the effects of empowerment on work outcomes. Self-advocacy, self-efficacy, competence, and self-perceived stigma were used to measure empowerment. Overall, higher empowerment levels were associated with higher work status, adjustment to disability, and quality of life. Specifically, on the subscales of empowerment, self-efficacy, and competence were positive predictors of work status, adjustment to disability, and quality of life.

Rehabilitation researchers have examined the effects of empowerment groups in helping individuals with disabilities transition from school to the world of work (Michael, Wehmeyer, & Gragoudas, 2004). The empowerment group for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities was designed to increase self-determination and student involvement. Using surveys and interviews, the study indicated that the empowerment group increased students' self-determination helping students successfully transition to adult life.

Rehabilitation researchers have also examined client or consumer variables likely to be related to empowerment. For example, Kosciulek and Merz (2001) used structural equation modeling to examine the relationships between consumer direction, community

integration, empowerment, and quality of life among 159 consumers with disabilities who were receiving services in a large Midwestern city. The empowerment scales designed for users of mental health services measured power/powerlessness, self-esteem/self-efficacy, community activism, and autonomy, control, and optimism over future and righteous anger. The results showed that higher levels of consumer direction in the rehabilitation service process were associated with higher levels of empowerment, and that empowerment was directly related to quality of life . Empowerment indirectly, influenced the relationship between consumer-directed services process, and quality of life. The emerging focus on outcome assessment and the importance of empowerment in the rehabilitation discipline have led to the expansion of the empowerment construct in the rehabilitation literature; but, still, there is a paucity of empirical studies in the rehabilitation literature (Frain, Bishop & Tschopp, 2009).

**Management, nursing, and health.** Management, nursing, and other health fields also have interests in empowerment although the focus appears to be on employees' empowerment at the psychological level. However, recently a growing number of studies have emerged related to organizational empowerment and empowering clients in the workplace. A few studies centered on the development of a measure of psychological empowerment and examined how empowerment affected work-related domains. Sprietzer (1995) developed a multidimensional measurement of psychological empowerment in the work place. The instrument assessed meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact, and the researchers defined empowerment as “motivational construct” reflecting individual orientation in the work contexts (p. 1,444). Several studies have used Sprietzer's (1995) psychological empowerment instrument to

investigate the effects of empowerment in work contexts. The studies indicated that psychological empowerment is significant in work satisfaction (Holdsworth & Cartwright, 2002; Laschinger, Finegan, Shamina & Wilk, 2004 ; Chang, Shih, & Lin, 2009), organizational commitment and job performance (Liden, Wayne, & Sparrowe, 2000; Logan & Ganster, 2007), and perceived respect in the workplace (Faulkner & Aaschinger, 2008). The outcomes of these studies indicated that empowerment appears effective in increasing work related elements including job satisfaction and commitment to work. Empowered employees are more likely to have higher satisfaction, performance, and commitment that may increase organizational effectiveness and employee well-being.

**Counseling and counseling psychology.** In the counseling and psychology fields, there are few empirical empowerment articles, despite growing interests in client empowerment. McWhirter (1991) defined empowerment as “the process by which people, organizations, or groups who are powerless (a) become aware of the power dynamics at work in their life context, (b) develop the skills and capacity for gaining some reasonable control over their lives, (c) exercise this control without infringing upon the rights of others, and (d) support the empowerment of others in their community” (p. 224). In the definition, empowerment encompasses goals for “powerless” populations. Second, it emphasizes an awareness of power dynamics, development of skills, exercising power, and supporting the empowerment of others. Third, it encompasses community empowerment including participation in the community to influence others. Based on the definition, McWhirter (1991) discussed the counseling process for empowerment with respect to the view of human nature, conceptualization of problems, power balance between client and counselor, and power analysis in order to provide an empowerment

framework for counselors' roles and counseling processes. In addition, Prilleltensky (1994) discussed the concept of empowerment as comprising value, process, and agents/stakeholders for the advancement of research in mainstream psychology. In empowerment, value comprises self-determination, distributive justice, and collaborative and democratic participation. Agents are people who take action for themselves or for others, and stakeholders are persons invited into the process.

Since 2000, there have been growing discussions about empowerment in the counseling literature both conceptually and theoretically. Hipolito-Delgado and Lee (2007) presented a personal empowerment process to help oppressed students in school settings. They asserted that personal empowerment can lead to community action and advocacy. The process of personal empowerment includes critical consciousness, positive identity, and taking social action. Similarly, Cattaneo and Chapman (2010) proposed the process of empowerment for use in research and practice in psychology. The authors defined empowerment as “an iterative process in which a person who lacks power sets a personally meaningful goal oriented toward increasing power, takes action toward that goal, and observes and reflects on the impact of this action, drawing on his or her evolving self-efficacy, knowledge, and competence related to the goal. Social context influences all six process components and the links among them” (p. 647). The definition emphasizes the iterative process and broad social aspects of empowerment. Further, the authors identified the components of the empowerment process including setting personally meaningful and power-oriented goals, self-efficacy, knowledge, competence, action and impact.

Empowerment in counseling has been applied in different contexts including school consultation. In order to help culturally diverse parents, counselors should integrate empowerment into parent consultation (Holcomb-McCoy & Bryan, 2010). Recently, Holcomb-McCoy and Bryan (2010) posited that empowerment in consultation with parents can help them increase power and build their own power base. Though some authors have proposed and introduced empowerment concepts and processes in counseling and psychology, there is a paucity of empirical literature that examines empowerment and its application in counseling contexts. Moreover, there is a need for an expansion of the empowerment framework to incorporate both personal and community empowerment. Indeed, a need exists for empirical studies that measures personal and community empowerment and related outcomes to guide the effectiveness of empowerment practices and intervention in counseling.

### **Conceptual Framework: Components of Empowerment**

In a variety of disciplines, such as community psychology, social work, rehabilitation, management, nursing and health, empowerment has long been a key concept. Within some of the disciplines, some effort has been made to develop empowerment frameworks to guide research, practice and intervention. Researchers have examined the components of empowerment differently for specific contexts and populations. Specifically in counseling, despite the current popularity of empowerment, the construct is not well defined. The lack of precise definition and consistent measurement of empowerment in the prior literature may be an obstacle to applying it to empirical research and the practice of empowerment (Cattaneo & Chapman, 2010; Hur, 2006; McWhirter, 1997; Zimmerman & Warschausky, 1998). Endeavors to develop

cohesive definitions and components of empowerment from prior literature will provide an integrated empowerment framework with consistent terms and operational definitions and components for application to parent empowerment research.

### **Components of Personal Empowerment**

Empowerment components refer to the operationalization of empowerment in order to study the consequences of the empowerment process (Perkins & Zimmerman, 1995). Table 2 presents the measures of personal empowerment across various conceptual and empirical articles. Zimmerman (1990) presented empowerment components in terms of intrapersonal, interactional and behavioral components. The *Intrapersonal* component consists of perceived control, competence, and efficacy. It includes perceived abilities and capability to achieve goals and behavioral outcomes. The *Interactional* component refers to understanding sociopolitical and community issues and developing skills to mobilize skills. It includes critical awareness, understanding causal agents, skill development, and skill transfer across life domains and resource mobilization. The *Behavioral* component refers to taking action to influence others or communities. It includes community involvement, organizational participation, and coping behaviors.

Gutierrez and Lewis (1999) described personal empowerment as comprising three components that lead to psychological transformation through: a) critical consciousness, b) confidence, and c) connection. *Critical consciousness* includes one understanding of the location of self and social groups in society with respect to interpretation of the distributive system in society; it is a perception of one's position in the social order. Critical consciousness also involves a collective orientation to social change, feelings of

discontent with the distribution of power and rejection of the legitimacy of power disparities between groups, and identification with shared group values and interests. *Confidence* in one's abilities and actions refers to self-efficacy related to modifying the environment, persistence when individuals encounter setbacks, and individuals' ability to overcome the feelings of futility, despondency, and anxiety. *Connection* is the development of social support networks and the creation of power through interaction by involving oneself with others in similar situations.

Becker, Kovach, and Gronseth (2004) defined individual empowerment as self-determination, decision-making, and self-sufficiency. In rehabilitation counseling, Frain, Bishop and Tschopp (2009) identified empowerment includes self-efficacy, self-advocacy, competence, and self-perceived stigma. Peterson and Reid (2003) examined the relationship of psychological empowerment with participation in substance abuse prevention activities, neighborhood sense of community and alienation, and awareness of neighborhood substance abuse problems. They measured competence, efficacy and control as indicative of empowerment. Their findings showed substance abuse prevention activities directly influenced psychological empowerment through awareness of neighborhood substance abuse problems.

Koren, DeChillo, and Friesen (1992) developed multi-dimensional family empowerment to assess different aspects of empowerment among families with disabilities. They defined empowerment at three levels: family, service system, and community/political levels, with each level consisting of attitudes, knowledge, and behavior domains. Gutierrez (1995) described empowerment as consisting of group identification, group consciousness, and collective efficacy. *Group identification* involves

sharing common experiences and concerns, group culture and norms, *group consciousness* involves understanding power relations in the society, and *collective efficacy* involves perceived capability. Gutierrez, DeLois, and Glenmayer (1995) defined empowerment as a psychological process consisting of control, confidence, power, choice and autonomy.

Despite frequent references to empowerment in the counseling literature, the literature reveals a paucity of empirical investigation that proceeds from the lack of a clear theoretical framework of the empowerment construct. I draw on the general empowerment literature to generate the components of personal empowerment. Table 2 presents the measures of personal empowerment across various conceptual and empirical articles. Some of authors presented theoretical components without empirical validation while others presented some empirical evidence. While little consensus exists across the studies in how authors described or measured components of personal empowerment, some consistencies emerge. First, competence is shown in most of the studies as one of components. Second, in community psychology studies, self-determination is a critical factor in measuring empowerment. Third, in the management and health studies, authors measured empowerment using Spreitzer's (1995) component of sense of meaning, self-determination, competence and impact. Fourth, in rehabilitation counseling, studies using Koren, Dechillo and Friesen's (1992) instruments focused on advocacy, knowledge, competence, and self-efficacy. Fourth, in counseling and social work, studies emphasize the importance of consciousness.

Table 2

*Components of Personal Empowerment*

<i>Authors</i>	<i>Components of Empowerment</i>	<i>Professional Discipline</i>	<i>Empirical or Theoretical</i>
Zimmerman (1990)	Perceived control, competence , efficacy, critical awareness, understanding causal agents, skill development, skill transfer across life domains, resource mobilization	Community Psychology	Theoretical
Peterson & Speer (2000)	Political efficacy, Perceived competence, Internal locus of control, desire for control	Community Psychology	Empirical
Peterson & Reid (2003)	Competence, efficacy, control	Community Psychology	Empirical
Becker, Kovach & Gronseth (2004)	Self-determination, decision- making, self-sufficiency	Community Psychology	Empirical
Koren, DeChillo, & Friesen (1992)	advocacy, knowledge, competence, and self-efficacy	Rehabilitation	Empirical
Zimmerman & Warschausky (1998)	Sense of control, critical awareness	Rehabilitation	Theoretical
Frain, Bishop, &	Self-efficacy, self-advocacy,	Rehabilitation	Empirical

Tschopp (2009)	competence, self-perceived stigma		
Gutierrez (1995)	Group identification, group consciousness, collective efficacy	Social work	Empirical
Gutierrez & Lewis (1999)	Consciousness, confidence, connection	Social Work	Theoretical
Gutierrez, DeLois, & Glenmayer (1995)	Control, confidence, power, choice and autonomy	Family	Empirical
McWhirter (1991)	Awareness of power dynamics, skill development, control over one's life community participation	Counseling	Theoretical
Cattaneo & Chapman (2010)	Meaningful, power-oriented goals, Self-efficacy, Knowledge, Competence, Action, Impact	American Psychology	Theoretical
Banyard & Laplant (2002)	Silencing self, self-esteem, generalized self-efficacy, desirability of control, specific measures of perceived control	Psychology	Empirical
Spreitzer (1995), Butts, Vandenberg, DeJoy, Schaffer, &	Meaning, competence, self-determination, impact	Management Health Psychology	Theoretical Empirical

A synthesis of the empowerment literature points to four key components of personal empowerment: consciousness, sense of meaning, competence and self-determination.

**Consciousness.** The concept of consciousness is critical to helping marginalized populations become empowered (Hardina, 2003). The counseling and social work disciplines frequently consider consciousness as an important component of empowerment (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991; Gutierrez & Lewis, 1999; McWhirter, 1991; Zimmerman, 1990). Consciousness refers to understanding of how their sociocultural identities (e.g., their race, class, language) in society result in racial and social discrimination and relative deprivation related to their group membership (Gutierrez, 1995; Gutierrez & Lewis, 1999). The awareness of power dynamics (McWhirter, 1991) is an aspect consciousness.

**Sense of meaning.** *Sense of meaning* is the belief or view that one's tasks and efforts are valuable and worthwhile (Spreitzer, 1995). Sense of meaning is a critical component in the work-based measure of psychological empowerment developed by Spreitzer (1995). Sense of meaning means that people believe in the importance of and know the meaning of work (e.g., school, education), and make a meaningful contribution to work (e.g., school, education). People want to engage in tasks that they believe are worthwhile.

**Competence.** Self-efficacy, mastery, control, self-esteem and competence are frequently considered as components of empowerment (Banyard & Laplant ,2002;

Cattaneo & Chapman ,2010; Gutierrez, DeLois, & Glenmayer ,1995); Frain, Bishop, & Tschopp ,2009; Koren, DeChillo, & Friesen ,1992; Peterson & Speer, 2000; Zimmerman, 1990; Zimmerman & Warschausky ,1998). Some authors identify them as psychological or intrapersonal empowerment components. The terms are overlapping in their meanings. Self-esteem, efficacy, control and mastery are analogues to competence (Hur, 2007; Zimmerman, 1988). Zimmerman (1988) posited that “Psychological empowerment may be generally described as the connection between a sense of personal competence, a desire for, and a willingness to take action in the public domain (p. 746). Competence refers to perceived ability and beliefs in one’s capability to successfully perform tasks and activities (Seibert, Silver & Randolph, 2004; Butts, Vandenberg, DeJoy, Schaffer, & Wilson, 2009).

**Self-determination.** *Self-determination* is related to the ability to voice one’s opinion and to have the courage to take risks to achieve personal rights (Hur, 2006). Staples and Boehm (2004) described self-determination as expressing one’s internal voice and feelings, taking risks, and raising questions without fear of consequences. The concepts of self-sufficiency and decision-making ability (Becker, Kovach & Gronseth, 2004) are connected to self-determination. Therefore, the components of personal empowerment can be summarized as four factors or components: sense of meaning, consciousness, competency, self-determination.

Unlike community empowerment, personal empowerment is embedded in individualistic actions rather than cooperation and community actions (Speer, 2000). Some components in the personal empowerment literature such as advocacy, connection, and impact seem more pervasive and relevant to the community empowerment literature.

A synthesis of the empowerment literature revealed two main components of community empowerment: community belonging and community participation. Table 3 presents the measures of community empowerment across various conceptual and empirical articles.

### **Components of Community Empowerment**

Community empowerment is a “social action process by which individuals, communities, and organizations gain mastery over their lives in the context of changing their social and political environment to improve equity and quality of life” (Wallerstein, 2006, p.17). Personal empowerment is likely to overlook the context in which the person is embedded that affects their life and well-being (Israel, Checkoway, Schulz, Zimmerman, 1994). Recently, as seen in Table 3, a growing number of studies have moved beyond personal empowerment to focus on community empowerment (Boehm & Stapes, 2004; Maton, 2008; Peterson & Reid, 2003; Speer, 2000). Community empowerment refers to individuals influencing decisions and changes in the social system and control over their community through collective efforts and participation ((Israel, Checkoway, Schulz, Zimmerman, 1994). The word “participation” is often mentioned in descriptions of community empowerment. Moreover, community empowerment is associated with social justice and advocacy because it involves taking action (Hur, 2006). Maton (2008) mentioned “for marginalized or oppressed individuals, the process of empowerment can be expected to take place over an extended period of time, in community settings that are salient in member’s lives ” (p. 5). Community empowerment makes it possible to influence others and communities by involving organizational activities and community services (Maton, 2008).

Community empowerment includes working together to support and help one another, and to change organizations for action taking (Hur, 2006; Bohem & Staples, 2004). Despite the importance of community empowerment (McWhirter, 1991; Zimmerman & Rappaport, 1988), components of community empowerment were scarcely mentioned in empirical studies. Some studies identified components such as collective belonging, community involvement, control over community organization, and community building (Hur, 2006; Boehm & Staples, 2004). Other studies indicated that community empowerment is comprised of components such as participatory activities, participation in parent organizations, involvement in the decision-making process, sense of belonging to the community, and community involvement as can be seen in Table 4 (Itzhaky & Schwartz, 2000; Speer & Peterson, 2000; Speer & Peterson, 2000).

Table 3

*Components of Community Empowerment*

<i>Authors</i>	<i>Components</i>	<i>Discipline</i>	<i>Conceptual/ Empirical</i>
Zimmerman(1990)	Community involvement, organizational participation, behavioral coping	Community Psychology	Theoretical
Hur (2006)	Collective belonging, Involvement in community, Control over organization in community, Community building	Community Psychology	Theoretical

Boehm & Staples (2004)	Collective belonging, Involvement in community, Control over organization in community	Community Psychology	Empirical
Banyard & Laplant (2002)	Community connection, Social action	Community Psychology	Empirical
Gutierrez & Lewis (1999)	Connection	Social Work	Theoretical
Speer & Peterson (2000)	Participatory activities (behavioral)	Social Work	Empirical
Itzhaky & Schwartz (2000)	Participation in parent organizations and decision making, sense of belonging to the community	Family Social Work	Empirical
Wiggins et al. (2009)	Community involvement and participation, sense of community solidarity	Public Health	Empirical
McWhirter (1991)	Community participation	Counseling	Theoretical
Zimmerman & Warschausky (1998)	Organizations working together to exert control over policy decisions, Collective efforts to maintain or improve quality of	Rehabilitation	Theoretical

life,

Residents' participatory skills

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A synthesis of the community-based empowerment literature points to two key components of personal empowerment: community belonging and community participation.

**Community belonging.** The literature shares similarities regarding the construct of community empowerment. First, one of the most frequently reported components in the literature is the notion of *collective or community belonging*, referring to connections to social networks including close relatives and peers (Staples & Bohem, 2004). Gutierrez and Lewis (1999) concept of connection is included in community belonging. Community belonging can be described as the sense of community including sense of belonging and connection to their community (Speer, 2000; Wiggins et al., 2009).

**Community participation.** Second, another critical component of community empowerment is *one's involvement or participation in community activities or events that may lead to one affecting decision-making and policy*. In studies of social work and community psychology, researchers perceive empowerment as associated with participation (Hardina, 2003; Zimmerman & Rappaport, 1988). Zimmerman and Rappaport (1988) defined participation as "involvement in any organized activity in which the individual anticipates without pay in order achieve a common goal" (p.726). Community participation includes involvement in activities to influence and affect the power structure, and can be connected to the notions of control over community organization and community building (Boehm & Staples, 2004; Hur, 2006). In reviewing

the conceptual interrelations between the components of community empowerment, the studies described in Table 3 consistently focused on two components, namely, community belonging, and participation in the community.

### **Parent Empowerment**

The foregoing careful review and synthesis of prior empowerment literature suggest clear operational components of empowerment at the personal and community levels. At the personal level, empowerment includes consciousness, sense of meaning, competence and self-determination. At the community level, empowerment includes community belonging and participation in community. These empowerment components represent an empowerment framework that can be used in a particular context and with a particular population. This empowerment framework derived from an extensive review of extant literature on empowerment can be applied to parent empowerment including related definitions, components, and methodologies.

In the next section, the empowerment framework will be expanded to inform this study of parent empowerment and academic outcomes especially for marginalized parents. Parent empowerment is discussed including its relationships to parent involvement, parent education, multicultural competency, social justice advocacy, and school-family-community partnerships. Following that is an examination of the family empowerment and parent empowerment research and a description of the personal and community empowerment definitions and components as they relate to parent empowerment. Finally, the research on parent empowerment on academic related outcomes is reviewed to inform the proposed study.

## **The Relationship of Parent Empowerment to Key Counseling and Education**

### **Variables**

Principles of parent involvement, parent education, cultural competency, social justice advocacy, and school-family-community partnerships are deeply grounded in the counseling and education literatures with the words empowerment and parent empowerment often interspersed in discussions of these topics. The education literature documents the importance of empowering marginalized parents (Cooper & Christine, 2005; Delgado-Gaitan, 1991; Jasis & Ordóñez-Jasis, 2004; Shepard & Rose, 1995). Parent involvement and parent education frequently utilize empowerment approaches in terms of helping parents advocate for their children, getting their voices heard in schools, and exerting influence over schools for a better education. However, despite the emerging acceptance of parent empowerment as critical to parents of low-income and other marginalized students, the extant literature has few models or studies that specifically guide school counselors through the process, interventions, and components of parent empowerment or in understanding its relationship to academic achievement outcomes. In order to help low-income and other marginalized populations, parent empowerment must be conceptualized, operationalized and measured in individual as well as community terms (Staples, 1990). Below, I discuss the links of parent education and parent involvement to parent empowerment, and the connection of parent empowerment to social justice advocacy, multicultural competency and school-family-community partnerships.

## **Parent Empowerment, Parent Involvement, and Parent Education**

Recently, parent education and parent involvement discussions have applied parent empowerment to their interventions and, sometimes, used the terms interchangeably (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991; Shepard & Rose, 1995; Toumbourou & Gregg, 2002; Vincent, 1996). Parent education and parent involvement programs should move from traditional involvement and engagement of parents into empowering parents and developing the parent empowerment process. Traditionally, parent involvement and parent education have been centered in White, middle-class norms and expectations of education such as helping with homework, attending Back-to-School Night, and volunteering at school events (Auerbach, 2007). Proponents of parent involvement models often seem unaware or unappreciative of the needs and experiences of low-income and marginalized parents (Jasis & Ordóñez-Jasis, 2004; Tilman, 2009). Even though recently the growing need for culturally sensitive parent education programs is emphasized, few culturally specific parent programs exist that address deep cultural values such as socioeconomic status, language, acculturation level, and parents' own interpretation and identity with their race, ethnicity and culture (Gorman & Balter, 1997; Kumpfer, Alvarado, Smith & Bellamy, 2002).

Without considering the cultural contexts of parents of low-income and other marginalized parents, schools blame parents that are less likely to be involved in children's school and education in the traditional ways that align with school norms (Addi-Racah & Arviv-Elyashiv, 2008). Further, parents' involvement is likely to be translated into giving school positions to parents that maintain institutional power (Vincent, 1996). One study utilized qualitative, semi-structured interviews to examine the

empowerment perspectives of 50 parents consisting of working class, African/Caribbean, and South Asian parents, and 16 teachers (Vincent, 1996). The participants indicated that there few possibilities existed for them to engage with the school when they shared little common ground with respect to race, social class, language or religious beliefs (Vincent, 1996). The traditional parent involvement model perceives parents as supporters or learners such as fund-raisers and as audience in their relationships with school personnel without any sharing power (Auerbach, 2007; Vincent, 1996). Schools routinely send out messages that limit parents to a support role, which disempowers parents of color, parents from low income backgrounds, and those who speak another Language or have limited English proficiency (Vincent, 1996). Indeed, traditional parent involvement models may prevent low-income and minority parents from increasing their influence in their children's education.

Building on the cultural and socioeconomic experience of low-income and marginalized parents, some researchers have incorporated an empowerment approach into parent involvement and parent education. For example, Shepard and Rose (1995) proposed a hierarchical parent empowerment model for parental involvement so that parent involvement transitions to empowerment ultimately. The study identified four hierarchical levels consisting of a) basic communication, b) home improvement, c) volunteering, and d) advocacy (Sheppard & Rose, 1995, p. 376). At the first level, *basic communication* refers to developing parents' responsibility through communicating with their children's schools. *Home improvement* involves parents making efforts to improve parenting skills such as homework assistance, reading, and discipline skills and more actively engage their children education. *Volunteering* means that parents becoming

volunteers at school through more involvement and connection in the schools. At the highest stage, *advocacy* comprises parents involving community organizations (e.g., local groups) and connecting to local communities (e.g., a local business) to affect community change and impact policy for institutional changes. The goals of parent involvement are that parents should move from developing basic communication to advocating for their children and community. The process of hierarchical parent empowerment for parent involvement is similar to the parent empowerment process that some authors define in terms of awareness of power dynamics and developing power and mobilizing it to influence others and advocate for their children (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991; McWhirter, 1991).

Moreover, parent education programs that focus on parent empowerment increase parents' involvement in schools and improve their children education. Jasis and Ordóñez-Jasis (2004) explored a Latino parent-organizing project that focused on parents' empowerment to improve their children's schooling and enhance their opportunities for a better school experience. The parent empowerment project enhanced involvement in schools with the goal of helping parents achieve an active voice in their children's education. The study's findings indicated that the empowerment project played critical roles for Latino parents in developing their own voice and decision-making through collective involvement in order to change and improve their children's education (Jasis & Ordóñez-Jasis, 2004).

In attempting to promote educational opportunity and equity for all students, schools' parent involvement and parent education programs should go beyond traditional approaches rooted in middle-class White parents' norms. Hence, parent empowerment

rooted in cultural competency, social justice advocacy, and school-family-community partnerships would enhance the goals of parent involvement and parent education. Further, the literature on parent empowerment embraces notions of social justice, multicultural competency, and partnerships with marginalized parents and vice versa. Therefore, efforts to define and measure parent empowerment should address underlying notions of social justice, partnerships, and multicultural competency.

### **Parent Empowerment and Multicultural Competency**

The concept of empowerment is integral to multicultural counseling practice in helping culturally diverse populations become empowered (Lee, 1991). Cultural sensitivity and competency play critical roles in empowering low-income and minority populations to engage in the schooling of children (Hipolito-Delgado & Lee, 2007; Lee, 2001; Lee, 2005). Specifically, critical consciousness is a critical element in the multicultural competence (Hipolito-Delgado & Lee, 2007; Vera & Speight, 2003). Moreover, parent empowerment based on cultural competency results in increased educational involvement of parents in ways that engage them in the decision-making process and sharing of the responsibility in schools (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991). Culturally specific empowerment programs with Spanish-speaking Latino populations in a community setting improved parenting practices and youth adjustment (Martinez & Eddy, 2005). Therefore, it is important that parent empowerment embrace multicultural competency.

Delgado-Gaitan (1991) identified empowerment as helping people gain valued resources and take action. Through ethnographic methodology, the researcher examined the nature of parent involvement activities in Carpinteria schools for four years. The

study compared a traditional parent program with a culturally sensitive program. The culturally sensitive program adapted a bilingual and migrant program and resulted in empowering parents through their shared common histories, isolation, and stereotypes in their schools and through parents organizing activities to become involved and communicate with schools (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991). School personnel's cultural sensitivity to families' social and cultural experiences resulted in enhanced personal feelings of competence and increased participation in schools. Ultimately, parents can share the power with and foster cooperation between school personnel and parents (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991).

### **Parent Empowerment and Social Justice Advocacy**

Empowerment also involves advocacy in helping individuals who are marginalized in society find their voice and take action (Ratts & Hutchins, 2009; Trusty & Brown, 2005). Trust and Brown (2005) intended that empowered parents may join in advocacy for their children (Trusty & Brown, 2005). Effective parent empowerment enables parents to increase knowledge about the education system and become strong advocates for their children thus challenging the status quo (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001; Cooper & Christie, 2005). In schools, parent involvement has a goal of increasing parents' influence in their children's lives. However, lower socioeconomic families have less power in schools and tend to value and perpetuate conformity rather than autonomy and self-direction (Shepard & Rose, 1995).

Empowering programs can help urban school parents become advocates and seek a deeper level of educational change or even alter their life paths (Cooper & Christie, 2005). Cooper and Christie (2005) analyzed the effect of a parent program, the District

Parent Training Program (DPTP), based on empowerment principles. The program was designed to empower parents to be active community members and seek educational change through positive teacher-parent interaction and being school volunteers and community leaders. The participants, who were Latino parents with limited English-speaking skills in a small Southern California school district, attended the 13-week program. Using a qualitative case study approach to determine the effectiveness and impact of program activities, the researchers found that the program increased parents' active involvement in school and their efforts to advocate for their children and engage in the decision-making processes in the school. The program also helped parents recognize their strengths, rights, and power. Parents became more involved in their communities and schools by joining committees and being volunteers. These empowered parents sought educational change and to become advocates within schools. Ultimately, the results may be indirectly associated with their children's academic success.

### **Parent Empowerment and School-Family-Community Partnerships**

School-family-community partnerships and parent empowerment can affect each other mutually or reciprocally. School-family-community partnerships facilitate parent empowerment in that parents gain skills, strong social networks, and personal competence in the partnership process (Bryan, 2005). Indeed, parent empowerment is an important principle and prerequisite for developing effective school-family-community partnerships with marginalized partners (Bryan & Henry, 2012).

On the surface, schools invite all parents to participate in the educational process as partners in collaboration with schools, but in actuality only the more powerful parents can take advantage of this right (Birenbaum-Carmeli, 1999). The traditional partnership

model between schools and parents fail to acknowledge broader social inequalities and unequal distribution of social, economic, and cultural capital that affect low-income and marginalized populations (Auerbach, 2007). Moreover, in school-family-community partnerships, school staff tends to emphasize more traditional roles of parents viewing partnerships more as communication and participation without the roles of decision-making. As a result, low-income and marginalized parents experience disempowerment or tokenism (Abrams & Gibbs, 2000).

Power struggles or tensions over leadership and authority often exist between parents and school staff (Abrams & Gibbs, 2000). The researchers found that struggles arose between parents and school staff around decisions, such as the distribution of grant funds, curriculum and instructional strategies, staffing, and projected goals and outcomes for the new school (Abrams & Gibbs, 2000). Empowerment must be grounded in collaborative partnerships to help people become empowered. The collaborative partnership in community-level interventions can enhance empowerment through community mobilization efforts (Griffith et al., 2008). Griffith et al., (2008) examined how empowerment through community partnerships can help community mobilization address youth violence. They conducted a case study analysis involving 13 participants who worked at Flint's Youth Violence Prevention Center (YVPC). YVPC comprised a partnership with a university, local hospitals, local and state health departments, police, courts, the local school system, and grassroots organizations. Through in-depth interviews, the study described the effectiveness of community mobilization strategies within the empowerment framework. Findings indicated that empowering a community

requires strong partnerships with core groups and networking such as community, political, institutional groups.

**The relationship of parent empowerment, multicultural competence, social justice advocacy, and school-family-community partnerships.** It is essential to integrate cultural competency, equitable power (equal partnerships) and social justice advocacy in the empowerment process in helping low income and marginalized parents become empowered. Equitable power enables minority populations to view themselves as partners in the empowerment process, and participate in communities for social changes (Maton, 2008; Peterson & Reid, 2003; Speer, 2000). Multicultural awareness and knowledge and advocacy are critical factors in empowerment (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991; Hipolito-Delgado & Lee, 2007; Gutierrez, 1995). Empowerment embraces the concept of social justice, which refers to equity and equality in the distribution of social resources (Gutierrez & Lewis, 1999). Therefore, empowerment is an underlying element of social justice, partnerships, and multicultural competency and is interlinked with these factors mutually and reciprocally.

### **Research Related to Parent Empowerment**

The following section includes a review of the family and parent empowerment empirical literature, followed by a discussion of parent empowerment including its definition and components. The section closes with a discussion of the research on the relationship of parent empowerment to academic related outcomes.

## Family Empowerment Research

In relation to parent empowerment, studies in fields such as family studies have focused on children and families who have disabilities and mental health issues. The development of valid and reliable family empowerment instruments has led to a proliferation of empirical studies using these instruments. Koren, DeChillo and Friesen (1992) developed the Family Empowerment Scale (FES) for use with families whose children have emotional disabilities. The Family Empowerment Scale (FES) consists of multiple dimensions. First, it includes three levels of empowerment: family, service systems, and community/political, each with three domains: attitudes, knowledge, and behaviors. Overall, the FES measures four subscales of advocacy, knowledge, competence, and self-efficacy. The framework of the FES identified empowerment as occurring at the *family* level, *service systems* level such as professionals and agencies, and *community/political* level such as legislative bodies, policymakers, agencies, and community members, each with respect to attitudes, knowledge, and behaviors. Related to mental health issues, disabilities, and medical issues, a variety of studies exist using the FES across disciplines (Curtis & Singh, 1996; Cunningham, Henggleler, Brondino, & Pickrel (1999); (Whitley, Kelley, Campos, 2011; Resendez, Quist, and Matshazi, 2000).

Parents' perceptions of their involvement in mental health services are associated with family empowerment (Curtis & Singh, 1996). In the study, 228 families whose children have emotional disabilities completed the involvement in mental health services survey and the FES. The result showed that family empowerment is significantly correlated with family involvement. Specifically, increased family empowerment in the knowledge domain was related to involvement in mental health services.

Researchers have also examined the effectiveness of multisystem therapy on family empowerment using the FES (Cunningham, Henggleler, Brondino, & Pickrel, 1999). The participants were 118 juvenile offenders diagnosed with substance abuse or dependence using the DSM-III-R criteria and their families. The participants were randomly assigned to the treatment group (receiving multisystemic therapy) and control group (receiving usual services). Findings indicated that multisystemic therapy that focused on empowering participants increased empowerment at the family and community/political levels. Further, increased family empowerment levels of caregivers were significantly correlated with youth functioning. Increased empowerment at the family level was significantly related to positive change in caregiver and family functioning. Increased empowerment at the service system level resulted in improving family functional variables such as family cohesion, dyadic relationships, and caregiver supervision of their children.

In another study using the FES (Whitley, Kelley, Campos, 2011), a strength-based community program was designed to empower grandparents African American custodial grandmothers raising grandchildren by helping them gain an increased sense of control over their lives and increased collaboration and advocacy over a 12-month period. The program increased empowerment at the family, service system, and community levels. Advocacy, knowledge, and self-efficacy were also significantly increased by the community-based program (Whitley, Kelley, Campos, 2011).

Using the FES, Resendez, Quist, and Matshazi (2000) examined the relationships between family empowerment, parent satisfaction and mental outcomes in caregivers of children who had received services for 6 months from intake and discharge. The family

empowerment level of advocacy, knowledge, competence, and self-efficacy were significantly related to parent satisfaction and children functioning in services. The more empowered caregivers were the more satisfied they were with services, and the better their child functioned. Further, mental health services increased the knowledge level of family empowerment.

The FES is useful for assessing empowerment among family members of a person with a disability. However, there are limitations and challenges to applying the framework underlying the FES to counseling for empowering parents. First, the FES items appear to focus on personal empowerment only to assess attitudes or beliefs and do not incorporate community empowerment. Second, a premise of the FES is that families are connected to mental health service systems. However, marginalized parents may not be connected to specific services and agencies in the community. Third, the family empowerment components of the FES were developed for families with disabilities. This makes the FES difficult to apply to parent empowerment because it is already been tailored to specific populations and contexts.

### **Parent Empowerment Research**

Researchers are conducting an increasing number of empirical studies of parent empowerment with a variety of empowerment-based programs. However, few studies were conducted using quantitative measures of parent empowerment and few of those in relation to outcome variables including academic outcomes. Most parent empowerment studies examine empowerment using interviews and observation. Second, in many cases, parent empowerment is not multifaceted, but measured as a single factor., Third, little consistency exists in definitions and quantitative variables used to measure parent

empowerment. Efforts to develop a parent empowerment framework should consider the need for measures that include both personal and community components. A clear definition and components of parent empowerment should be established to guide measurement of parent empowerment. A need also exists for studies that examine the relationship of empowerment to outcome variables such as academic outcomes to demonstrate the importance of empowerment.

### **Parent Empowerment: Definitions and Components**

The preceding discussions about empowerment identify empowerment as fundamentally about increasing power at personal and community levels. Based on the literature on empowerment across a variety of disciplines and keeping the understanding of power in schools and parents' contexts in mind, parent empowerment is defined as:

*A process and outcomes in which parents who lack power in schools increase their power by gaining control over their lives and taking action on behalf of their children. Parents gain access to resources and information and get their voice heard in the school, become advocates for their children, and take action to get a better education for their children. Empowered parents develop both personal and community empowerment, that is, they increase their consciousness, sense of meaning, self-determination, competence, community belonging, and participation in community and school.*

This definition includes both process and outcome components, as has been suggested in the literature (Boehm & Staples, 2004; Gutierrez & Lewis, 1999; Maton, 2008; McWhirter, 1991; Speer & Hughey, 1995; Zimmerman, Israel, Schulz, &

Checkoway, 1992). The process encompasses multicultural competency, social justice advocacy, and equitable school-family-community partnerships. It encompasses the personal, interpersonal, and political power of parents in order to take control over their lives and improve their life situations. Also, it indicates that empowerment occurs at both the personal and community level (Cattaneo & Chapman, 2010; Hipolito-Delgado & Lee, 2007; Hur, 2006; Itzhaky & Schwartz, 2000; McWhirter, 1991; Robins, 2002;). Further, parent empowerment focuses on low-income and other marginalized parents and the school settings that affect their children's education and results in better outcomes for their children such as improved child development and education.

### **Parent Empowerment Components**

Zimmerman and Warschausky (1998) intended that empowerment should be “conceptualized differently for specific contexts and populations (p. 4). Based on a review of the literature on empowerment in general and on parent empowerment, I offer a framework of parent empowerment that researchers can use to guide research and school counselors and other school staff can use to promote parent empowerment. This parent empowerment model is based on the integration of personal and community empowerment in ways that adhere to multicultural competency, social justice advocacy, and equitable school-family-community partnerships. Parent empowerment allows parents to increase the power that controls their situations and influence schools for a better education for their children. Especially, parent empowerment in school settings enables parents to advocate for their children through engaging in school reforms or systemic change activities (Cooper & Christie, 2005). For example, in high schools,

empowered parents may influence adolescents' behaviors with respect to reducing substance use and delinquency behaviors (Toumbourou & Gregg, 2002).

### **Components of Parent Empowerment**

An effective parent empowerment intervention or program should result in the following components of personal and community empowerment for parents.

**Personal parent empowerment.** As the previous literature illustrated, personal empowerment is the process and outcome of developing personal power so that parents recognize and identify the power they already have and exert power and influence over others, increasing their sense of meaning, self-determination, competence, and impact (Gutierrez & Lewis, 1999; McWhirter, 1991).

**Consciousness.** Friere (1973) introduced consciousness as a method of liberating oppressed people and of cultural emancipation in education. The dialogue on individuals' historical contexts may play a crucial role developing critical consciousness (Friere, 1973). Moreover, a variety of literature in counseling focuses on consciousness in empowerment (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991; Gutierrez & Lewis, 1999; Mcwhirter, 1991; Zimmerman, 1990). The development of consciousness is pivotal for developing personal empowerment (Gutierrez, 1995; Zimmerman & Warschausky, 1998). Gutierrez, DeLois and GlenMaye (1995) intended that individuals' critical awareness of their common history, called ethnic consciousness, be included in developing critical consciousness. Consciousness includes awareness of ethnic, social and cultural reality that affects their lives (Boehm & Staples, 2004). The development of critical consciousness includes group identification, group consciousness and self and collective efficacy (Gutierrez, 1995). Therefore, awareness and understanding of one's own culture play a critical role

increasing consciousness (Gutierrez, 1995). Gutierrez (1995) examined the relationship of Latino ethnic consciousness on empowerment using a quasi-experimental design. Participants were 677 Latino undergraduates at Midwestern University. The participants were randomly assigned to one of three groups; treatment group 1 (consciousness raising group), treatment group 2 (ethnic identify) and one control group. The empowerment measurement measured involvement in cultural activities, community involvement, involvement in political action activities, and ethnic activism. The consciousness-raising group had higher empowerment scores than the experimental group (ethnic identity) and control group. Overall, the two experimental groups had higher empowerment scores than the control group. The results indicated that ethnic consciousness directly affected empowerment. Similarly, Ball (2009) examined the implementation of critical pedagogy for consciousness in classrooms. The observations in the classroom revealed that students developed increased their academic outcomes, considered alternative life possibilities, and increased confidence in decision-making.

*Sense of meaning.* Although sense of meaning specifically for parents is not measured in the literature, sense of meaning is measured in the general empowerment literature. Sense of meaning is incorporated in Spreizer's (1995) empowerment components and a variety of studies consider it a critical factor in measuring empowerment (Chang, Shih, & Lin, 2009; Holdsworth & Cartwright, 2002; Laschinger, Finegan, Shamina & Wilk, 2004). Sense of meaning refers to one's values and beliefs considering one's work or task as being valuable or worthwhile (Butts, Vandenberg, DeJoy, Schaffer & Wilson, 2009; Hur, 2006; Seibert, Silver & Randolph, 2004). ). In education, sense of meaning may include parents' perceptions of the importance of

education and their values regarding their children's school activities and academic performance (Bowen & Bowen, 1998). In addition, parents' values may include perceptions regarding their responsibility of involvement in their children's school and education (Nelson, Prilleltensky, & MacGillivray, 2001). Parents' sense of meaning includes not only parents' values about their children's education and their involvement in schools, but also what education means in their own lives and their expectations for their children's education. Parents may have different values, goals and beliefs about their role in education and these may conflict with school culture (Auerbach & Collier, 2012). When utilizing deficit models, schools may assume that low-income and color of parents do not value education (Cooper, 2005).

***Self-determination.*** Recently, studies place emphasis on self-determination to measure empowerment Rapport (1987) proposed that empowerment is determination over one's own life. Self-determination is a central element of empowerment components (Boehm & Staples, 2004; Becker, Kovach & Gronseth ; 2004; Rapport, 1987). It is one's ability to make choices as one determines and to set goals to improve one's life (Barry, Ackerson & Harrison, 2000). It refers to the ability to voice one's opinion proactively (Hur, 2006). Self-determination also refers to parents making decisions and contact with schools to get their voice heard. It includes parents' contact with school staff, raising questions confidently and not being afraid to express their opinions with schools.

***Competence.*** Competence includes one's beliefs in one's capability to successfully perform activities or tasks (Seibert, Silver & Randolph, 2004). Parents feel confident in their abilities to foster their children education, communicate with and work with schools. Parents' competence can be developed when school staff identify and build

upon their strengths (Bryan & Henry, 2008). It is important for parents to recognize their skills, resources, and experiences and the valuable asset they are in their children's education. Competence includes parents' beliefs about their capacity and ability to help their children in their education, to get information, and to work with schools.

**Community parent empowerment.** Community empowerment develops collective power through connecting others, developing their sense of belonging, and participating in schools and community. At the community level, parent empowerment consists of community belonging and participation in the community.

**Community belonging.** First, one of the most frequently reported components in the literature is the notion of collective or community belonging referring to social networks including close relatives and peers (Staples & Bohem, 2004). Community belonging refers to building social networks and being connected to others in the community. It includes connecting among and between people serving as a basis for solidarity and collective action (Nogurea, 2002). Parents can have connection with other parents to get information and mutual help. Community belonging enables parents to enhance or build social capital and to work together for solving problems (Auerbach, 2002). It can be described as a sense of community solidarity (Wiggins et al., 2009). In particular, marginalized parents are more likely to be empowered when they hear information and get support from parents who have similar life experiences (Auerbach, 2012).

**Community participation.** Community empowerment refers to "collective action to improve the quality of life in a community and to the connections among community organizations" (Parkins & Zimmerman, 1995, p. 571). For collective action and

connections, participation is a critical factor. Community participation includes parents taking part in school activities such as volunteering, PTA organizations, and special events. It also refers to being part of the community to influence or to solve problems, and to make decisions to change the community. Participation may result in improvement of the community (Florin & Wandersman, 1990). Meaningful community participation goes beyond parents simply being present at school activities to their involvement in decision-making and advocacy. Participation that affects decision-making and policy is a critical component of community empowerment. Participation includes activities to influence and affect the power structure and, as a result, can be connected to the notions of control over organization and community building (Boehm & Staples, 2004; Hur, 2006). The empowerment model of Shepard, Trimberger, McClintock, and Lecklder (1999) identified an integrated participation model, which includes attending open houses, teacher conferences, and bake sales, serving as chaperons for school functions, and participating in workshops and programs designed by the schools (Shepard, Trimberger, McClintock & Lecklder, 1999). However, parents' community participation moves beyond these activities to volunteering for school or community organizations, serving as a member or representative of community organization to impact school policies and administration in their school or community (Shepard, Trimberger, McClintock & Lecklder, 1999).

### **Parent Empowerment and Academic Related Outcomes**

Many articles explore parent empowerment conceptually rather than empirically (Cochran, 1992; Vincent 1996). Moreover, there is little consensus about the operational components of parent empowerment or the instruments used to measure parent

empowerment (Griffith, 1996; Goldring & Shapira, 1993; Toumbourou & Gregg, 2002). Some researchers perceive parent involvement and parent empowerment interchangeably, in some cases using parent involvement items to assess parent empowerment and vice versa. Furthermore, few empirical studies exist that examine the relationship between parent empowerment and academic achievement or academic related outcomes (Griffith, 1996; Goldring & Shapira, 1993; Toumbourou & Gregg, 2002). Yet, parent empowerment especially for marginalized parents should enhance students' academic performance and other academic related outcomes (Auerbach, 2002; Cooper & Christe, 2005; Jasis & Ordóñez-Jasis, 2004). In this section, the literature related to parent empowerment and student outcomes is reviewed.

Empowerment for parents of high schoolers appears to influence adolescents' behaviors for example, reducing substance abuse and delinquency behaviors (Toumbourou & Gregg, 2002). Toumbourou's and Gregg's (2002) study examined the effect of a parent empowerment program on high school students' delinquent behavior, adolescent behavior, substance use, self-harm and suicidal behavior, and depressive symptoms. In this study, the sample consisted of 28 schools for 14 intervention and 14 control parents' groups. The parents and the adolescents in each family who participated in the parent empowerment program were surveyed to measure adolescent behaviors. Toumbourou and Gregg (2002) used logistic regression to determine the effects of the parent empowerment program. The result showed that the parent empowerment program significantly reduced students' substance use and delinquent behaviors. There was no significant intervention impact on depression symptoms, self-harm and suicidal behavior.

Parents' perceptions of their empowerment play a critical role in student academic performance. Griffith (1996) studied the relationship between parent empowerment and students' academic performance in 41 elementary schools in a large suburban school district. The researchers sent survey packets to the schools to send home to parents. Overall, parental empowerment was correlated with student performance scores, which is the state criterion-referenced test consisting of reading, writing, language use, mathematics, science, and social sciences, after controlling for demographic variables; in the regression analysis, parent empowerment accounted for 5% in the student test performance. The results revealed that high levels of parent empowerment were positively and significantly related to high levels of student academic performance. It is possible that the more parents feel empowered in schools, the higher student academic performance may be.

Parent empowerment appears to be related to parent involvement in and parents' satisfaction with their children's schools. Goldring and Shapira (1993) surveyed 337 parents from four elementary and middle schools in Israel about parent involvement, parent empowerment, satisfaction, and compatibility between schools' and parents' expectations using regression analysis. Goldring and Shapira (1993) found that parents who perceived themselves as empowered were more likely to be involved in schools and be satisfied with their children's education. Results showed that parent perceptions of empowerment were significantly associated with school satisfaction. Parents with high levels of empowerment were more satisfied with the school and more involved in their children's schools.

Parent empowerment is likely to enhance community self-determination and leadership, and participation through helping traditionally marginalized parents achieve active voices in the education process of their children. Jasis and Ordóñez-Jasis (2004) examined the La Familia Initiative, a parent-organizing project consisting of Latino immigrant parents from five participating schools for two years. Using a qualitative design, the study examined the effective factors of the project on their children's schooling. La Familia Initiative project is based on the empowerment process in terms of consciousness, knowledge, and action to promote parents' voice and address their issues affecting their children schooling. Specifically, the empowerment process happened as follows: Initiating community meeting to introduce La Familia Initiative to a large number of families, creating a variety of committees to better focus the project's activities, institutionalizing the program into the life of the school, organizing activities in schools such as multicultural nights for the holidays, and suggesting issues for school improvement for positive school community change. Through empowerment as a result of the La Familia Initiative, parents' developed their own voice as effective organizers, participated in school decision-making and became school activists. Ultimately, the findings indicated that the project improved students' academic achievement.

Moreover, parent empowerment helps marginalized parents develop improved interaction with schools and improve schooling for their children. Jasis and Marriott (2010) examined an alternative community based education program called Project Avanzando, which is based on empowerment approaches. The participants were marginalized parents with characteristics such as migrants, low income, and English learners. The ethnographic analysis was conducted of in-depth individual and group

interviews, classroom observation, program survey of the focus groups for three years. The empowerment concept underlying the study was that parents' recognizing and challenging power structure is associated with changing power. The findings showed that the community-based Project Avanzado increased parents' sense of self-efficacy and assertiveness, and parents believe the program had positive effects on students' school achievements.

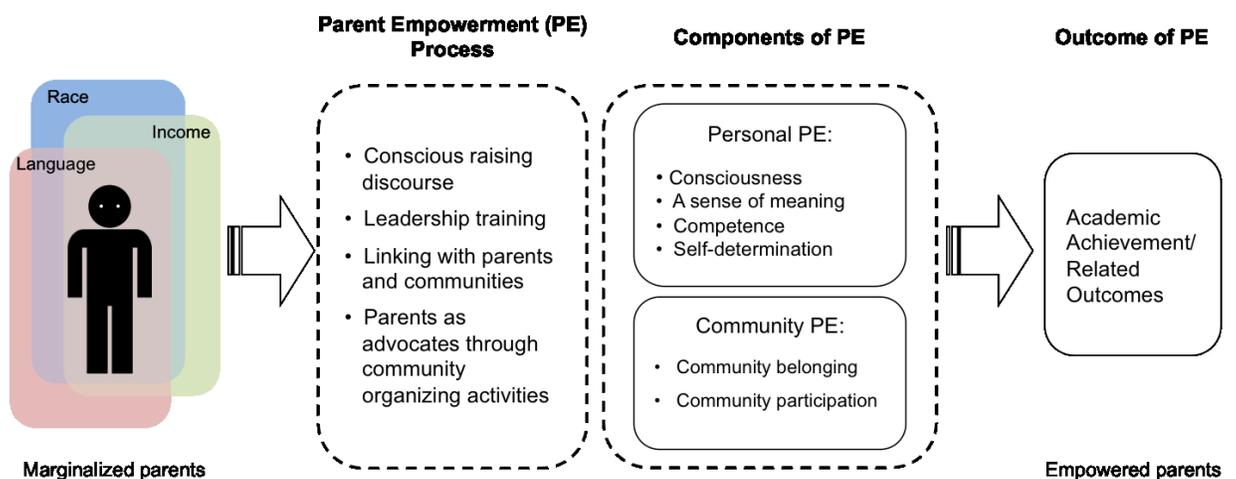


Figure 1. Parent Empowerment Model

Counseling has placed increasing emphasis on empowerment as a critical element of helping clients, students, and parents (Bemak & Siroskey-Sabdo, 2005; Holcomb-McCoy & Bryan, 2010; Hipolito-Delgado & Lee; McWhirter, 1997; Lee, 1991, 2005; Ratts & Hutchins, 2009). Moreover, the scant empirical evidence of parent empowerment on academic related outcomes may be due to the fact that parent empowerment frameworks are not yet fully developed. Moreover, none of the existing studies examine parent empowerment using large nationally representative samples. Cattaneo and Chapman (2010) suggested that longitudinal data methodology may be effective to examine empowerment considering the dynamic and complex nature of empowerment.

This lack of empirical evidence about the relationship between parent empowerment and academic achievement is problematic because a number of important planning and intervention benefits could emerge through further exploration and understanding of these relationships. Further, an empirical study to investigate effects of parent empowerment on academic outcomes using a large national representative sample may provide evidence and justification of the importance of parent empowerment in counseling.

### **Summary**

Marginalized parents and students are more likely to experience powerlessness, exclusion, isolation, and discrimination in schools (Auberbach, 2004; Bemak, Chi-Ying, & Siroskey-Sabdo, 2005; Charles, 2005; Noguera, 2002). Moreover, the intersections of class, race/ethnicity, and language may contribute to parents' negative experiences in schools that perpetuate marginalization as a result of institutional barriers and discrimination, lack of resources and social networks, and having their voices ignored (Bemak & Cornely, 2002; Blanchett, Lingner, & Harry, 2009; Cholewa & West-Olatunji, 2008;). School personnel must recognize the ways in which marginalization and intersectionality affect students' academic achievement and educational opportunities.

The concept of empowerment is about helping marginalized populations gain resources, control over their lives and reduce societal marginalization in community settings (Cattaneo & Cahpman, 2010; Cochran, 1992; Maton, 2008). However, though there is growing interest in applying empowerment perspectives in counseling, little consensus exists about the definition, process, and components of empowerment. Thus, it is difficult for counseling researchers to study empowerment. Laverack and Wallerstein

(2010) emphasized that “the design of methodology of the measurement of empowerment must begin with a clear theoretical understanding to the concept, both as process and as an outcome, its different levels of analysis and the domains or factors that influence its utilization effectiveness” (p. 183).

The review of prior empowerment literature provides definitions and operational components of parent empowerment on the personal and community levels. Parent empowerment is a process and an outcome in which parents who lack power in schools increase their power to gain control over their lives and take action for their children. Parents develop both personal and community empowerment; that is, they increase consciousness, their sense of meaning, self-determination, competence, community belonging, and participation in community and school. In the study, the clear conceptual framework of parent empowerment will provide a cornerstone to guide the investigation of the relationship of parent empowerment to academic outcomes.

### **CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY**

This chapter discusses the methodology of the study describing the purpose of the study, research design, sample, measures, procedures, data analysis, and limitations of the study. The purpose of the study was discussed along with the specific research questions guiding the study. The purpose of this study was to define and assess parent empowerment and its relationship to academic achievement. Further, the study examined how intersectionality affects parent empowerment.. The following questions guided the study:

1. What is the relationship of parent empowerment to academic achievement after controlling for demographic variables?
  - a. What is the relationship of parent personal empowerment (i.e., consciousness, sense of meaning, competence, and self-determination) to academic achievement after controlling for demographic variables?
  - b. What is the relationship of parent community empowerment (i.e., community belonging, and community participation) to academic achievement after controlling for demographic variables?
2. How does intersectionality relate to parent empowerment?
  - a. How does parent empowerment vary based on intersections of parents' race/ethnicity, home language, and income?

## **Research Design**

This study was a correlational study that used data from the Parent and Family Involvement Survey 2007 of the National Household Education Surveys (NHES) collected by the National Center of Education Statistics (NCES). The study was designed to investigate the relationship between parent empowerment and academic achievement as measured by parents' reports of students' grade point average (GPA). Further, the study investigated the role of intersectionality in parent empowerment. The parent empowerment constructs as defined in this study were measured by selected variables from the Parent and Family Involvement Survey (PFI-NHES: 2007).

## **Sample**

The nationally representative sample of parents was selected from the NHES: 2007, a public use data set collected by the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). The NHES: 2007 consists of a national sample of parents of children from kindergarten through grade 12. The sample comprised 10,681 parents of students who attended U.S. public and private across 50 states and the District of Columbia.

## **Measures**

### **Dependent Variable**

In this study, the dependent variable was academic achievement measured by parents' self-reports of their children's Grade Point Average (GPA). Dornbusch et al (1987) found that self-reported grades provide an appropriate measure of academic achievement relative to standardized achievement tests. The researchers (Dornbusch et al,

1987) indicated that the correlation between school GPA and self-reported grades was .76. In the current study, Students' Grade Point Average (GPA) was a categorical variable ranging from 1 to 5 with 1 indicating the children receive mostly As, 2 mostly Bs, 3 mostly Cs, 4 mostly Ds and lower, and 5 indicating the school does not give these grades. In this study, participants who selected response 5 were excluded thus representing the missing data described in a later section. Self-reported GPA is treated as an interval variable in this study as in the case in other studies (Grotsky & Jones, 2007; Schmidt, Shumow, Kackar, 2007) The variable is described in detail in Table 4.

### **Demographic Variables**

**Parents' educational level.** Parents' educational level measured the highest level of education completed by the child's parents: 1 = less than high school diploma, 2 = high school graduate or equivalent, 3 = vocational/technical education after high school or some college, 4 = college graduate, and 5 = graduate or professional school. In the regression analyses, the reference group was graduate or professional school.

**Household income.** Household income was measured on a 14 point scale ranging from 1 = \$5000 or less to 14 = Over \$100,000.

**Home language.** Parents' language measured what language parents speak most at home coded 1=Another language, 2=Spanish, 3=English and Spanish equally, 4= English and another language, 5=English. In the regression analyses, the reference group was 5=English.

**Race/ethnicity.** In this study, race/ethnicity was measured by mother's race/ethnicity. The reason for selecting mother's race/ethnicity was that the majority of respondents (75%), who completed the questionnaire as major caregivers for their

children, were children's mothers rather than fathers or other types of guardians (7,846 out of 10,681 or 75.0%). They responded to the question "what is your relationship to child?" as multiple responses. Mothers' responses were coded as dichotomous scales (Yes=1, No=0) for each of seven race/ethnicity variables; Hispanic, African American, American Indian, Asian, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific, other race, and White. Due to multiple responses, the total percentages of ethnicity/race were more than 100%. In each of regression analyses, the reference group was White. In the interaction analyses, the variable White measured whether mothers' race is white or minority using a dichotomous scale (Yes=1, No=0).

**School type.** School type was measured by whether the child goes to public or private school and coded as two categories: 1=public, 0=private.

**Urbanicity.** PFI-NHES: 2007 derived the urbanicity variable from the zip code and census data of the respondent. The four categories, city, suburban, town, and rural, are identified in NCES community types. And specifically, city consisted of large, middle and small. Suburban also comprised of large, middle size and small. Town and rural consist of fringe, distant and remote. According to NCES community types, city is for territory with population ranging from 100,000 to 250,000 inside urbanized area and a principal city. Suburban include the settled population from 100,000 to 250,000 inside an urbanized area and outside principal city. Town is the territory inside an urban cluster, ranging 10 miles to 35 miles from an urbanized area. Rural is the territory that is ranging from less than or equal to 5 miles to more than 25 miles from an urbanized area and is also ranging from less than or equal to 2.5 miles to more than 10 miles from an urban

cluster. In this study, those variables were recoded into two categories: 0 = Urban/combined city, suburban, and town and 1 = Rural.

Table 4

*Demographic Variables*

Variables in the Study	Survey Items and Variable Name from NHES /Scale
Race/	Mothers' race/ethnicity
Ethnicity	Dichotomous variable (Multiple responses) Hispanic (MHISPAN 1), African American (MBLACK 1), American Indian (MAMIND 1), Pacific Islander (MPACI 1), Asian (MASIAN 1), Other race (MARACEOTH 1); (1=Yes, 0=otherwise)
Parents	Parents' highest educational levels (PARGRADE07)
Education	Categorical Variable 1 = Less than high school 2 = High school graduate or equivalent, 3 = Some college or vocational 4 = College 5 = Graduate or professional school (Reference group)
Household	Total income of all persons in the household the past year
Income	Continuous Variable (HINCOME) 1= \$5000 or less, 2 =\$5,001 to \$10,000, 3=10,001 to\$15,000, 4=15,001 to \$20,000, 5=\$20,001 to \$25,000, 6=25,001 to 30,000, 7=30,001 to \$35,000, 8=\$35,001 to \$40,000, 9=\$40,001 to \$45,000,

10=\$45,001 to %50,000, 11=\$50,001 to \$60,000, 12=\$60,001 to \$75,000, 13=75,001 to 100,000, 14= Over \$100,000.

Parents' language	Language parents speak most at home (RESPEAK) Categorical Variable 1 = Another language, , 2 = Spanish, 3 = English and Spanish equally, 4 = English and Another Language Equally, 5 = English
School Type	Dichotomous Variable(SPUBLIC) 0=Private, 1= Public
Urbanity	Dichotomous Variable (ZIPLUCL) 0 = Urban (City, Suburban, Town), 1 = Rural ( Rural).

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### **Independent Variables: Parent Empowerment.**

Parent empowerment was operationalized by six variables that measure two constructs and six components of parent empowerment as defined by the research from the literature review.

**Parent personal empowerment.** Parent personal empowerment was measured by four variables: consciousness, sense of meaning, competence, and self-determination. In parent personal empowerment, one item measures consciousness, two items measure sense of meaning, one item measures competence, and one item measures self-determination.

**Consciousness.** Consciousness includes parents awareness of their social and cultural reality (e.g., race, class, language) that affects their life and their children's education (Boehm & Staples, 2004; Gutierrez, 1995; Gutierrez, DeLois, &

GlenMaye,1995; Gutierrez & Lewis, 1999). Consciousness can be developed by increasing sense of ethnic identity and awareness of ethnic heritage through dialogue about one's historical or sociocultural contexts (Freire, 1973; Gutierrez,1995). Two items from the Parent and Family Involvement Survey of the NHES: 2007 were used to measure consciousness. The two items: "In the past week has anyone in the family talked with the child about his/her family history or ethnic heritage?" and "In the past month has anyone in the family talked with the child about his/her family history or ethnic heritage?" were both dichotomous items (1 = Yes, 2 = No) coded by 0=No, 1=Yes. These two items were combined to create a composite measuring the variable consciousness. This variable captured one aspect of consciousness, that is, parents' consciousness of their sociocultural context. Note that this variable does not capture critical consciousness.

***Sense of meaning.*** Sense of meaning refers to parents' values and beliefs related to education especially regarding parents' perceptions of their children's education and their own involvement in schools as valuable or worthwhile (Butts, Vandenberg, DeJoy, Schaffer & Wilson, 2009; Hur, 2006; Seibert, Silver & Randolph, 2004). In education, sense of meaning refers to parents' educational meaning. Bowen and Bowen (1998) reported that educational meaning refers to the perception of the importance of the relevance of school work as well as the perception that schooling is worthwhile and valuable. Walker, Wilkins, Dallaire, Sandler and Hoover-Dempsey (2005) suggested that parents' perceptions of the importance of their children education are associated with beliefs about roles including their own responsibility (i.e., role construction). Role construction includes parents' beliefs about responsibilities in terms of their involvement and activities in children' education (Walker, Wilkins, Dallaire, Sandler & Hoover-

Dempsey, 2005). Therefore, in this study, sense of meaning was measured by two items: “It is parents’ responsibility to teach their children to value education and success in school” and “It is the parents’ responsibility to attend meetings with teachers or other school staff.” Both items were measured on a 4-point scale (1=*strongly agree*, 4=*strongly disagree*). These items were reversed coded so that a higher score represents a higher sense of meaning (1=*strong disagree*, 2=*disagree*, 3=*agree*, 4=*strongly agree*). Together, these two items captured one aspect of parents’ sense of meaning, that is, parents’ perceptions of their responsibility or investment in their children’s education.

**Competence.** This includes parents’ beliefs in their capability to foster their children education and communicate with and work with schools (Seibert, Silver & Randolph, 2004). Competence was measured by one item: “I know how to help my child do well in schools.” It was measured on a 4-point scale (1=*strongly agree* to 4= *strongly disagree*). This item was reversed coded so that a higher score represents a higher sense of competence.

**Self-determination.** Self-determination refers to parents’ ability to voice their opinion proactively such as by contacting the school to get their voice heard (Boehm & Staples, 2004; Hur, 2006). It was measured with a single indicator: “I contact the school or teacher when I disagree with the child’s school” and was measured on a trichotomous scale (1 = Yes, 2 = No, and 3 = don’t ever disagree) recoded as 0=No, 1= don’t ever disagree, 2=Yes.

**Parent community empowerment.** Parent community empowerment comprise of community belonging and community participation. In parent community

empowerment, three items measured community belonging, and ten items measured community participation.

***Community belonging.*** Community belonging refers to parents' feeling or sense of belonging to the community and their connectedness with others in the community and was measured by three items. Two items asked about belonging in the school: "My child's school as a whole is welcoming to my family" and "I trust the staff at my child's school to act with my child's best interest in mind." Both items were measured on a four-point scale (1=*strongly agree*, 4= *strongly disagree*), which were reverse coded for this study. The third item measured parents' connectedness with others in the community. The item asked parents "About how many parents do you talk regularly in your neighborhood, community, or child's school/homeschool group who have children about the same age/grade as your child/children." It was measured on a four-point scale that assesses how many other parents they are in contact with ranging from 0 = none to 4 = more than 10 other parents. All three responses were summed up to create the total score on the community belonging scale for the current study.

***Community participation.*** Community participation refers to parents' involvement in the school and community in meaningful ways. A total of ten items were included to construct the scale. It was created by aggregating ten dichotomous (No=1, Yes =2) items that asked parents if they attended, served, and participated in a variety of activities such as a school meeting, PTA, school events, volunteer, fundraising, meeting with a guidance counselor, attending an event, and attending an athletic or sporting event. The items were recoded as Yes =1, No=0 and then summed up ranging 0 to 10.

Table 5

*Variables of Parent Empowerment and Academic Achievement*

Variables in the Study	Survey Items and Variable Name from NHES /Scale	Scale
<i>Parent Personal Empowerment</i>		
Consciousness	Dichotomous variable FOHIST, FOETHNIC Talk with child about the family history or ethnic heritage	0=no, 1=yes
Sense of meaning	Continuous variable, Sum of two variables: FPPRVAL, FPPRATND 1. Parents' responsibility to teach their children to value education and success 2. Parents' responsibility to attend meetings with teachers or other school staff	1 = Strong disagree, 2= disagree, 3= Agree, 4=Strong agree
Competence	Continuous variable FPHLPCHD Know how to help my child do well in school	1=Strong disagree, 2= Disagree, 3=Agree, 4= Strong agree
Self-determination	Trichotomous variable FPTALK	2=Yes, 0= No, 1= don't ever

	Contact the school or teacher, when disagree with child's school,	disagree
	<i>Parent Community Empowerment</i>	
Community belonging	Continuous variable, Sum of three variables: FPSWELCM, FPPTRUST, CSPARCMT	
	1. School as a whole is welcoming to my family	1=Strong disagree, 2=disagree,
	2. Trust the staff at child's school to act with child's best interest in mind	3= Agree, 4= Strong agree
	3. Contact with other parents (regularly)	0 = none, 1 = one to three other parents, 2 = four to five other parents, 3 = six to ten other parents, 4 = more than 10 other parents
Community participation	Continuous Variable, Sum of ten variables: FSMTNG, FSPTMTNG, FSATCNFN, FSSPORT, FSVOL, FSFUNPRS, FSCOMMTE,	1 = Yes, 0 = No (Recoded as 1=Yes, 0=No)

FSCOUNSLR, FOGROUP,

FOSPRTEV

1. Attended a general school meeting  
(e.g., open house, back to school night)
2. Attended a meeting of the parent-  
teacher organization or association
3. Gone to a regularly scheduled  
parent-teacher conference with child's  
teacher
4. Attended a school or class event  
(e.g., play, dance, sports event, or  
science fair)
5. Served as a volunteer in child's  
classroom or elsewhere in the school
6. Participated in fundraising for the  
school
7. Served on a school committee
8. Met with a guidance counselor in  
person
9. Attended an athletic or sporting  
event (outside of school) in which my  
child was not a player
10. Attended an event sponsored by a

	community, religious, or ethnic group	
Academic Achievement	Continuous variable	1 = Mostly D's
	SEGRADES	and lower
	Parents; reports of child's grades	2 = Mostly C
	across all subjects	3 = Mostly B's
		4 = Mostly A's

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## **Data Analysis**

### **Procedures**

The NHES survey was conducted by random digit dialing (RDD) telephone survey using computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) technology from a national sample in the 50 states and the District of Columbia (Hagedorn et al, 2009). Specifically, the National Household Education Surveys Program (NHES)'s Parent and Family Involvement in Education (PFI) developed by National Center for Education Statistic (NCES) was conducted to study parent and family involvement in children enrolled in kindergarten through grade 12 and was collected from January 2 through May 6, 2007 (Hagedorn et al, 2009). PFI-NHES: 2007 provides current and cross-sectional data on a nationally representative sample of children including public, private, and home school students (Hagedorn et al, 2009). The PFI survey includes the topics of school choice, homeschooling, family involvement in school, homework, activities outside of school, parents support for the school, school efforts for family involvement, satisfaction with the

school, postsecondary education plan, and health and disabilities of child (Herrold & Mulligan, 2008).

The sample frame of NHES: 2007 RDD comprised all telephone numbers in 100 banks including high minority population (Hagedorn et al, 2009). As previous studies of 1995, 1999, 2001, 2003 and 2005, this study used a simple random sample of telephone numbers selected from all telephone numbers in 100 banks, called the listed stratum in a list-assisted sample (Hagedorn et al, 2009). Therefore, people do not have telephone numbers in the list was not included in the sample. This sampling frame may be biased to produce differential rates among population subgroups by means of excluding non-telephone households and zero-listed strata (Hagedorn et al, 2009).

In order to ensure a high minority population in the sample while reducing biases, the weights of selection probabilities is used to oversampling of telephone numbers in the high minority (Hagedorn et al, 2009). Two stratified sampling procedure conducted securing minority population; at first phase, minority stratification was used only, and then the mailable status obtained from samples of first phase, in which subsampling was conducted with combining minority stratum and mailable status as a second phase (Hagedorn et al, 2009). The NHES-PFI interviews were conducted in English and Spanish and 771 interviews completed in Spanish in PFI survey (Hagedorn et al, 2009). Specifically, The PFI survey used unequal selection probabilities according to the number of children in the household. In some household, more than one child was selected, the other hand, one child for any PFI-eligible children was selected for the survey (Herrold & Mulligan, 2008).

In NHES: 2007, the interviews were conducted as two stages; Screener interviews are for sample household members, and then households completed screener interviews were sampled for extended interviews (Hagedorn et al, 2009). The screener interviews were conducted to gather information related to subjects, select the appropriateness of extended interviews, and administer statistical items (Herrold & Mulligan, 2008). Overall, the screener unit response rate comprised of 53 %. In the PFI survey, the weighted unit response was 74.1 % and the overall unit response rate including the screener and the interview unit response rate was 39.1 % (Herrold & Mulligan, 2008).

For reliability and validity, weighting adjustment was used to help reduce the bias in the collection and processing of data (Herrold & Mulligan, 2008). In the collection of data, estimation procedures of the weights adjustment were conducted to exclude 4.7 percent of children who live in households without telephones and the 11.9 percent who live in cell-only households (Herrold & Mulligan, 2008). Considering response bias, NHES: 2007 conducted a bias study to evaluate overall bias related to nonresponse and noncoverage. As a result, in the PFI -NHES: 2007, there was no evidence about substantial overall bias. In the PFI-NHES 2007, the item nonresponse rate was 3 percent or lower. However, specifically, nonresponse rate of the item of household income was 9.5 percent. The imputation using a hot-deck procedure was conducted for missing data to increase reliability (Herrold & Mulligan, 2008). Moreover, weighting procedures by household-level and person-level were used to increase representativeness.

### **Data Analysis**

SPSS Complex Samples 19.0 was used to test for regression and higher linear regression in order to adjust sample design effects and consider the sample weight. SPSS

Complex Samples 19.0 is effective to control for sample design effects of complex samples that produce small standard errors associated with increasing probability of Type I error. Moreover, analyses of complex samples must use procedures or software that applies sampling weight to correct for oversampling to adjust the standard errors.

**Descriptive statistics.** The means, frequency, percentage, and standardized deviations of all demographic variables and parent empowerment variables were described. Further, the correlations between the parent empowerment variables and academic achievement were examined.

**Hierarchical multiple linear regression.** To answer research question one, the independent variables were entered in blocks or steps called models. At the first step (Model 1), the academic achievement measure was regressed on the demographic variables. In the second step (Model 2), the academic achievement measure was regressed on the six components of parent empowerment controlling for the demographic variables. The model R-square and Wald  $F$  were examined at each step of the analysis. In addition, the Beta coefficients, t-test statistics, and level of significance were examined to determine the significance and direction of the relationship of each variable to the dependent variable.

**Intersectionality variables.** To examine effect of intersectionality of race/ethnicity, income and language on parent empowerment, interaction variables were created by product terms of race/ethnicity, household income, and language (e.g., race/ethnicity x language, race/ethnicity x income, language x income, race/ethnicity x household income, and language at home). The strategy of analyzing interaction effects is used as a beginning attempt to capture the effects of intersectionality in the context of a

large national dataset. Storer et al (2012) explored intersectionality by investigating interaction between class, race and students' educational attainment. The researchers (Storer et al, 2012) suggested that interaction analysis may help explain intersectionality as meaningful ways.

**Interaction effects.** To examine interaction effects of race/ethnicity, income and language on parent empowerment, multiple regression and logistic regression analyses were conducted. A separate regression analysis containing Race, Household Income, Language, and other independent variables were conducted for each variable of parent empowerment.

**Multiple linear regression.** To examine the interaction effects of race/ethnicity, language, and income on four components of parent empowerment (i.e., sense of meaning, competence, community belonging, and community participation), four multiple regression analyses were conducted. The multiple regression method is considered that it is appropriate to predict continuous criterion variables from more than one predictor. The squared multiple correlation coefficients ( $R^2$ ) and Wald  $F$  estimated to predict whether all predictors explain the significant amount of variance in the criterion variables. In addition, each beta coefficient and t-test for each coefficient was used to evaluate the effect of each predictor on the criterion.

**Logistic regression.** To examine interaction of race/ethnicity, language, and income and consciousness and self-determination in the parent empowerment, I conducted three separate logistic regression analyses, one each for consciousness, self-determination (Never disagree vs. No), and self-determination (Yes vs. No). Logistic regression is appropriate to analyze dichotomous dependent variables. Results provide

logged odds (B) and odds ratios (ORs) for each independent variable. ORs are useful to interpret the results comparing with the logged odds. An OR describe whether one group (e.g., African American, Spanish, private) differ from the other group (e.g., White, English, public). For example, in the gender, if the two odds of male and female are same, the odds ratio will be 1.0. Wald chi-square test and Nagelkerke *R* square were used to assess overall model fit and effect size. Wald chi-square test indicates the significance ( $p < .05$ ) of each beta coefficient to evaluate the effect of each predictor on the criterion.

### **Weights and Design Effect**

PFI-NHES: 2007 is complex sample design used the weights of selection probability and two stratified sampling procedure to ensure a high minority population in the sample (Hagedorn et al, 2009). For oversampling of minority population, a two-stage stratified sample was conducted; at the first stage, from the telephone numbers, NHES had obtained sufficient number of minority population by selection probability, and then , at the second stage, it checked mailable status meeting the criteria related to the research interests.

Complex sampling strategies such as NHES identifies “being effective in getting a sufficient number of the right types of observation in sample” (Thomas, Heck, & Bauer, 2005, p.55). However, the complex sampling strategies are more likely to produce biases of estimates of variances and standard errors (Thomas, Heck, & Bauer, 2005). The problem is that commonly used statistical packages ignore the complexities of the data and treat the data as a simple random sample (Thomas, Heck, & Bauer, 2005). Fortunately, PFI-NHES: 2007 includes a set of weights that researchers can use to adjust oversampling. In this study, SPSS Complex Samples 19.0 was used to adjust sample

design effects and incorporate the sample weight. SPSS Complex Samples 19.0 is effective to control for sample design effects of complex samples by correcting for the small standard errors associated with increasing probability of Type I error.

### **Missing Data Analysis**

Missing data may need to pay close attention in that it increases bias in parameter estimates, inflate Type I error rates, reduce statistical power and cause loss of information (Collins, Schafer, & Kam, 2001). The techniques of listwise deletion, pairwise deletion, and imputation are conducted to deal with missing data. A missing data analysis consists of estimation of the amount of missing data and treatment of it in the current study.

**The amount of missing data.** The scope of missing data for the variables in the current research in the multiple hierarchal regression analysis was examined through frequency analysis. Table 6 shows the proportion of missing data for each variable. The result of frequency analysis revealed that missing data were very few except an academic achievement variable in the current study. PFI-NHES survey used a imputation method for missing data in numeric and categorical data in order to developing the sampling weights and to help research apply a variety of method (Herrold & Mulligan, 2008). Overall, the percentage of missing data per survey question ranged from 0% to 24.2%. The missing data of the parent empowerment variables such competence, self-determination, and sense of meaning and school type, race/ethnicity of demographic variables stemmed from non-response of 311 parents of home schooling whose children do not attend public or private schools. In particular, academic achievement variable showed higher rate of missing data (around 24 %). The item related to academic achievement asked to parents about the child grades during the school year. One of the

responses is “child’s school doesn’t give these grades”, in which 21.3 % (2,275) was applied to it except 311 homeschooling sample. The survey requested parents who checked 5 (school doesn’t give these grades) on the question student’s GPA to move onto next question asking parents to describe child’s work at school as one of them such excellent, above average, average, below average, and failing. Several variables, including parents’ highest educational level, language at home, school type, consciousness, community belonging, community participation, household income, and school urbanicity had no missing data.

**Treatment of missing data.** For the current research, missing data were treated in list- wise deletion. First, variables such as competence, self-determination sense of meaning, school type, race/ethnicity have 2.9 % in missing data. The reason of frequency of the missing data stemmed from non-response of 311 parents having home-schooling children. Missing data on the parent empowerment variables such competence, self-determination, and sense of meaning and school type, race/ethnicity of demographic variables stemmed from non-response of 311 parents of home schooling whose children do not attend public or private schools. Therefore, in the current study, those cases (311 cases) were omitted with missing data to run analysis.

Second, pertaining the cases (24.2% missing data) included the response of “school does not give these grades” were excluded from the present study. An academic achievement in the current study was developed students’ grade point (GPA). The item requesting parents who checked 5 (school doesn’t give these grades) on the question student’s GPA (SEGRADES) to move onto next question (SEGRADEQ) asking parents to describe child’s work at school as one of them such excellent, above average, average,

below average, and failing is slightly different from students' grade point (GAP) in that being more related to parents' subjective perceptions. The academic achievement is an important variable as a dependent variable in the current study. In addition, there may be possibility of inaccuracy through simply recoding them or assigning estimates one's expected subgroup membership. Therefore, although listwise deletion is more likely to result in a substantial decrease in the sample size, it is crucial to increase accuracy to assess a concept what exactly need to be examined. Changes in the sample (n's) occur in different analyses due to missing data.

Table 6

*The Pattern of Missing data*

Variables	Valid (N)	Missing (N)	Percentages (%)
Race/ethnicity	10287	394	3.7%
Home Language at home	10681	0	0
Parents' highest educational level	10681	0	0
Household Income		0	0
School Type		0	0
Urbanicity		0	0
Sense of meaning	10370	311	2.9%
Consciousness	10681	0	
Competence	10370	311	2.9%
Self determination	10370	311	2.9%

Community belonging	10681	0	0
Community Participation	10681	0	0
Academic Achievement	8095	2586	24.2%

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## Chapter 4: RESULTS

This chapter describes the results of the data analyses used to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the relationship of parent empowerment to academic achievement after controlling for demographic variables?
  - a. What is the relationship of parent personal empowerment (i.e., consciousness, sense of meaning, competence, and self-determination) to academic achievement after controlling for demographic variables?
  - b. What is the relationship of parent community empowerment (i.e., community belonging, and community participation) to academic achievement after controlling for demographic variables?
2. How does intersectionality relate to parent empowerment?
  - a. How does parent empowerment vary based on intersections of parents' race/ethnicity, home language, and income?

This chapter is organized by research question. In each section, the research question is stated, as well as the data analyses used to answer the question and the results of the analyses. For the first research question, results of multiple linear regression analyses are described. For the second research question, the results of multiple regression analyses with interaction terms are discussed.

## **Research Question 1**

The following section describes the results related to the first research question and its sub-questions: What is the relationship of parent empowerment to academic achievement after controlling for demographic variables?

- a. What is the relationship of parent personal empowerment (i.e., consciousness, sense of meaning, competence, and self-determination) to academic achievement after controlling for demographic variables?
- b. What is the relationship of parent community empowerment (i.e., community belonging, and community participation) to academic achievement after controlling for demographic variables?

In this section, the results of the regression analysis applied to answer question one is described. The section begins with a description of the demographic characteristics of the sample, and then includes the results concerning the relationship of parent empowerment to academic achievement.

### **Demographic Characteristics of the Sample**

The current study sample consisted of nationally representative 10,681 parents from the Parent and Family Involvement of the National Household Education Statistics (PFI-NHES: 2007). The sample was composed of six ethnic/racial groups, in which 75.2 % of the sample had White origin, 16.7 % of the sample had Hispanic origin, 15.5% of the sample had Black (African American), 2.7% of the sample had American Indian, 3.3% of the sample had Asian, 0.5% of Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, 5.6 % of the sample had other origins. Due to multiple responses of race/ethnicity, the total percentages were more than 100%. Approximately 7% of parents received less than

high school diploma, 21 % parents received high school graduate or equivalent degrees, 29% of parents received vocational or technical school after high school or some college school, and 22.2% parents received college graduate degrees, whereas 21% parents had graduate or professional schools. Approximately 22.8% family reported their total annual household income was less than \$25,000. 20.6% of family reported between \$25,000 and \$50,000, 20.0% reported between \$50,001 and \$75,000, and 36.4% reported more than \$75,001. 86.6 % of family spoke English at home, 9.2 % of family speaks Spanish, 1.8 % of family another language, 1. 4% of family speaks English and Spanish equally, 1. 0 % of family speaks English and another language equally. The summary of demographic characteristics of the sample can be found in Table 7.

Table 7

*Demographic Characteristics of the Sample (N=10,681)*

<b>Characteristics</b>		<b>%</b>
<b>Mother's Ethnicity/Race</b>		
White	8083	75.2%
African American	1207	15.5%
Hispanic	1762	16.7%
American Indian	274	2.7%
Asian	378	3.3%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific	59	0.5%
Other	610	5.6%
<b>Language at home</b>		
English	9230	86.6%

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Spanish	951	9.1%
Another language	217	1.8%
English and Spanish equally	167	1.3%
English and another language equally	116	1.1%
<b>Parents' highest educational level</b>		
Less than high school diploma	558	6.6%
High school graduate or equivalent	2020	21.2%
Vocational or technical school after high school or some college	3053	29.0%
College graduate	2524	22.2%
Graduate or professional school	2526	21.0%
<b>Household income</b>		
\$25,000 or less	1715	22.8%
\$25,001 to \$50,000	2229	20.6%
\$50,001 to 75,000	2375	30.0%
More than \$75,000	4362	36.4%
<b>Urbanicity</b>		
Urban	8800	79.1%
Rural	1881	20.9%
<b>School type</b>		
Public	1392	88.2%
Private	8978	11.8%

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## **The Relationship of Parent Empowerment to Academic Achievement**

In order to investigate the relationship of parent empowerment to academic achievement, descriptive analyses were initially conducted to determine general responses items. Means, standard deviations, and weighted percentages are presented Table 8.

On average parents reported that their children received B grades ( $M = 3.2$ ,  $SD = .80$ ). Parents reported a high average sense of meaning ( $M = 7.3$ ,  $SD = .87$ ), that is, that they have responsibility to teach their children to value education and to attend meetings with teachers or other school staff. Parents also reported high average competence regarding their children's education and school ( $M = 3.4$ ,  $SD = .62$ ). The item related self-determination was asked to parents whether they contact with the school or teacher, when disagree with child's school, in which 5.0% of parents reported that they don't contact with the school or the teacher, 86.0% of parents responded that they contact with the school or the teacher; whereas, 9.0 % indicated that parents never disagree with the school or the teacher ( $M = 1.7$ ,  $SD = .53$ ). Community belonging, which was measured with three items related to a sense of belonging to the school and connectedness with other parents, was aggregated ranging from 1 to 12. Overall, parents had slightly higher than average values on community belonging ( $M = 8.35$ ,  $SD = 2.08$ ), in which they seemed they feel that they are belonged to the community. Community participation asked parents if they attended, served, and participated in a variety of activities inside and outside schools and was aggregated ten dichotomous items ranging from 1 to 10. Overall, parents responded with average values in the community participation ( $M = 5.36$ ,  $SD = 2.28$ ).

Table 8

*Descriptive Analysis of Parent Empowerment Components and Academic Achievement**(N = 7770)*

Components	Mean	Standard Deviation	Weighted Percentage	Ranges
<b>Parent Personal</b>				
<b>Empowerment</b>				
Sense of meaning	7.36	0.87		1-8
Consciousness	0.58	0.49	Yes (61.2%), No (38.8%)	
Competence	3.4	0.62		1-4
Self-determination	1.7	0.53	No (5.0%), Never disagree (9.0%), Yes (86.0%)	
<b>Parent Community</b>				1-12
<b>Empowerment</b>				
Community belonging	8.35	2.08		
Community participation	5.36	2.28		1-10
Academic achievement	3.30	0.80		1-4

## **Correlation between Parent Empowerment, Academic Achievement and Demographic Variables**

The correlations among all study variables are presented in table 9. The correlation among variables was moderate or higher, ranging from .00 to .49. Independent variables were correlated significantly or moderately, falling between .00 and .49. The correlation analysis revealed that the parent empowerment variables, except for consciousness, were significantly correlated to academic achievement with small to modest correlations. Self-determination was negatively significantly related to academic achievement. Parents who contacted with the teacher or the school when they disagreed with were negatively related to students' GPA. Furthermore, consciousness was not related to academic achievement. Competence and community belonging were the most strongly correlated with academic achievement.

Table 9

*Bivariate Relationships between Variables (N=7770)*

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Independent Variables</b>							
Parent Personal Empowerment							
1. Sense of meaning	1						
2. Consciousness	.04***	1					
3. Competence	.36***	.05***	1				
4. Self-determination	.09***	.04**	.06***	1			
Parent Community							
Empowerment							
5. Community belonging	.37***	.02	.37***	.06***	1		
6. Community	.25***	.10***	.21***	.17***	.38***	1	

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participation

**Dependent Variables**

7.	Academic	.15***	-.08	.30***	-.02*	.29***	.19***	1
	achievement							

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

## Hierarchical Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Table 10 presents the results of the two-model hierarchical multiple regression analysis conducted to predict academic achievement for the following research questions;

1. What is the relationship of parent empowerment to academic achievement after controlling for demographic variables?

- a. What is the relationship of parent personal empowerment (i.e., consciousness, sense of meaning, competence, and self-determination) to academic achievement after controlling for demographic variables?
- b. What is the relationship of parent community empowerment (i.e., community belonging, and community participation) to academic achievement after controlling for demographic variables?

The demographic characteristics entered in Model 1 accounted for 13% of the variance of academic achievement,  $R^2 = .13$ , Wald  $F(17, 7747) = 26.67, p < .000$ .

Regarding parents' demographic variables, being Black/African American ( $\beta = -.237, t_{7763} = -5.615, p < .000$ ), having less than high school diploma, ( $\beta = -.515, t_{7763} = -6.934, p < .000$ ), being a high school graduate or equivalent ( $\beta = -.403, t_{7763} = -9.17, p < .000$ ), attending vocational or technical school after high school or some college ( $\beta = -.304, t_{7763} = -8.084, p < .000$ ), and being a college graduate ( $\beta = -.065, t_{7763} = -1.957, p < .05$ ), were all negatively associated with their children's reported academic achievement compared with parents with graduate or professional degrees. On the other hand, parents of students from private schools ( $\beta = .118, t_{7763} = 2.946, p < .05$ ), parents from higher household income backgrounds ( $\beta = .26, t_{7763} = 6.216, p < .000$ ), parents using Spanish at home ( $\beta = .158, t_{7763} = 2.215, p < .05$ ), and Asian parents ( $\beta = .139, t_{7763} = 2.47, p < .05$ )

reported that their children had higher GPAs than White parents, parents who spoke English only at home, and parents with children in public schools.

In Model 2, parent empowerment variables were added to the demographic variables. This model accounted for an additional 7% of variance in academic achievement,  $R^2 = .20$ , Wald  $F(24, 7740) = 33.825$ ,  $p < .000$ . Overall, parent empowerment was positively associated with academic achievement ( $\beta = 1.54$ ,  $t_{7763} = 6.619$ ,  $p < .000$ ) when controlling for demographic variables. In Model 2, once parent empowerment was entered into the model, the effect of private school on academic achievement was no longer significant. On the other hand, the effects of Asian ethnicity, and speaking another language, speaking Spanish, or speaking English and another language were stronger than in model 1. Regarding the parent empowerment variables in Model 2, competence ( $\beta = .260$ ,  $t_{7763} = 10.476$ ,  $p < .000$ ) was the strongest variable in predicting academic achievement indicating that the more parents feel that they know how to help the child do well in school, the higher the academic achievement of their children. Parents who reported that they did not contact the teacher or the school ( $\beta = .098$ ,  $t_{7763} = 2.001$ ,  $p < .05$ ) compared with parents who reported contacting the teacher or the school when they disagreed with the school had higher academic achievement. Parents' community belonging was positively associated with their children academic achievement ( $\beta = .05$ ,  $t_{7763} = 5.485$ ,  $p < .000$ ) indicating that parents with higher belonging to the school or connection with other parents had their children had higher achievement. Parents' community participation was also positively associated with their children's academic achievement ( $\beta = .028$ ,  $t_{7763} = 4.218$ ,  $p < .000$ ), suggesting that parents who are involved in a variety of school and community activities such as a school meeting, PTA,

school events, volunteer, fundraising, meeting with a guidance counselor, attending an event, athletic or sporting event in the community had higher academic achievement of their children. Sense of meaning and consciousness did not have an effect on children academic achievement.

Table 10

*Hierarchical Multiple Linear Regression Predicting Academic Achievement from Parent Empowerment Controlling for Demographic Variables*

Parameter	Model 1(Step 1)		Model 2(Step 2)	
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>
Intercept	2.87***	.201	1.54***	.233
<b>Control Variables</b>				
<b>Mother's Ethnicity/Race<sup>a</sup></b>				
Hispanic	-.015	.053	-.009	.051
African American	-.237***	.042	-.212***	.043
American Indian	-.121	.083	-.093	.084
Pacific Islander	-.082	.143	-.073	.138
Asian	.139*	.056	.172**	.061
Other Origins	-.045	.066	.003	.068
<b>Language at home<sup>a</sup></b>				
Another language	.148	.081	.186*	.081
Spanish	.158*	.071	.225**	.070

English and Spanish Equally	.102	.112	.114	.100
English and Another Language Equally	.177	.112	.210*	.105
<b>Parents' highest educational level <sup>a</sup></b>				
Less than high school diploma	-.5.15***	.074	-.363***	.075
High school graduate or equivalent	-.403***	.074	-.275***	.044
Vocational or technical school after high school or some college	-.304***	.038	-.205***	.036
College graduate	-.065*	.033	-.031	.031
<b>Type of School <sup>a</sup></b>				
Private	.118*	.040	.02	.04
<b>Urbanicity <sup>a</sup></b>				
Urban	-.066	.040	-.05	.04
<b>Household Income</b>	.26***	.004	.021***	.004
<b>Parent Empowerment Variables</b>				
Sense of Meaning <sup>b</sup>			-.006	.018

Consciousness <sup>a</sup>		
Yes		
Competence		
Self Determination <sup>a</sup>		
Yes		
Don't ever disagree		
Community Belonging <sup>b</sup>		
Community Participation <sup>b</sup>		
Wald F	26.6***	33.8***
$R^2$	.128	.202

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Note. <sup>a</sup>Reference categories for each variable in order: English only for home language, graduate or professional school for highest education, public for school type, rural as Urbanicity, No for consciousness and self-determination. <sup>b</sup>Aggregated items.

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

## Research Question 2

The following section will describe the results related to the second research question and its sub-question: How does intersectionality relate to parent empowerment?

a. How does parent empowerment vary based on intersections of parents' race/ethnicity, home language, and income?

To answer research question two, two-way and three-way interactions were entered into multiple linear or logistic regression analyses, which were conducted in order to determine the relationships between the variables; parents' income,

race/ethnicity and home language and the parent empowerment variables. For two-way interaction, interaction terms such as race/ethnicity and income, race/ethnicity and language, language and income were produced, and regarding three-way interaction, interaction terms such as race/ethnicity, language and income were produced as Table 11. In addition, for the categorical dependent variables of consciousness and self-determination, logistic regression analyses were conducted, and for the quantitative dependent variables of sense of meaning, competence, community belonging, and community participation, multiple linear regression analyses were conducted.

The purpose of examining interaction effects was to determine whether the interactions of race/ethnicity, language and income had additional effects on parent empowerment. For the interaction effects models, two-way and three-way product terms of income, race/ethnicity, and home language, were derived. In the interaction effects models, income was a continuous variable, race/ethnicity comprised two categories: Minority and White (Reference group), and home language comprised five categories: (e.g., Another language, Spanish, English and Spanish, English and another language, English).

In this study, prior to conducting the two and three-way interactions, the multiple linear regression or logistic regression analyses without interaction variables were conducted to evaluate the effects of demographic variables on each parent empowerment variable. Therefore, first, a multiple linear or logistic regression analysis was conducted regressing each parent empowerment variable (i.e., sense of meaning, consciousness, self-determination, competence, community belonging, community participation) onto income, race/ethnicity, and home language without interactions. Each analysis was

followed by an examination of the regression with two way and three way interaction effects (i.e., interactions of income, race/ethnicity, and home language). A description of the variables used in the interactions and each interaction terms are presented in Table 11 and their descriptive statistics are presented in Table 12. For each parent empowerment variable, the effects of the demographic variables (i.e., parents' income, race/ethnicity and home language) are described first (main effects only model) followed by a discussion of the two-way and three-way interaction effects (interactions model). In this study, focus is placed more on main effects; interaction effects are interpreted with cautions.

2. How does intersectionality relate do parent empowerment?

- a. How does parent empowerment vary based on intersections of parents' race/ethnicity, home language, and income?

Table 11

*Description of Interaction Terms*

	Variables
Race/ethnicity	Categorical variable
	Minority
	White (Reference group)

Language	Categorical variable Another language, Spanish, English and Spanish, English and another language, English (Reference group)
Income	Continuous variable
Two- way Interaction	Race/ethnicity x Language (Reference group-White) Language x Income(Reference group- English only) Race/ethnicity x Income (Reference group- White)
Three-way Interaction	Race/ethnicity x Language x Income(Reference group- English only x White x Income)

Table 12

*Description for Each Independent and Dependent Variables in the Interaction Analysis  
(N=9982)*

Variables	Weighted Percentage (%)	Mean (M) and Standard
-----------	----------------------------	-----------------------------

**Mother's Ethnicity/Race**

White	74.8%
African American	15.9%
Hispanic	16.9%
American Indian	2.5%
Asian	3.3%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific	0.5 %
Other	5.7%

**Language at home**

English	86.1%
Spanish	9.6%
Another language	1.8%
English and Spanish equally	1.3%
English and another language equally	1.2%

**Parents' highest educational level**

Less than high school diploma	6.8%
High school graduate or equivalent	21.8%
Vocational or technical school after high school or some college	28.8%
College graduate	22.1%
White	74.8%

Minority	25.2%	
Public	88.1%	
Private	11.9%	
Household Income		9.68 (3.78)

**Dependent Variables**

Sense of meaning		7.35 (.87)
Consciousness	Yes (58.8%), No (41.2%)	
Competence		3.43 (.62)
Self-determination	No (5.3%), Never disagree (10.0%), Yes (84.7%)	
Community Belonging		8.49 (2.08)
Community Participation		5.48 (2.28)

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## **The Relationship of Race/ethnicity, Home Language and Income on Parent Empowerment**

### **The relationship of race/ethnicity, home language and income on sense of meaning.**

Table 13 presents the results of the multiple linear regression conducted to predict sense of meaning. The demographic characteristics accounted for 5% of the variance of sense of meaning,  $R^2 = .05$ , Wald  $F(16, 9920) = 19.6$ ,  $p < .000$ . Regarding parents' demographic variables, being Black/African American ( $\beta = -.088$ ,  $t_{9935} = -2.032$ ,  $p < .05$ ), having less than a high school diploma, ( $\beta = -.309$ ,  $t_{9935} = -4.117$ ,  $p < .000$ ), being a high school graduate or equivalent ( $\beta = -.274$ ,  $t_{9935} = -6.145$ ,  $p < .000$ ), attending vocational or technical school after high school or some college ( $\beta = -.210$ ,  $t_{9935} = -6.126$ ,  $p < .000$ ), and were all negatively associated with sense of meaning when compared with parents with graduate or professional degrees. On the other hand, parents of students from private schools ( $\beta = .164$ ,  $t_{9935} = 5.453$ ,  $p < .000$ ) and parents from higher income backgrounds ( $\beta = .013$ ,  $t_{9935} = 3.149$ ,  $p < .01$ ) reported a higher sense of meaning than did their counterparts indicating that parents whose children were in private schools and who had a higher income perceived that they had a responsibility to teach the importance of education and to attend school meetings. Home language was not a predictor of sense of meaning.

### **Interaction effects of income, race/ethnicity, and language on sense of meaning.**

To understand effects of the intersectionality of race/ethnicity, income and language on sense of meaning, two and three way interaction variables (i.e., income x

home language, income x ethnicity, home language x ethnicity, income x ethnicity x home language) were added to the analysis predicting sense of meaning (see table 13). This model accounted for an additional 0.003% of variance in the sense of meaning,  $R^2 = .053$ , Wald  $F(30, 9906) = 11.284$ ,  $p < .000$ . Once interaction variables were entered into the model, the effect of African American was no longer significant, speaking Spanish was a positively significant predictor on sense of meaning. Regarding interaction, only one interaction, home language and race/ethnicity, was a predictor of sense of meaning. Minority parents who spoke another language ( $\beta = .790$ ,  $t_{9935} = 1.97$ ,  $p < .05$ ) had a higher sense of meaning compared with White parents who reported speaking English only at home. Minority parents who reported speaking another language at home had higher perceptions about their responsibility regarding teaching the importance of education and attending school meetings than White parents who spoke another language at home.

#### **The relationship of race/ethnicity, home language and income on consciousness.**

Table 14 presents the results of the logistic regression conducted to predict consciousness. The demographic characteristics had an influence on consciousness, Wald  $\chi^2(16) = 143.314$ ,  $p = .000$ . Regarding race/ethnicity, Hispanic ( $B = .430$ ,  $t = 3.448$ ,  $p = .001$ ) and Black/African American parents ( $B = .620$ ,  $t = 5.921$ ,  $p < .000$ ) reported higher odds of consciousness than White parents indicating they are more likely to talk with the child about family history or ethnic heritage. Regarding language at home, parents who spoke another language ( $B = .947$ ,  $t = 3.737$ ,  $p < .000$ ), speaking Spanish ( $B = .442$ ,  $t = 2.931$ ,  $p < .01$ ), and parents who spoke English and another language ( $B = .923$ ,  $t = 2.983$ ,  $p < .01$ )

had higher odds than parents speaking English only meaning that they are more likely to talk to the child about family history or ethnic heritage. In the parent educational variable, parents having less than high school degree ( $B = -.514, t = -3.066, p < .01$ ), being a high school graduate or equivalent ( $B = -.203, t = -1.973, p < .05$ ) and vocational or technical school after high school or some college ( $B = -.189, t = -2.256, p < .05$ ) were less likely to report consciousness compared with parents with graduate or professional degrees. School type and Income had no effects on consciousness. African American and Hispanic parents were more likely to report consciousness indicating higher odds of talking with the child regarding family history or ethnic heritage compared to White parents. Moreover, parents who spoke another language, speaking Spanish, and speaking English and another language at home were more likely to report consciousness relative to parents who spoke English only at home. On the other hand, parents who have less than college degrees were less likely to report consciousness suggesting that they were less likely to talk with the child about family history or ethnic heritage compared to parents with graduate or professional degrees.

#### **Interactions of income, race/ethnicity, and language on consciousness.**

To understand effects of the intersectionality of race/ethnicity, income and language on consciousness, two and three way interaction variables (i.e., income x home language, income x ethnicity, home language x ethnicity, income x ethnicity x home language) were added to the analysis (see table 14). There was a significant interaction between income, race/ethnicity, language and parent empowerment (Wald  $\chi^2$  (26) = 136.892,  $p < .000$ ). However, the small numbers in some categories of the home language variable may have caused inflation in the standard errors which may lead to

larger beta coefficients and an inflation of Type II error. Once the two-way and three-way interaction variables were entered into the model, the effect of speaking another language, speaking Spanish and being African American were no longer significant, whereas being American Indian appeared to be a significant predictor of consciousness. Regarding the interactions, there was a significant two-way interaction between speaking Spanish at home and income (OR =1.072), between speaking English and another language at home and income (OR =.747) and between speaking English and another language at home and being minority (OR = .028) relative to speaking English only and income, and speaking English and another language at home and income. In the three-way interaction effects, the interaction between speaking English and another language at home, were minority, and income (OR =1.393) was positively related to consciousness relative to White parents speaking English only at home and income were positively associated with consciousness.

**The relationship of race/ethnicity, home language and income on competence.**

Table 13 presents the results of the multiple linear regression conducted to predict parents' competence. The demographic characteristics accounted for 6.2% of the variance of competence,  $R^2 = .062$ , Wald  $F(16, 9920) = 20.7$ ,  $p < .000$ . Regarding parents' demographic variables, parents speaking Spanish at home ( $\beta = -.221$ ,  $t_{9935} = -4.826$ ,  $p < .000$ ), having less than a high school diploma, ( $\beta = -.309$ ,  $t_{9935} = -4.117$ ,  $p < .000$ ), being a high school graduate or equivalent ( $\beta = -.274$ ,  $t_{9935} = -6.145$ ,  $p < .000$ ), attending vocational or technical school after high school or some college ( $\beta = -.210$ ,  $t_{9935} = -6.126$ ,  $p < .000$ ), and having a college degrees ( $\beta = -.065$ ,  $t_{9935} = -2.978$ ,  $p < .01$ ) all reported lower competence compared with parents who speak English at home, were White, and

had graduate or professional degrees. On the other hand, parents of students from private schools ( $\beta = .087$ ,  $t_{9935} = 3.591$ ,  $p < .000$ ) reported higher competence than parents having children attending public schools, suggesting that parents who had a child attending private schools felt that they know how to help their child do well in school. Race/ethnicity and household income were not associated with parents' perceptions of their competence.

### **Interactions of income, race/ethnicity, and language on competence.**

To understand effects of the intersectionality of race/ethnicity, income and language on competence, two-way and three-way interaction variables (i.e., income x home language, income x ethnicity, home language x ethnicity, income x ethnicity x home language) were added to the analysis (see table 13). This model accounted for an additional 0.4% of variance in the sense of meaning,  $R^2 = .066$ , Wald  $F(30, 9906) = 12.642$ ,  $p < .000$ . Once interaction variables were entered into the model, the effect of parents' speaking English and another language at home was significant. The two-way interaction between income and parents speaking English and another language at home was negatively associated with parents' perceptions of their competence ( $\beta = -.074$ ,  $t_{9935} = -3.393$ ,  $p = .001$ ) compared to parents speaking English only and income, indicating that parents speaking English and another language at the same income levels reported lower competence than speaking English only. On the other hand, the three-way interaction effect of having income, being minority, and speaking English and another language at home had a positive relationship with competence ( $\beta = .074$ ,  $t_{9935} = 2.617$ ,  $p < .01$ ) relative to income, being White and speaking English only at home.

**The relationship of race/ethnicity, home language and income on self-determination.**

Tables 15 and 16 present the results of the logistic regression analysis conducted to predict parents' self-determination. The demographic characteristics (i.e., income, home language, and race/ethnicity) had were related to self-determination, Wald  $\chi^2$  (32) =152.524,  $p < .000$ . Self-determination was measured by asking whether parents contacted the teacher or the school when they disagreed with the teacher or the school. The following is discussed the results compared to yes vs. no in the self-determination and never disagree vs. no.

***Yes Contact the School vs. No Contact.*** Regarding self-determination, parents who had a child attending a private school ( $B = -.437$ ,  $t = -2.056$ ,  $p < .05$ ) had greater odds of contacting the school when they disagreed with the teacher or the school compared to those in public school. In the parent educational variable, having less than a high school degree ( $B = -.904$ ,  $t = -3.207$ ,  $p = .001$ ), being a high school graduate or equivalent ( $B = -.801$ ,  $t = -3.733$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and attending a vocational or technical school after a high school or some college ( $B = -.504$ ,  $t = -2.721$ ,  $p < .01$ ) were all inversely associated with self-determination indicating that parents with lower educational levels were less likely to contact the teacher or the school when they disagreed with the teacher or the school relative to parents who had higher levels of education (graduate or professional). Additionally, parents who reported speaking another language at home ( $B = -1.165$ ,  $t = -3.654$ ,  $p < .000$ ), parents who were Hawaiians or Pacific Islander ( $B = -1.023$ ,  $t = -2.105$ ,  $p < .05$ ), and parents who were Asian ( $B = -1.032$ ,  $t = -3.574$ ,  $p < .000$ ) were less likely to

respond yes to self-determination indicating they were less likely to contact the teacher or the school when they disagreed with them.

***Never Disagree vs. No Contact.*** Regarding self-determination, parents with less than a high school degree ( $B = -.976, t = -2.748, p < .01$ ), who were a high school graduate or equivalent ( $B = -.808, t = -3.090, p < .01$ ), and who attended vocational or technical school after high school or attended some college ( $B = -.509, t = -2.245, p < .05$ ) were less likely to report never disagreeing compared than graduate or professional degrees. This result suggests that parents with lower educational levels were less likely to report they had never disagreed with the teacher or the school relative to parents who had higher educational levels. Additionally, being Asian ( $B = -.744, t = -2.111, p < .05$ ) was negatively associated with self-determination (response of never disagree) indicating that Asian parents were less likely to report that they never disagree with the teacher or the school compared to White parents. Also, parents who had children attending private schools ( $B = .616, t = 2.541, p < .05$ ) were more likely to report that they had never disagreed with the teacher or the school.

**Interactions of income, race/ethnicity, and home language on self-determination.**

To examine the effects of the intersectionality of race/ethnicity, income and language on self-determination, the two-way and three-way interaction variables (i.e., income x home language, income x ethnicity, home language x ethnicity, income x ethnicity x home language) were added to the analysis (see tables 15 and 16). There was significant interactions between income, race/ethnicity, language and self-determination (Wald  $\chi^2(60) = 216.87, p < .000$ ). However, the small numbers in some categories of the

home language variable may have caused inflation in the standard errors, which may lead to small beta coefficients, and an inflation of Type II error.

***Yes contact the school vs. no contact.*** Regarding interactions in the analysis of self- determination, there were significant two-way interactions between speaking English and another language at home and income (OR =.712), between speaking another language at home and being minority (OR =. 031), and between speaking English and another language at home and being minority (OR = .012) compared to parents who spoke English only at home and income, parents who spoke another language at home and were White, and to parents who spoke English and another language at home and were White. These results suggest that those parents were more likely to contact the school or the teacher when they disagreed with the teacher or the school. In the three-way interaction, speaking English and another language at home, being minority, and income (OR =1.432) were positively associated with self- determination (yes).

***Never disagree vs. no contact.*** In the interaction analysis with self- determination regarding parents who reported they never disagree with the teacher or the school, there was significant two-way interaction effects between speaking another language at home and income (OR =.710), between speaking English and another language at home and income (OR = .719), between speaking another language at home and being minority (OR =. 005) and between speaking English and another language and being minority (OR = .011) relative to parents who reported speaking English only at home, were White and have income. In the three-way interaction analysis, parents who reported speaking English and another language at home, were minority, and had income (OR =1.62) and minority parents who spoke another language at home and had income (OR=1.64)

reported that they never disagreed with the school or teacher relative to those parents who reported speaking English only at home, being White with income.

**The Relationship of race/ethnicity, home language and income on community belonging.**

Table 17 presents the results of multiple linear regression conducted to predict community belonging. The demographic characteristics accounted for 16% of the variance of sense of meaning,  $R^2 = .16$ , Wald  $F(16, 9920) = 66.758, p < .000$ . Regarding parents' demographic variables, speaking another language ( $\beta = -.387, t_{9935} = -2.280, p < .05$ ), speaking Spanish ( $\beta = -.247, t_{9935} = -2.058, p < .05$ ), speaking English and Spanish ( $\beta = -.418, t_{9935} = -2.119, p < .05$ ), being Hispanic ( $\beta = -.228, t_{9935} = -2.207, p < .05$ ), being African American ( $\beta = -.775, t_{9935} = -9.320, p < .000$ ), being Asian ( $\beta = -.588, t_{9935} = -3.228, p = .001$ ), having less than high school diploma, ( $\beta = -.923, t_{9935} = -7.201, p < .000$ ), being a high school graduate or equivalent ( $\beta = -.891, t_{9935} = -10.79, p < .000$ ), attending vocational or technical school after high school or some college ( $\beta = -.677, t_{9935} = -9.752, p < .000$ ), and having college degrees ( $\beta = -.250, t_{9935} = -3.871, p < .000$ ) were all less likely to report community belonging that felt connected to the school. These results indicate that parents who spoke English and Spanish, who spoke Spanish only at home as well as who were Hispanic, were African American and were Asian were less likely to be connected with other parents and belong to the school. On the other hand, parents of students from private schools ( $\beta = .859, t_{9935} = 12.277, p < .000$ ) and parents from higher house income backgrounds ( $\beta = .033, t_{9935} = 4.035, p < .000$ ) reported higher community belonging than parents who had children attending public schools and had lower income.

**Interactions of income, race/ethnicity, and home language on a community belonging.**

To examine effects of the intersectionality of race/ethnicity, income and language on community belonging, two and three way interaction variables (i.e., income x home language, income x ethnicity, home language x ethnicity, income x ethnicity x home language) were added to the analysis (see table 17). This model accounted for an additional 0.06% of variance in the sense of meaning,  $R^2 = .166$ , Wald  $F(30, 9906) = 38.698$ ,  $p < .000$ . Once the interaction variables were entered into the model, the effect of speaking another language at home and speaking Spanish at home were no longer significant. Regarding the two-way interaction, there were significant negative two-way interactions between speaking English and Spanish at home and income ( $\beta = -.108$ ,  $t_{9935} = -2.027$ ,  $p < .05$ ), between speaking English and another language at home and income ( $\beta = -.279$ ,  $t_{9935} = -3.208$ ,  $p = .001$ ), between speaking English and another language at home and being minority ( $\beta = -.231$ ,  $t_{9935} = -2.116$ ,  $p < .05$ ), and between income and being minority ( $\beta = -.061$ ,  $t_{9935} = -3.404$ ,  $p < .001$ ) compared to those speaking English only and income, speaking English and another language at home and being White, and being White and income. In the three-way interaction, income, there were significant positive interaction effects between speaking English and another language at home, and being minority ( $\beta = .268$ ,  $t_{9935} = 2.562$ ,  $p < .01$ ), suggesting that minority parents who had income and who spoke English and another language at home perceived themselves as having more community belonging than White parents who spoke English only at home and had income.

### **The relationship of race/ethnicity, home language and income on community participation.**

Table 17 presents the results of the multiple linear regression analysis conducted to predict a community participation. The demographic characteristics accounted for 15% of the variance of community participation,  $R^2 = .15$ , Wald  $F(16, 9920) = 60.346, p < .000$ . Regarding parents' demographic variables, speaking another language ( $\beta = -.768, t_{9935} = -3.54, p < .000$ ), speaking Spanish ( $\beta = -.483, t_{9935} = -3.161, p < .01$ ), having less than high school diploma, ( $\beta = -1.534, t_{9935} = -8.548, p < .000$ ), being a high school graduate or equivalent ( $\beta = -.907, t_{9935} = -8.572, p < .000$ ), attending vocational or technical school after high school or some college ( $\beta = -.634, t_{9935} = -7.671, p < .000$ ), and having college degrees ( $\beta = -.229, t_{9935} = -2.986, p < .01$ ), were all negatively associated with community participation comparing with parents with speaking English only and with graduate or professional degrees. On the other hand, African American ( $\beta = .268, t_{9935} = 2.393, p < .05$ ), parents of students from private schools ( $\beta = .822, t_{9935} = 10.214, p < .000$ ) and parents from higher house income backgrounds ( $\beta = .089, t_{9935} = 8.043, p < .000$ ) had higher community participation than counterparts, indicating those parents were more likely to involve in a variety of activities such as a school meetings, PTA, school events, volunteer, fundraising, meeting with a guidance counselor, and attending community events.

### **Interactions of income, race/ethnicity, and language on community participation.**

To examine effects of the intersectionality of race/ethnicity, income and language on community participation, two-way and three-way interaction variables (i.e., income x

home language, income x ethnicity, home language x ethnicity, income x ethnicity x home language) were added to the analysis (see table 17). This model accounted for an additional 0.01% of variance in the community participation,  $R^2 = .151$ , Wald  $F(30, 9906) = 35.861$ ,  $p < .000$ . Once interaction variables were entered into the model, the effect of speaking Spanish, speaking another language, African American were no longer significant, whereas parents who speaking English and another language, Asian and other origins appeared to significant predictors on community participation. Regarding two-way interaction, there were significant positive interaction effects between speaking English and another language and being minority ( $\beta = 2.723$ ,  $t_{9935} = 4.301$ ,  $p < .001$ ) compared to parents who spoke English and another language and also there were significant positive interaction effects between White parents who spoke English and another language and had income ( $\beta = .077$ ,  $t_{9935} = 2.296$ ,  $p < .05$ ) compared to White parents who spoke English only and had income. On the other hand, in the three-way interaction, there were significant negative interaction effects between speaking English and another language, minority and income ( $\beta = -.173$ ,  $t_{9935} = -2.661$ ,  $p < .01$ ) than White parents who spoke English only had income.

Table 13

*Multiple Linear Regression Examining Effects of Interaction of Race/ethnicity, Language, and Income on Parent Personal Empowerment (Sense of Meaning, Competence)*

Sense of Meaning				Competence			
Main		Interaction		Main		Interaction	
<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>

Intercept	7.151***	.197	7.158***	.377	7.151**	.197	3.087**	.268
					*		*	
Ethnicity/Race <sup>a</sup>								
Hispanic	-.033	.058	-.051	.062	-.031	.039	-.026	.041
African American	.088*	.043	.088	.094	.019	.031	-.095	.073
American Indian								
American Indian	-.098	.078	-.093	.086	-.006	.063	-.040	.059
Pacific Islander	.017	.130	.020	.138	.025	.077	-.036	.091
Asian	-.146	.078	-.215	.110	-.028	.058	-.134	.080
Other origins	-.044	.064	.046	.121	-.040	.045	-.138	.081
Language at home <sup>a</sup>								
Another language	-.152	.219	-.702	.282	-.058	.065	-.202	.369
Spanish	-.120	.118	.702*	.282	-	.046	-.275**	.088
					.221***			
Both A <sup>b</sup>	-.111	.233	-.361	.288	.000	.074	.066	.176
Both B <sup>b</sup>	-.178	.169	-.262	.189	.013	.089	.518**	.164
Parents' highest educational level <sup>a</sup>								
Less than high school diploma	-.309***	.075	-.309***	.075	-	.053	-	.053
					.283***		.290***	

High school	-.274***	.045	.279***	.045	-	.030	-	.029
graduate or						.256***		.259***
equivalent								
Vocational or	-.210***	.034	-.241***	.034	-	.023	-	.023
technical school						.206***		.208***
or some college								
College	-.035	.030	-.037	.030	-.065**	.022	-.067**	.022
graduate								
Type of School								
Private	.164***	.030	.165***	.030	.087***	.024	.082***	.024
Household	.013**	.004	.014**	.005	.001	.003	.004	.003
Income								
Two-way Interactions								
Anlang			.790*	.401			.288	.417
xMinority								
Spanish x			-.130	.208			.163	.148
Minority								
Both A <sup>b</sup> x			.238	.438			.141	.283
Minority								
Both B <sup>b</sup> x			.369	.288			-.291	.249
Minority								
Anlang x			.024	.029			-.002	.031
Income								

Spanish x	.007	.015	.011	.010
Income				
Both A <sup>b</sup> x	.030	.028	-.012	.020
Income				
Both B <sup>b</sup> x	-.007	.023	-.074**	.028
Income				
Minority x	-.007	.010	-.012	.007
Income				
Three-way Interactions				
Anlang x	-.022	.039	.017	.036
Minority x				
Income				
Spanish	.002	.025	.000	.019
xMinority x				
Income				
Both A <sup>b</sup> x	-.025	.043	.016	.028
Minority x				
Income				
Both B <sup>b</sup> x	-.004	.032	.074	.028
Minority x				
Income				
Wald <i>F</i>	19.413***	11.284***	20.74***	12.642***

$R^2$  .051 .053 .062 .066

Note. <sup>a</sup> Reference categories in order: English only for home language, graduate or professional school for highest education level, public for school type, White for race x Income and race x Language, English only for Language x Income, White parents speaking English only and income for three way interaction. <sup>b</sup> Anlang indicates another language, both A indicates English and Spanish equally, both B indicates English and another language equally

Table 14

*Logistic Regression Examining Effects of Interaction of Race/ethnicity, Language, and Income on Parent Personal Empowerment (Consciousness)*

	Consciousness <sup>a</sup>					
	Main			Interaction		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>OR</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>OR</i>
Intercept	2.77***	.52	15.91	2.32*	.99	10.2
Ethnicity/Race <sup>a</sup>						
Hispanic	.430***	.13	.651	.39**	.13	.68
African American	.620***	.11	.538	.37	.24	.69
American Indian	.659	.21	.517	.62**	.21	.540
Pacific Islander	.673	.38	.51	.59	.39	.56
Asian	.142	.19	.87	.17	.28	.85
Other origins	.039	.14	1.04	.09	.31	1.09
Language at home <sup>a</sup>						
Another language	.95***	.25	2.58	-.278	1.42	.76

Spanish	.44**	.15	1.56	.10	.284	1.11
Both A <sup>b</sup>	.39	.26	1.47	.72	.683	2.06
Both B <sup>b</sup>	.92	.31	2.52	4.05*	1.24	57.2
				**		7
Parents Highest Education Level						
Less than high school diploma	-.51***	.17	.60	0.54*	.167	.58
High school graduate or equivalent	-.203*	.10	.82	-.22*	.103	.80
Vocational or technical school or some college	-.189*	.08	.83	0.20	.08	.82
College graduate	-.129	.08	.88	-.13	.081	.88
Type of School						
Private	.12	.08	1.14	.12	.089	1.13
Household Income	-.00**	.01	.10	-.003	.012	.997
Two-way Interaction						
Anlang x Minority				.417	1.60	1.52
Spanish x Minority				.29	.47	1.33
Both A <sup>b</sup> x Minority				-.74	1.02	.47
Both B <sup>b</sup> x Minority				-3.57*	1.48	.028
Anlang x Income				.253	.163	1.29
Spanish x Income				.070*	.035	1.07
Both A <sup>b</sup> x Income				-.012	.073	.99

Both B <sup>b</sup> x Income				
Minority x Income				
Three-way Interactions				
Anlang x Minority x Income				
Spanish x Minority x Income				
Both A <sup>b</sup> x Minority x				
Income				
Both B <sup>b</sup> x Minority x				
Income				
Wald Chi-square	143.31***		136.8	
			9	
Nagelkerke $R^2$	.04		.04	

Note. <sup>a</sup> Reference categories in order: English only for home language, graduate or professional school for highest education level, public for school type, White for race x Income and race x Language, English only for Language x Income, White parents speaking English only and income for three way interaction. <sup>b</sup> Anlang indicates another language, both A indicates English and Spanish equally, both B indicates English and another language equally.

Table 15

*Logistic Regression Examining Effects of Interaction of Race/ethnicity, Language, and Income on Self- determination (Yes vs. No)*

	Self-determination <sup>a</sup> Yes vs No					
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>OR</i>	<i>Interaction</i>		
Intercept	1.07	.82	2.93	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>OR</i>
				.410	1.44	1.50
Ethnicity/Race <sup>a</sup>						
Hispanic	-.02	.29	.92	-.05	.28	.95
African American	-.09	.19	.92	.110	.351	1.12
American Indian	.39	.35	1.48	.45	.39	1.57
Pacific Islander	-1.02*	.49	2.8	1.16*	.48	3.18
Asian	-1.03***	.29	2.8	1.15*	.46	3.17
Other origins	-.07	.25	1.07	.27	.52	1.32
Language at home <sup>a</sup>						
Another language	-1.17***	.32	.31	1.463	1.31	4.32
Spanish	-.62	.34	.54	-.88	.29	.41
Both A <sup>b</sup>	-.30	.47	.74	-.49	.19	.61
Both B <sup>b</sup>	-.33	.414	.72	3.52**	1.15	33.9

Parents Highest Education Level						
Less than high school diploma	-.904***	.282	.405	-.88**	.29	.41
High school graduate or equivalent	-.80***	.21	.45	-.79***	.22	.45
Vocational or technical school or some college	-.50**	.18	.60	-.49**	.19	.61
College graduate	-.23	.19	.79	-.21	.20	.81
Type of School						
Private	.437*	.212	1.548	.419*	.211	1.521
Household Income	-.004	.016	.996	-.016	.021	.98
Two-way Interaction						
Anlang x Minority				-3.47*	1.53	.03
Spanish x Minority				-3.47	1.52	.031
Both A <sup>b</sup> x Minority				-.02	1.35	.98
Both B <sup>b</sup> x Minority				-4.40**	.09	.71
Anlang x Income				-.18	.09	.98
Spanish x Income				.02	.06	1.02
Both A <sup>b</sup> x Income				-.04	.09	.96
Both B <sup>b</sup> x Income				-.34***	.09	.71
Minority x Income				.05	.04	1.05
Three-way Interactions						

Anlang x Minority x Income		.222	.12	1.25
Spanish x Minority x Income		-.11	.10	.90
Both A <sup>b</sup> x Minority x Income		-.01	.14	.99
Both B <sup>b</sup> x Minority x Income		.36**	.137	1.43
Wald Chi-square	103.56**	216.87		
Nagelkerke $R^2$	.04	.05		

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Note. <sup>a</sup> Reference categories in order: English only as home language, graduate or professional school for highest education level, public for school type, White for race x Income and race x Language, English only for Language x Income, White parents speaking English only and income for three way interaction, No for consciousness and self-determination . <sup>b</sup> Anlang indicates another language, both A indicates English and Spanish equally, both B indicates English and another language equally.

Table 16

*Multi-nominal Logistic Regression Examining Effects of Interaction of Race/ethnicity, Language, and Income on Self-determination (Never disagree vs. No)*

	Self-determination <sup>a</sup> Never disagree vs. No					
	Main			Interaction		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>OR</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>OR</i>
Intercept	-.472	1.11	.624	-4.08	2.49	.017
Ethnicity/Race <sup>a</sup>						
Hispanic	-.32	.33	1.38	-.51	.34	1.67
African American	-.31	.24	1.36	1.49*	.71	4.44
American Indian	.05	.58	.95	-.29	.47	1.34
Pacific Islander	-.28	.64	1.33	-.952	.80	2.59
Asian	-.74*	.35	2.10	1.38*	.67	3.99
Other origins	.33	.32	1.40	-.79	.71	2.12
Language at home <sup>a</sup>						
Another language	-.53	.41	.59	3.92**	1.43	50.48
Spanish	.37	.40	1.45	1.11	.62	3.04
Both A <sup>b</sup>	.340	.595	1.40	.067	1.42	1.07
Both B <sup>b</sup>	.18	.51	1.19	4.12**	1.48	61.57
Parents Highest Education Level						
Less than high school diploma	-.98**	.35	.38	-.93**	.36	.39
High school graduate or equivalent	-.82**	.26	.44	-.82	.27	.44

Vocational or technical school or some college	-.51*	.23	.60	-.47	.23	.63
College graduate	.06	.22	1.06	.10	.23	1.11
Type of School						
Private	.616*	.242	1.85	.60*	.24	1.81
Household Income	-.04	.02	.96	-.03	.03	.97
Two-way Interaction						
Anlang x Minority				-5.31**	1.85	.01
Spanish x Minority				-.84	1.08	.43
Both A <sup>b</sup> x Minority				1.05	2.05	2.86
Both B <sup>b</sup> x Minority				-4.55*	1.99	.01
Anlang x Income				-.34**	.11	.71
Spanish x Income				-.06	.07	.94
Both A <sup>b</sup> x Income				.012	.145	1.01
Both B <sup>b</sup> x Income				-.33*	.11	.72
Minority x Income				-.02	.05	.98
Three-way Interactions						
Anlang x Minority x Income				.50**	.16	1.64
Spanish x Minority x Income				.18	.12	1.20
Both A <sup>b</sup> x Minority x Income				.05	.20	1.05
Both B <sup>b</sup> x Minority x Income				.48**	.17	1.62
Wald Chi-square	103.56**			216.87		
Nagelkerke $R^2$	.04			.05		

Note. <sup>a</sup> Reference categories in order: English only for home language, graduate or professional school for highest education level, public for school type, White for race x Income and race x Language, English only for Language x Income, White parents speaking English only and income for three way interaction, No for consciousness and self-determination . <sup>b</sup> Anlang indicates another language, both A indicates English and Spanish equally, both B indicates English and another language equally.

Table 17

*Multiple Linear Regression Examining Effects of Interaction of Race/ethnicity, Language and Income on Parent Community Empowerment (Community belonging, Community Participation)*

	Community Belonging				Community Participation			
	Main		Interaction		Main		Interaction	
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>
Intercept	6.524***	.426	6.622***	.892	5.082***	.539	2.938**	1.033
Ethnicity/Race <sup>a</sup>								
Hispanic	-.228*	.103	-.144	.109	.132	.122	.130	.130
African American	-.775***	.083	.718	.239	.268*	.112	-.214	.271
American Indian	-.202	.160	-.177	.166	.115	.206	-.079	.214
Pacific Islander	-.322	.299	-.221	.319	.008	.393	-.356	.384

Asian	-.588***	.182	-.355	.254	-.328	.201	-.896**	.299
Other origins	.162	.112	-.261	.264	-.175	.138	-.699*	.326
Language at home <sup>a</sup>								
Another language	-.387*	.170	-.092	.851	-.768***	.217	-.838	1.013
Spanish	-.247*	.120	-.092	.215	-.483**	.153	-.358	.314
Both A <sup>b</sup>	-.418*	.197	-.042	.552	.132	.245	1.002	.601
Both B <sup>b</sup>	-.053	.371	2.484**	.900	-.241	.258	-1.351***	.276
Less than high school diploma	-.923***	.128	-.941***	.129	-1.534**	.180	-1.542***	.181
High school graduate or equivalent	-.891***	.083	-.858***	.083	-.907***	.106	-.901***	.105
Vocational or technical school or some college	-.677***	.064	-.655***	.068	-.634***	.083	-.624***	.083
College graduate	-.250***	.064	-.245***	.064	-.229**	.077	-.235**	.077

Type of School

Private	.859***	.070	.827***	.064	.822***	.080	.839***	.81
Household Income	.033**	.008	.060***	.010	.089***	.011	.090***	.013
Anlang x Minority			.039	.938			1.373	1.174
Spanish x Minority			.477	.356			.637	.478
Both A <sup>b</sup> x Minority			-.234	.797			.291	1.077
Both B <sup>b</sup> x Minority			-2.317*	1.095			2.723***	.633
Anlang x Income			-.048	.074			.001	.090
Spanish x Income			-.048	.026			-.021	.044
Both A <sup>b</sup> x Income			-.108*	.053			-.102	.066
Both B <sup>b</sup> x Income			-.279***	.087			.077*	.033
Minority x Income			-.061***	.018			.018	.025

Three-way Interaction

Anlang x Minority x Income	.067	.083		-.090	.106
Spanish xMinority x Income	.015	.041		-.036	.063
Both A <sup>b</sup> x Minority x Income	.133	.077		-.006	.113
Both B <sup>b</sup> x Minority x Income	.268**	.105		-.173**	.065
Wald <i>F</i>	66.758***	38.698	60.346***	35.861	
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	.16	.166	.15	.151	

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Note. <sup>a</sup> Reference categories in order: English only for home language, graduate or professional school for highest education level, public for school type, White for race x Income and race x Language, English only for Language x Income, White parents speaking English only and income for three way interaction, No for consciousness and self-determination . <sup>b</sup> Anlang indicates another language, both A indicates English and Spanish equally, both B indicates English and another language equally

## **Chapter 5: DISSCUSSION**

The results of this study suggest that several important parent empowerment variables are related to academic achievement. Further, an attempt to explore the effects of intersectionality of race/ethnicity, income, and home language through interaction effects suggests that there is some relationship between intersectionality and parent empowerment. The following section begins with a discussion of the major findings of the current study, followed by important implications for school counselor practice, counselor preparation, and future research. The section concludes with a discussion of the limitations of the study.

### **The Findings**

Guided by the parent empowerment framework outlined in chapter two, the effects of parent empowerment on academic achievement, as measured by parents' reports of GPA, were examined in a nationally representative sample from the PFI-NHES: 2007. The effects of the intersection of race/ethnicity, language and income on parent empowerment were also examined. Below, I discuss the effects of the demographic variables and the parent empowerment variables on academic achievement, followed by discussion of the intersections of race/ethnicity, language, and income on academic achievement. All interaction effects are interpreted cautiously as a need exists to explore these interactions more carefully in future research.

## **The Effects of Demographic Variables on Academic Achievement**

African American mothers and parents with lower education levels, that is, less than college, reported lower GPAs for their children. On the other hand, parents with higher income backgrounds and Asian parents reported higher academic achievement than White mothers, mothers with lower family income, and parents who spoke English only. Parents who spoke another language at home or who spoke English and another language equally at home reported higher GPAs for their children. Overall, household income was the strongest predictor of children's academic achievement. As corroborated by previous research on academic achievement, these findings suggest that parents' socioeconomic status such as income and educational levels are more likely to be associated with children's academic achievement (Israel, Beaulieu, & Hartless, 2001; McNeal, 1999; Sun, 1999). Further, this study corroborates previous research, that suggest that children from low-income backgrounds, with parents who have less than a college education, and African American parents often experience lower academic achievement in schools (Blanchett, Klinger & Harry, 2009; Gregory, Skiba & Noguera, 2010). Perhaps an examination of the effects of the intersectionality of race/ethnicity, home language, and income on parent empowerment may help to shed light on reasons why these children may be disadvantaged academically.

## **The Effects of Parent Empowerment on Academic Achievement**

In general, some components of parent empowerment as defined in this study appear to be related to academic achievement, namely competence, self-determination, community belonging, and community participation. Interestingly, parents' sense of

meaning and consciousness were not related to children's academic achievement.

More specifically, parents' views of their competence were the strongest predictor for academic achievement. The item "I know how to help my child do well in the school," was used as a measure of parents' competence. Parents who knew how to help their children reported significantly higher academic achievement than did those who did not know how to help the child. This finding is corroborated by previous research that indicates that parents' competence that measured parents' performance regarding discipline, supervision, helping children handling social issues and academic success is a critical factor for facilitating children's education success (Bogenschneider, Small, & Tsay, 1997). It seems feasible that when parents feel that they can help the child, they may be more confident in supporting their children's education. Alternately, parents who feel able to help their children may have higher education levels and higher income that makes it easier for them to access resources to help their children.

Parents' self-determination had a negative relationship with children's academic achievement after controlling for demographic variables. Self-determination was measured by whether parents contacted the school when they disagreed with the school or teacher. Parents who did not have contact with the school when they disagreed with the teacher or the school reported significantly higher academic achievement for their children than did parents who had contact with the school. This finding may be corroborated by previous research that indicates that parents may recognize that it would not be wise to disagree with the school or to confront teachers, rather than complying with their perception and views (Lareau &

Horvat, 1999). It is possible that parents may be penalized for disagreeing with the school. Alternately, parents may be contacting the school because of their children's poor academic performance.

Parents' community belonging (i.e., how much parents feel the school is a welcoming environment, trusts the schools, and connected to other parents) was positively related to their children's academic achievement. Parents who felt that their child's school was welcoming to the family, trusted the staff at the child school, and connected with the other parents reported higher GPAs for their children. The link between parents' community belonging and children's academic achievement is supported by research that found that being connected or known by other parents were associated with higher levels of academic achievement (Sun, 1999).

Parents' community participation (i.e., parents' participation in the school and community activities) was also positively related to academic achievement. This result suggests that parents' participation in school and community events such as school meetings, PTA, school events, volunteering, fundraising, meeting with a guidance counselor, and attending a community event or sports event in the community may be especially salient in enhancing children's academic achievement. This finding is congruent with numerous research findings on the importance of parent involvement in children's education (Hill & Taylor, 2004; Hill et al, 2009; Ice & Hoover-Dempsey, 2011; Jeynes, 2007; Kao & Rutherford, 2007; Lee & Bowen, 2006; McNeal, 1999; Sun, 1999).

Interestingly, parents' consciousness as measured by this study was not related to their children's academic achievement. In this study, consciousness was measured

by asking parents directly whether they talked about family history or ethnic heritage with their children. A single indicator measuring consciousness may be not sufficient for predicting the effect of consciousness on academic achievement. Further, while parents may play a critical role developing ethnic consciousness through conversation with their children, this consciousness may not affect academic achievement (Carter, 2008; Sander, 1997; Ward, 2000).

Parents' sense of meaning was also not a significant predictor of academic achievement. In the bivariate correlation, sense of meaning had a strong positive relationship with academic achievement. However, once parent empowerment variable were entered into the regression analysis, parents' sense of meaning was no longer associated with academic achievement. This sequence of results suggests that parents' sense of meaning may be indirectly related to academic achievement through one of the other empowerment variables.

### **The Intersectionality of Race/Ethnicity, Language and Income and its Relationship to Parent Empowerment**

Overall, the intersections of race/ethnicity, language, and income appeared to contribute to parent empowerment. Given the positive relationship of parents' competence, self-determination, community belonging, and community participation to academic achievement, the discussion here focuses on the intersections of race/ethnicity, language, and income on these four aspects of parent empowerment. The possible effects of race/ethnicity, language, and income on parents' sense of meaning and consciousness are also discussed. While the relationships of race/ethnicity, home language, and income are discussed, the interactions among

these are discussed sparingly and with caution, as future research is needed to more thoroughly examine the effects of intersecting identities on parent empowerment.

Overall, one measure of parents' socio-economic status, parents' highest educational level, was a significant predictor of all aspects of parent empowerment. Children's attendance at private school was a significant predictor of most aspects of parent empowerment, except consciousness. Household income was also a significant predictor of most aspects of parent empowerment except competence and self-determination.

**Competence.** Parents with lower levels of education, that is, lower than a graduate or professional degree all reported lower levels of competence. As mentioned earlier, parents who know how to help their children reported significantly higher academic achievement than did those who did not know how to help the child. Parents who speak Spanish only at home reported lower competence. This is corroborated by research about immigrant and Hispanic/Latino parents that indicate that they often feel incapable of helping their children succeed in school (Auerbach, 2007; Lopez, 2001).

Together, these results suggest the need for school counselors, principals, and other school staff to pay attention to enhancing parents' competence in helping their children succeed academically, especially parents with lower educationally levels and Hispanic or Latino parents.

Parents with children attending private schools also reported higher levels of competence than parents with children attending public schools. This may reflect the social capital that parents seem to gain in private schools (Morgan & Sørensen, 1999).

Alternately, private schools may do a better job of helping enhance parents' ability to help their children succeed in school.

Although the interaction effects must be interpreted with caution, it is possible that being in multiple intersecting identities of race/ethnicity, home language, and income, may affect parents' views of their competence. After consideration of interaction effects, parents who speak both English and another language equally reported higher competence. However, increasing income appeared to result in perceptions of lower competence for parents who spoke both English and another language equally (compared to parents who speak English only) and to perceptions of higher competence for minority parents who speak both English and another language equally (compared to White parents with higher income who speak English only at home).

**Self-determination.** Parents' with lower education levels were less likely to report self-determination than parents with graduate and professions degrees, that is, they were less likely to contact the school when they disagreed with the school and teachers. Parents with lower education levels were also less likely to say that they never disagreed with the school.

Asian and Pacific Islander parents were less likely than White parents to say that they contact the school when they disagree with the school and teachers. Asian parents were also less likely to say that they never disagree with the school (i.e., more likely to say no they never contact the school). This finding is supported by research that indicates that Asian parents tend to express a deferential attitude toward the teacher or the school (Ritter, Mont-Reynaud, & Dornbusch, 1993). On the other hand,

parents who had a child attending a private school were more likely to contact the school or the teacher when they disagree with the school or the teacher. They were also more likely to say that they never disagree with the school and teachers.

After considering the interactions, parents who spoke both English and another language equally were more likely than parents who spoke English only to say that they contact the school when they disagree with the school and teachers. They were also more likely to say that they never disagree with the school. Similarly, those who speak both English and another language equally with lower income were less likely to report that they contact the school when they disagree with them and also to report that they were less likely to disagree with the school. These results suggest that for low-income families who may have an immigrant background, lower income may discourage them from contacting the school when they disagree with the school and teachers. In contrast, those parents who are minority who speak both English and another language equally with lower income reported they were more likely to contact the school when they disagree with them and also more likely to disagree with the school. This finding suggest that lower income parents of racial/ethnic minority status seem more likely to reach out to contact the school when they disagree with the school possibly for help from the school or to protect their children who may be experiencing feelings of marginalization in the school. As a caveat, although these interactions between race/ethnicity, home language, and income, and their relationship to self-determination must be interpreted cautiously, these findings suggest that disagreement with the school may be complicated for parents with intersecting identities as they struggle with whether to contact the school or not.

**Consciousness.** Interestingly, parents' consciousness was not related to academic achievement; however, it appeared to be salient for some minority parents. Hispanic parents and African American parents were more likely than White parents to report consciousness, that is, that they talk about their family history and ethnic heritages with their children. The relationship of race/ethnicity to consciousness is corroborated by previous research on consciousness, (Altschul, Oyserman, & Bybee, 2006, Carter, 2008; Marshall, 1995). Similarly, parents who spoke another language in the home or who spoke Spanish only at home were more likely to report consciousness than parents who speak English only in the home. These results may reflect the heightened sense of racial and cultural awareness among racial/ethnic and language minority groups who experience discrimination in the United States. On the other hand, parents with lower levels of education than parents with graduate or professional degrees and parents with lower levels of household income were less likely to report consciousness, that is, these parents were less likely to report talking about their family history and ethnic heritages with their children (Hughes & Chen, 1997).

**Sense of meaning.** Similar to consciousness, although sense of meaning was not related to academic achievement, it appeared to be important for African American parents. Sense of meaning in this study reflects parents' perceptions of their responsibility to teach the importance of education to their children and their responsibility to attend school meetings. African American mothers had a higher sense of meaning than White parents indicating that they reported a higher sense of responsibility for teaching the importance of education to their children and attending

school meetings. This result is interesting given that schools often perceive African American mothers as devaluing the importance of education and as having lower levels of parental involvement (Noguera, 1996). Similar to consciousness, parents with lower levels of education reported lower sense of meaning; however, unlike with consciousness, parents with higher household income and parents with children attending private school reported higher sense of meaning.

After considering the interactions, minority parents who speak another language at home reported higher feelings of responsibility for educating their children about the importance of education and attending school meetings compared to White parents who speaking another language at home. These findings certainly refute the stereotype that minority parents are not concerned about their responsibility of attending school meetings and teaching their children about the importance of school(Auerbach, 2004; Auerbach, 2007; Chrispeels & Rviero, 2001).

**Community belonging.** Parents with lower education levels reported lower levels of community belonging while parents with higher income reported higher levels of community belonging. These results support research that suggests that those with greater access to resources experience schools as more welcoming and are less likely to feel marginalized(Noguera, 2002), whereas, parents from lower income backgrounds are more likely to experience feeling unwelcome and marginalized in schools. Not surprisingly, parents with children attending private schools also reported higher community belonging, indicating that they were more likely to experience the school as welcoming, trust the school, and feel highly connected to other parents.

Notably, Hispanic, African American, and Asian parents all reported lower levels of community belonging prior to considering interactions, and African American parents continued to report lower levels of community belonging after entering interactions in the model. This is not surprising given the spate of research that indicates that minority parents often feel unwelcome in schools (McGrath, & Kuriloff, 1999).

Regarding home language, parents who spoke another language at home, who spoke Spanish only, or English and Spanish equally also reported lower community belonging. These results may reflect the challenges that linguistically diverse and immigrant persons play in the schools (Blanchett, Klingner & Harry, 2009; Chrispeels & Rvero, 2001; Lopez, Scribner, & Mahitivanichcha). After considering interactions, parents who were minority and spoke both English and another language equally, parents who were minority with lower income, parents who spoke both English and another language equally with lower income all reported lower community belonging. Further, parents who were minority and who spoke both English and another language equally with lower income also reported lower community belonging.

These results suggest that parents' experiences of feeling unwelcome or marginalized in schools may be augmented for those with intersecting identities, in this case, parents who are minority, low income, and linguistically diverse (Cholewa & West-Olatunji, 2008; Crozier, 20001; McGrath & Kuriloff, 1999). While interesting, these interactions must be explored with a more robust sample of racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse parents before generalizations can be made.

**Community participation.** Results were very similar for community participation with parents with lower educational levels (compared to parents with graduate and professional degrees) and lower income reporting lower community participation, indicating that they were less likely to participate in school activities, school meetings, and community activities. Similarly, parents with higher income and those with children attending private schools reported higher community participation. These findings are corroborated by research that shows that parents whose children attend private schools and parents in higher socioeconomic statuses tend to be more involved in their children's schools (Hill, 2004; Israel, Beaulieu, & Hartless, 2001).

Similar to sense of meaning, African American parents were reported higher community participation than White parents. These findings suggest that African American parents are involved in a variety of school-based activities. It is not clear whether this involvement is initiated by the school or by parents, but these findings suggest that African American parents are concerned about their children's education. Given that the results about community belonging suggest that African American parents feel more unwelcome and disconnected in schools than White parents, it is possible that experiences of marginalization in the school may affect their ability to build the relationships with the school and the teachers that would allow them to help their children succeed (Harry, Klingner & Hart, 2005).

Parents who speak another language, or who speak Spanish at home reported lower levels of community participation, that is, they were less likely to participate in school-based activities. These findings are consistent with research which shows that Latino parents are more likely to engage in home-based rather than school-based

involvement such as participating in school activities and meeting (Walker, Ice, Hoover-Dempsey, & Sandler, 2011). The home-based involvement of immigrant parents includes teaching their children the importance of the education through exposing them to their own hard work and life hardships rather than by participating in school events or meetings (Auerbach, 2007; Lopez, 2001).

### **Implications**

The findings of the current study suggest that parent empowerment may relate to children's academic achievement in general. Specifically, competence, self-determination, community belonging and community participation appear to contribute to children's academic achievement. Further, interactions of race/ethnicity, language, and income related to six components of parent empowerment at some point. Race/ethnicity, language, and income continue to predict parent empowerment as a single factor or interaction effects. Given these results, counseling and educational strategies should focus on creating or strengthening all aspects of parent empowerment. Moreover, these findings seem to suggest that counselors should play a major role in removing race/ethnicity, language and income barriers and inequities in schools for empowering marginalized parents. Intervention or programs must be intentional and powerful to facilitate empowering marginalized parents in terms of consciousness, sense of meaning, competence, self-determination, community belonging and community participation. To achieve those, school counselors will need to create parent empowerment programs and implement transforming as well as systemic approaches. Transforming counseling for empowering marginalized parents include cultural competency and advocacy, collaboration and school, family and

community partnerships. Furthermore, school counselors must utilize creative and innovative nontraditional approaches to help parents develop leadership skills and organizing communities. This section will discuss implications for school counselor practices, preparation, and directions for future research.

### **Implications for School Counseling Practice**

On the basis of the findings of this study, I recommend the following practices to enhance parent empowerment that enhance parent empowerment, in turn, contribute increasing children academic achievement in the school context: (a) Consciousness-raising discourse, (b) Leadership training, (c) Linking with parents and communities, (d) Parents as advocates through organizing activities. I discuss each of the practices next. The proposed parent empowerment process is likely to have effects on parents' and schools' relationships and on marginalized parents' empowerment in school as a guide for social justice and advocacy which, in turn, will affect academic achievement (Canning & Fantuzzo, 2000).

### **Empowerment Process**

The parent empowerment process proposed here intend to develop sense of meaning, consciousness, competence, self-determination, competence, community belonging, and community participation by means of raising awareness and consciousness, develop leadership, enhance belonging to schools and impacting others, and being advocates through active participation.

**Conscious-raising discourse.** In this study, Ppersonal and collective exploration in terms of awareness of own culture such as family history and ethnic

heritage that enhance racial pride as well as racial identity may be indirectly related to children academic achievement (Carter, 2008; Sander, 1997). Moreover, consciousness of ethnic identity may the potential for powerful roles in interaction with schools that is crucial to increase competence (Goodman & West-Olatunji, 2009). The dialogue with children regarding family history and ethnic heritage may play a critical role in increasing awareness and consciousness their ethnic identity, but it should include awareness of context and power dynamic in the society (Chronister and McWhirter,2006). Moreover, parents need to increase cultural awareness and consciousness by critical reflection and a conscious-raising process that may connect to a sense of meaning, competence, community belonging and community participation (Boehm &Staples, 2004; Delgado-Gaitan, 1991; Gutierrez, 1995; Holcomb-McCoy & Bryan, 2010). Critical consciousness consists of group identification, group consciousness and collective efficacy; *group identification* indicates sharing common experiences and concerns, group culture and norms, *group consciousness* includes understanding power relations in the society, and *collective efficacy* involves perceived capability (Gutierrez, 1995; Holcomb-McCoy & Bryan, 2010). Critical reflection includes sharing their experiences in schools, realization of lack of information, and confronting common stereotypes and beliefs (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991). Diemer, Kauffman, Koenig, Trahan & Hsieh (2006) indicated critical consciousness is “ individuals’ capacity to critically reflect and act upon their sociopolitical environment” (p. 445). The consciousness-raising discourse involves a) building group identification, b) increasing consciousness, and c) facilitating reflection.

*Building group identification.* The strategies for promoting consciousness may begin with sharing the stories such as their ethnic heritages or family history to build group identification. Further, parents may share experiences and challenges with which they suffer in schools and educations through sharing stories. Using individual and group counseling skills such as empathy, active listening, and process illumination, school counselors facilitate them by sharing their experiences such as discrimination, oppression, and isolation in schools. Parents may share marginalized situations with respect to common social status and relative powerlessness. They may share frustration, confusion and alienation from the system they often encounter in schools (Auerbach, 2007). For example, parents may discuss the challenges to help their children due to parents' long work hours and lack of academic skills. Shared stories and voices help parents connect to each other and develop group identification that facilitate parents to view themselves as valuable and recognize the importance of children education.

*Increasing consciousness.* The stories of ethnic or family histories should be related to the awareness of power relations in society, unequal social systems, and structural inequalities influence their lives and children education (Lee, 2001; Rutts & Hutchens, 2009; Bemak & Chung, 2008). For example, critical consciousness includes the awareness of systemic issues around them that influence children's education such as educational resources, curriculum, school policy, school climate and safety. The counseling skills such as active listening, empathetic understanding and reflection facilitate parents in developing cultural awareness and consciousness. It may be beneficial to increase awareness of how power dynamics are played out in

one's life context and development of a sense of identity. School counselors could be facilitators for developing consciousness of class and power, reducing self-blame, and introducing consciousness-raising (Gutierrez, DeLois, & Glenmayer, 1995). Increased group consciousness is related to developing cultural competency and creating group connection among parents.

*Facilitating reflection.* It is important to facilitate reflection in the process of the consciousness-raising discourses such as group identification and raising group consciousness. Critical reflection helps parents realize the needs of community participation, competence, self-determination to advocate for their children and support each other in the learning process, ultimately, results in taking actions (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991).

Therefore, the process of consciousness-raising discourse helps parents initiate developing and mobilizing their potential power to increase sense of meaning, competence, self-determination, community belonging and community participation.

**Leadership training.** In the parent empowerment, competence, self-determination, community belonging and community participation were significant predictors on academic achievement. Moreover, race/ethnicity, language, parents' educational level and income play critical roles in affecting parent empowerment. Taking consideration into those results, leadership training can serve as tools to increase competence and self-determination through motivating and influencing others and making decisions in schools and in ways that encourage participation in decision-making process (Boyd-Franklin, Morris, & Bry, 1997; Cooper & Christen, 2005; Delgado-Gaitan, 1991; Mation & Salem, 1995). Moreover, leadership training

can help parent to give voice to one's opinions and taking initiative, ultimately, resulting in developing competence and self-determination (Boehm & Staples, 2004). For leadership training, parents need to develop some skills such as decision-making, assertiveness, and social skills that may contribute to parents' increased control over their environment and interaction with others (McWhirter, 1991). School counselors need to give parents opportunities to exercise various leadership roles such as leading meetings, being volunteers in community organizations, and public speaking. School counselors may help parents to be leaders in order to interact with schools with equitable power (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991). School counselors may develop training programs and small group meetings for leadership training. Empowered parents exert their leadership to address important educational issues and serve as decision-makers (Lopez, 2003). Moreover, parents develop their own voice as effective organizers and engage in decision-making to improve their children's schooling (Jasis & Ordóñez-Jasis, 2004). Further, parents can serve as leaders to help other parents implement educational reform ideas (Cooper & Christie, 2005). Especially, school counselors should pay attention to marginalized parents such as parents speaking another language or Spanish at home, minority and lower income. School counselors could train marginalized parents to have develop knowledge, skills, and courage to speak for and advocate for their children. Especially, in order to help parents to be advocates through community organizing activities, school counselors facilitate parents' development not only in leadership knowledge and skills, but also by exercising leadership roles (Lopez, 2003). To develop knowledge and skills, school counselors should help parents understand school systems such as curriculum,

policies, and budgets and develop advocacy skills, competence, and self-determination. School counselors help parents participate in school meetings, education and work at community organizations as volunteers and further help parents to speak up at meetings. To exercise leadership skills, school counselors may work with parents in planning parent conferences and help parents lead the programs in schools or community organizations and help parents establish community organizing.

**Linking with parents and communities.** Community belonging and community participation may play a critical role interacting with schools and cooperate with schools to support their children education (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991). Community belonging and community participation can serve as important tools to get information, resources and supports from parents (Bryan, 2005 ; McWhirter, 1997). The linking and participation are an important step towards parent empowerment and can also lead to an improvement in educational outcomes by distributing limited resources and by taking collective action. School counselors play crucial roles in connecting parents to others and schools or communities. Parents' participation with schools and connection to others enables parents not only to develop their own voices, but also to exert their powers to change and improve their children's education (Delgado-Gaitan, 1995; Jasis & Ordóñez-Jasis, 2004). School counselors can help marginalized parents build connections to other parents for sharing information and resources that develop community belonging. School counselors should coordinate parents to attend parent-teacher association or church council, and school counselors collaborate with communities and school staffs in

order for parents to work as volunteers to help organize events. Belonging to community group or to schools helps parents become empowered, and then empowered parents are more likely to participate in school meetings and influence policies with competence and sharing power.

**Parents as advocates through community organizing activities.** Maximizing parent empowerment promoting sense of meaning, competence, self-determination, community belonging and community participation may lead collective efforts in establishing community organizing (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991). Community organizing refers to collective actions of parents to enhance children academic achievement as synthesis of parent empowerment (Lopez, 2003). Parents may begin to express their voices about their rights, school curriculum and policies, and they may organize activities and establish systems to create change in the schools for their children education (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991). Moreover, parents may initiate organizing meetings with school staff members to convey their personal concerns such as scheduling problems and to advocate for their children. For example, the program created by five Latino immigrant mothers at a local middle school for organizing parents and working in partnership with the school resulted in improving the school climate, parents participation and academic success (Jasis & Ordoñez-Jasis, 2012). In addition, marginalized parents may organize activities to address their issues, change in school policies, and advocate for children in schools (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991). Schools counselors must be a liaison to bridge between schools and community organizing of parents. School counselors help in meetings with parents and schools periodically for parents to exert their powers. Parents may establish community

organizing or activities to make system changes and take collective action without approval and organizational support of schools. When parents in community organizing may initiate groups meetings with school administrations, school counselors may serve as agents bridging school and community organizing.

### **Implication for School Practice**

In order to implement the parent empowerment process, strategies and intervention for empowering parents must be systemic, comprehensive, and organizational and school-wide approaches. Furthermore, the interventions or strategies intended to address parent empowerment must focus on providing extra support and change in schools in terms of school policy, staff development, and a welcoming school climate. School counselors may play critical roles in initiating comprehensive school-wide changes (Chi-Ying, Siroskey-Sabdo, 2005; Lee, 2007; Ratts & Hutchens, 2009). Moreover, findings from this study suggest that schools should be mindful of the role of race/ethnicity, language, and income as single factor or interaction factors in the parent empowerment contributing to children's academic achievement. I suggest the following four types of multisystemic approaches supporting parent empowerment for marginalized parents: (a) Understanding intersectionality and marginalization by race/ethnicity, income and language, (b) Development of Multicultural competency and social justice advocacy that enhance parent empowerment for marginalized parents, (c) Enhancing positive school climate and community belonging, (d) School-Family-Community Partnership

**Understanding intersectionality and marginalization by race/ethnicity, income and language.** In schools, without recognition of existing imbalance in

power, deficit model, dysfunctional views regarding race/ethnicity, income and language, it may be difficult to empower parents; in turn, may not contribute to children's educational success (Bemak & Chung, 2008; López, Scribner, & Mahitivanichcha, 2001; Vincent, 1996). In order to empower marginalized parents, schools should understand how race/ethnicity, income and language operate or affect parent empowerment. Moreover, schools should be aware of intersections of race/ethnicity, income and language intensify the hardships and marginalization. It is critical to understand vicious cyclical loops in with respect to how intersectionality operates in social and school systems, how they affect marginalization and then how the marginalized situations produce psychological and academic problems in schools.

**Development of multicultural competency and social justice advocacy that enhance parent empowerment for marginalized parents.** School personnel should develop cultural competency helping marginalized parents develop consciousness that promotes ethnic self-identity and contextual awareness (Lee, 2005). School counselors should help school staffs counter deficit models by viewing marginalized parents as assets so that parents are viewed as central to education's goal (Auberbach, 2009; López, Scribner, & Mahitivanichcha, 2001; Toorp, 1997). Moreover, schools should increase opportunities that help marginalized parents have their voice heard that may increase competence and self-determination. Moreover, school counselors should make efforts advocating school policies to address inequities and help parents' voices to be heard. Schools should offer equitable initiatives and accessible organizational structures for low-income and marginalized parents to participate in school activities and the decision-making process (Cooper, 2009). For instance,

school counselors could make efforts to organize a school council that is comprised of low-income and minority parents as decision-makers. School counselors could also advocate school policies supporting the council through technical assistance, translation services, and childcare.

**Enhancing positive school climate and community belonging.** A welcoming and caring school climate for marginalized parents to feel valued, respected, encouraged, and supported increases community belonging in schools (Auerbach, 2004; Bryan, 2005; Cooper, 2005). Moreover, creating and providing to a welcoming environment for parents play a critical role in succeeding parents being involved in the educational process (Bryan, 2005; López, Scribner, & Mahitivanichcha, 2001). Indeed, schools may create the school as a community center for welcoming and comfortable environments for parents (Lopez, 2003).

**School-family-community partnerships.** Schools can help parents develop community belonging and community participation through school-family-community participation (Bryan, 2005; Bryan & Henry, 2008; Bryan & Henry, 2012). School counselors should serve as bridge or liaison in order for parents to participate more in the educational process (Bryan, 2005; Lee, 2001). Schools must bridge the gap between teachers and parents, between parents and stakeholders, and between parents and community. For example, school counselors could help community organizing of parents by initiating meetings among principals in schools (Lopez, 2003). Also, schools can initiate work groups in which teachers and parents work together to develop curriculums, and organize afterschool programs (Lopez, 2003). In addition, school counselors should connect with existing organizations in schools,

support groups, neighborhood action committees, community organizations, and other channels of collective effort in order to offer opportunities for community participation (Bryan & Henry, in press). School counselors work with churches and community groups to provide parent empowerment training so that parents can be empowered to effectively exercise influence over their schools (Bryan & Henry, 2008; Nogurea, 2002).

### **Implications for Future Research**

Based on a large national data set, PFI-NHES:2007, the results of this study lead to several future research areas to examine. First, this study provides important information of components of parent empowerment to guide future parent empowerment empirical studies. As an introductory study, more research is needed to fully understand parent empowerment variables. This research was intended to begin empirical validation of those ideas put forth by the previous studies. To further operationally define variables that constitute parent empowerment, the components identified here could be established to create parent empowerment composites and to develop a theoretical model using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Second, since parent empowerment was a significant predictor of children's academic achievement, future research needs to examine the effectiveness of the parent empowerment process proposed in this study. School counselors and counselor educators can use the parent empowerment components to examine the effectiveness of the parent empowerment process. More specifically, given the effects of parent empowerment on academic achievement, it would be important to examine whether parent empowerment program has effectiveness working with parents. Third, the findings of

this study provide a rationale for replicating the study using SEM to compare findings regarding interaction effects of parent empowerment and race/ethnicity, language and income variables. It is possible by examining the relationship of interaction effects on parent empowerment variables that use path models with latent variables in the structural equation models.

### **Limitations**

Since this study was based on a nationally representative as well as large national data set, the PFI-NHES: 2007 database, the analyses for the current study were limited to the variables in the database. Using variables as proxies for the construct may produce some limitations. First, students' grade point averages (GPA) responded to by parents is the only achievement data available in the data set. Although GPA is a significant indicator of academic achievement, objective students' overall GPA or a composite of several subjects such as reading, math and science achievement may be better for capturing the effect of parent empowerment on students' overall performance.

Second, the parent empowerment variables used in the study may need to develop variables to capture the construct of parent empowerment. For instance, although a single indicator of consciousness such as “ talk with the child about family history or ethnic heritage” may be the best item to measure consciousness component, this item may not fully capture the consciousness identified in the study. Future studies should develop components to measure the components of parent empowerment to explore the relationships of parent empowerment and academic achievement.

Furthermore, the variables used in the data set for the study such as parent empowerment variables and an academic achievement variable are derived from self-reported data that may not capture the construct to be measured. For instance, items such as “It is the parents’ responsibility to teach their children to value education and success in schools” or “I trust the staff at child’s school to act with child’s best interest in mind” may affect the desirability of parents rather than actual parents’ perceptions and feelings.

This study has begun to provide important information on the interaction effects of race/ethnicity, language, and income on parent empowerment; however, further research is needed. The intersection effects using multiple or logistic regression analysis may not completely capture intersectionality as presumed by theorists and may not include dynamic as well as qualitative meanings within groups (Hancock, 2007). Future research should put endeavors to conduct analysis to better capture intersectionality using fuzzy set logic collecting data and Exhaustive Chi-Squared Automatic Interaction Detector (Exhaustive CHAID) technique to establish classification tree (Hancock, 2007; Shaw, Chan, McMahon, 2011).

Further, for preventing inflation of standard errors and more accuracy results, first, to make the intercept term more meaningful, meaning centering should be conducted prior to conducting the analysis, in which, the continuous variable, income needs to be transformed by subtracting the sample mean from raw variables (Jaccard, 2001). Second, in order to obtain accurate result, it may be helpful to make small cells through combining multi-categorical variables such as language.

### **Summary**

The findings of the current study demonstrated that parent empowerment affects children's academic achievement. Moreover, intersections of race/ethnicity, language and income in parent empowerment are insightful of wide systemic and school-wide approaches. The results are significant in that they provide empirical information for school counselors, teachers, administrators and counselors for working with parents. Furthermore, these data may begin to provide insight into the theoretical framework of the parent empowerment to guide research and practice. Using a national as well as longitudinal study with large data may make a significant contribution to the counseling literature that sheds light on the potential of the counseling profession and researchers to develop parent empowerment and children's academic achievement and connectedness within intersectionality.

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