

Gendered Attitudes and Beliefs Among Latinx Youth

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Abstract

This research focuses on comparing the gender ideologies of Latinx youths with their parents. In semi-structured interviews with ten participants, we found that Latinx youths have less traditional gender ideologies than their parents. Even though these parents are resisting the changes with stereotypical beliefs like “machismo” and “machista,” they were not as strong and enforced as their own parents (youths’ grandparents). This research will also involve how parents are shaped by their children. This suggested that Latinx youths are more likely not to follow these gendered ideologies but constantly challenge their parents’ ideologies. We anticipate that there be some traits and values that youths are following that their parents taught them, but they reject the roles of “machismo” and “marianismo.” This research demonstrates if Latinx youths follow the gender beliefs of “machismo” and “marianismo” that their parents implemented in their childhood. We see if the youths intend to continue the roles of “machismo” or “marianismo” as part of their beliefs once they form a family in the future or have the same beliefs. We discuss whether youths have seen stereotypes in their household and how they react to them. We also compare and contrast the youths’ responses to their parents’ questions like “Did your parents follow the gender roles like your father being “machismo” or mother being “marianismo?”

Keywords: Latinx, Gender role attitudes, Machismo, Machista, stereotypes, Mexican

Introduction

In the previous research, they did not focus on Latinx youth and parents. Now we focus on both perspectives and their interpretation of gender beliefs. Knowing about the next generation is giving more freedom and not being ashamed of not following the norms of “machismo” and “marianismo.” It will make a difference in Latinx families. It will bring awareness to how beliefs about gender are changing. Many Latinx families describe the men in society as having values and beliefs composed of both positive and negative but do not label it marianismo (Piña-Watson et al., 2014). Studying families of Mexican descent is interesting, innovative, and important because everyone has a story on how machismo and marianismo impact their lives. Latinx families did not grow up from day one and had these gender roles. Over time, the parents decide on the children's roles and choose what to do about them. Latinx men/boys have the traditional gender roles embodied by machismo, and Latinx women/girls have the values of marianismo (Piña-Watson et al., 2014). Additionally, if Latinx youths do have these traditional gender roles embodied, they are not accepting the gender roles and are willing to challenge their parents' ideas with them.

Marianismo, and masculinity are norms that are not placed and directly spoken of but are used daily in Latinx families. Piña-Watson et al. (2014) refers to Marianismo as the belief that a woman should:

“(a) be the central figure of her family, thereby holding the family together and ensuring connectedness among them (family

pillar); b) be the one who models spiritual fortitude and ensures the spiritual health of the family (spiritual pillar); c) ensure control over sexual desires and be sexually “pure” (virtuous and chaste); d) put her own needs second to others (subordinate to others); and e) not speak out with her wants, desires, or needs as a means of maintaining harmony in interpersonal relationships and among groups.” (p.285)

Machismo is a traditional gender role value among Latino men and boys (Arciniega et al., 2008). Traditional machismo has some characteristics of violent, aggressive, and sexualized behaviors. It can also be associated with violence and heavy drinking (Arciniega et al., 2008). It also involves Latino men dominating women and having control (Arciniega et al., 2008). In former research, Piña-Watson et al. examined various gender of Mexican descent youth in mental health (p.280); however, they have not focused on Latinx youth of Mexican descent to individual gender role values. The previous research by Gerson, (2009) forced on men and women that were interviewed about their experiences of living in the U.S., which was based on varied racial, and ethnic identities and class backgrounds. While he was studying how “structural and cultural conflicts play out in the lives of young women and men” (Gerson., 2009). They focused on the whole population but not specifically on the Latinx population. This research will focus on looking into Latinx youths’ ideologies about gender attitudes and if they continue traditional

gender roles in their household of machismo or marianismo. The research will also provide new information on the newest generation of Latinx youth by knowing what they plan to do next with their families. It also provided new insight to both the youths and their parents on how parents are shaped by their children. By doing so, we demonstrate if Latinx youths follow the gender beliefs of “machismo” and “marianismo” that their parents implemented in their childhood.

Background

Many Latinx families know gender-role norms, particularly women's roles at home and men's roles as economic providers (Endendijk et al., 2018). Endendijk et al. (2018) noted that Latinx families are more traditional but decide not to change their gender beliefs or acknowledge their beliefs. Endendick et al. (2018) also mentioned that the children of mothers involved in stereotypically masculine housework tend to have less traditional beliefs on gender. This study demonstrated that as the future progress on gender beliefs, youths would have more flexibility in gender attitudes. Other studies have shown that children’s gender stereotypes come from the ages 3 to 5 years and in behaviors of attitudes toward gender norms (Halim et al., 2013). This research found that children have moments in their lives where they pick up these gender attitudes. There is little research on Latinx youth between the ages of 16 to 22 years old. This study will address whether Latinx youths will follow the gendered attitudes grounded by their parents or if they have challenged them.

Method

Participants

Participants were part of this research that focused on semi-structured interviews. Choosing the interview process helps us better use because it allows us to know one-on-one with the participants and understand their stories. It allows us to understand the participants in a more intimate way and share their experiences. Interviews took about 40 to 50 minutes. We collected data from 10 participants, including youths and parents. Of those 10, 6 were youths, and 4 were parents. Overall, there were 9 females and 1 male. The youths ranged from 16 to 22 years old, while the parents' ages ranged from 33 to 52. The sample among youths was primarily of Mexican descent (60% of respondents), with the other (40% of respondents) parents of Mexican origin. Something else to note is that we interviewed youths and their parents, so it was with the same families. Interviewing participants from the same families allows us to see the similarities and differences in their beliefs of “machismo” and “marianismo.” There were patterns in the parents' beliefs versus the beliefs of the youth.

Table 1. Demographic details are available for all those who took part in audio-recorded qualitative research sessions (n = 10 participants)

Parent or Youth	Ages	Relationship Status (a)	Sexual Orientation (b)
Parent	52	Married	Female
Youth	21	Single	Female
Youth	18	Single	Female
Parent	42	Married	Male
Parent	33	Married	Female
Youth	19	Single	Female
Youth	21	Single	Female
Parent	38	Married	Female
Youth	16	Single	Female
Youth	21	Single	Female

- a. Participants relate as to Single or Married
- b. Participants related as either Female or Male

Figure 1.

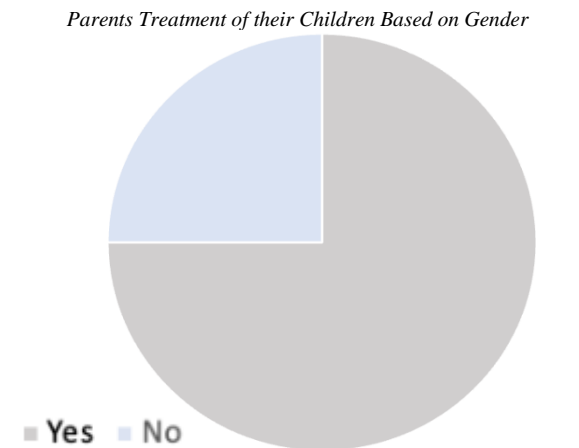


Figure 1. Parents were asked if they treated their children differently based on gender. 1 out of 4 (25%) indicated that they treated their children differently because of gender, while 3 out of 4 (75%) stated that they did not treat their children differently based on gender.

Table 2. Describes how youths' expectations they had and what their parents expected from them.

Expectations (a)	Challenging (b)
Clean bedroom, cooking, independent	Yes
Attending school, getting a job, independent, cleaning, sweeping, mopping	Yes
Clean bedrooms, assist in cleaning the kitchen, bathroom, and living room	Yes
Graduate school, become my own person, independent, and cook	Yes
Cooking, cleaning, clean bedroom, be independent	Yes
Work, clean, clean bedroom do errands, wash the dish, laundry, wash the car, mowing the lawn	Yes

- a. Participants were asked if they had any expectations from their parents and if it was challenging
 b. Yes or No

Materials

The materials used for the research were a recorder, computer, paper, pencil, and a coding program NVivo, a computer software. NVivo is a qualitative data analysis (QDA) developed to help qualitative data. It allows for organizing, analyzing, and find significant ideas with unstructured or qualitative data like interviews. Also, I was aided by my mentor Dr. Jennifer Whitmer. The sampling method used was convenience and snowball sampling. To recruit the participants and their families, we send an email via the Sociology department requesting participants. This also included methods in selecting and recruiting participants on social media like Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter. While there are unlikely to be 16 and 17-year-olds receiving these emails, we also got the participants that allow recruiting older participants who can refer anyone else that was younger participants. There was also compensation for the participants, a raffle. I also needed to obtain an IRB application, which I have completed two because of minors. The methods for selecting my participants were self-identified Latinx youths ages 16-22. We include at least one parent from the youth if they want to get interviewed. We provide five gift cards from Amazon. By doing some, we made a list of the participants and used a random number generator to select the winners.

Measures

The measures were forward-translated to Spanish in the interview for the parents; then, it was noted

back-translated to English by separating the individuals' dialects. Final versions of the themes were used to compare and analyze the parents' responses. Some questions asked of youths were, "Have you seen stereotypes in your household? Do you consider your father being "machismo" or your mother to be "marianismo"? "Can you think of any examples from your childhood when you became aware of different expectations for men and women?" "When you picture your own family, how do you envision household responsibilities and why? "Do you agree with the traditional gender roles or not?" "Do you ever have conflicts with your family about their ideas about gender?" While the questions asked of parents were, "Do you treat your sons differently from your daughters?", "What did your parents like when growing up regarding home duties?", "Did your parents follow the gender roles like your father being "machismo" or your mother being "machista?", "Do you think your partner helps you with duties? (at home, outside, or with children)", "How did you divide the labor at home when you were young? Do you think there is equality with your partner's help?"

Finding, Results, and Discussion

Youths Challenging Gender Attitudes

The center goal was understanding the kinds of gender ideologies youths are socialized into and if youths followed or resisted these gender attitudes. While youths push and resist, they also challenge their parents to change their beliefs. With data collected, gendered attitudes among Latinx youths overlap with their parents with their character traits. Youths and parents described growing up in households that displayed machismo and marianismo. Youths also resisted traditional gender stereotypes. And youths are showed that parents are more open to different gender ideas but still have some ideas of changes. This demonstrated objections when youths question their parents' attitudes toward gender roles. The youths are constantly resisting and challenging these gender attitudes with their parents. For instance, when the youth participant challenged her father's gender attitudes:

"But this one time when we were sharing our closet and my brother and I, we had his same clothes in the closet so that I would tell him...I'll wash this time, and then you dry the clothes. And then my dad saw one day; he said, why is your brother touching your clothes? That's not right. Then he's over here looking at your clothes. And I told him like dad; we are siblings. Like, it's OK. If he likes putting my clothes in the dryer, nothing will happen. Nobody's going to think less of him. But yeah, after that, he understood".

This youth challenged her father's ideas of gender attitudes by telling him it was okay that her brother

would help dry her clothes. Rather than the youth agreeing with her father, she could resist and challenge her father's ideas of machismo. This pattern was seen through the interviews conducted by the youths constantly having a small war on the battlefield with these gender attitudes with their parents.

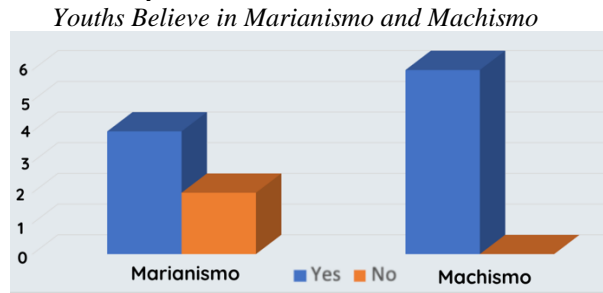
Result from Youths

Youths were asked, “Do you consider your father being “machismo” or your mother to be “marianismo”? (See Graph 1). This demonstrated that youths responded with mothers being “marianismo” by saying Yes (4) and No (2) while youths said that fathers were “machismo” Yes (6) and No (0). This allowed us to see that Latinx youths felt that fathers were more dominant to “Machismo” and their character traits. Some traits they described being associated with “machismo” were dominating, selfish, narrow-minded, arrogant, and strong. While mothers' character traits of “marianismo” were described as kind, selfless, soft, safe, and submissive. While the mothers were more lenient with their roles of “marianismo.” This was important to note because youths have more challenges with their fathers about these gender roles than mothers. For instance, youth says:

“When it comes to my dad, males are supposed to be dominant, they're supposed to be in charge of the women, and they should be strong, and they don't have to serve their own plate. They already work outside, so they do as much as possible for the family. And then when it comes to mom, it's always like assist the men because the men already have to do so much. So, like, survey their plate or get them a utensil or do the household chores, we have to take care of them because we are female of it.”

Even though mothers are willing to stand with their husbands, they still show less hardheaded gender roles of “marianismo.” This allows the youth to have opposites of resisting and challenging their parents' ideas. Youths have the balance to rebel against the gender roles they grow up in because one parent is lenient with these “stereotypes.” It allows them to express how they feel about what they see in society now. Another example youth says: “dad is like the one that kind of like is the one who was the last word.” When the youth described her father, she saw that his character trait dominated because he had the final say. This allied with the previous example of youths seeing gender attitudes with “machismo.”

Graph 1. Youth' were asked, “Do you consider your father being “machismo” or your mother to be “marianismo?”

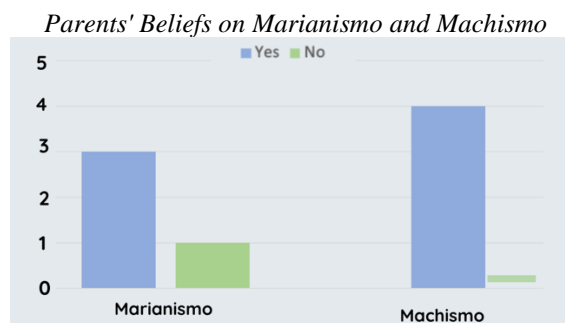


Marianismo: Yes (4) vs. No (2)
Machismo: Yes (6) vs. No (0)

Result from Parents

Parents were also asked the same question by youths “Did your parents follow the gender roles like your father being “machismo” or your mother being “marianismo?” Parents said mothers “marianismo” Yes (3) and No (1) in told 4 (See graph 2). In contrast, parents said that the father did follow “machismo” with Yes (4) and No (0) in told of 4. This was similar to youths' responses, with fathers dominating their gender roles. Parents also have these values as their youths make youths more willing to challenge gender roles. Parents are all from Mexican origin, so during their adolescence, they grow up with what was normally “machismo” and “marianismo.” When coming to the USA, they opened new ideas and values from what they grew up their whole life. Parents had many fights or accepted these gender roles they saw. It allowed youth to rush these gender roles because of their parents. It demonstrated that parents were the first to stop and change these gender roles because of moving and choosing to leave the gender roles. The parents have helped their youths challenge these gender roles.

Graph 2. Parents were asked if “Did your parents follow the gender roles like your father being “machismo” or your mother being “marianismo?”



Marianismo: Yes (3) vs. No (1)
Machismo: Yes (4) vs. No (0)

Youths Challenging Gender Attitudes

The parents are either accepting them or also challenging these gender attitudes. The parents' beliefs were not as strict as those of their parents (youth grandparents). During the interviews, they seemed more lenient towards the gendered attitudes of their children. Research has provided that these youths are having daily battles with their parents. These results have demonstrated that Latinx youths are challenging these gender attitudes, and parents are slowly adjusting to them (Graph 2). So far, the preliminary results are that youths can change these social norms.

Regarding the possible results, Latinx youths follow their parents' attitudes but are willing to challenge them. As discussed above, machismo and marianismo are seen in Latinx families, but machismo is more present in fathers. The youths noted that the father had harder beliefs than the mothers because the fathers of the action did. It is important to note that youths did not blame their fathers' actions, but they acknowledged their beliefs. Furthermore, marianismo for Latinx youth is not as recessive as machismo.

Limitations/Future Research

Future research could focus on the parents' ideals of machismo and marianismo. It was seen that parents were the first ones to take a step on stopping these beliefs. It puts to question what else have they resist in their culture.

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