



Wise Latina Project: A Social Capital Model of Adelante Chicas

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Introduction and Background of Problem

Despite the shifting demographics of the US, a paucity of research on Latina youth is available (Denner & Guzman, 2006; Garcia-Reid, 2007) and few studies include a partnership with programs designed for, by, and about Latinas (NWLC/MALDEF, 2009). Latinas are, in fact, a "critically understudied" (Garcia-Reid, 2007). Existing models of their development are inadequate to the task of explaining their unique cultural, familial, and ethnic identity processes (Denner & Guzman, 2006) and the importance of disaggregating ethno-cultural groups within the Spanish-speaking community (Umana-Taylor, et al. 2001; 2002;). A recent report from the National Women's Law Center and MALDEF (2009) has outlined several community and research initiatives to improve the social, educational, and employment outcomes of Latinas. Many of these are already inform the Adelante Chicas program that is the focus of our evaluation and analysis (www.adelantemujeres.org). The emerging paradigm of intersectionalities studies of gender (Cole, 2008), ethnic identity research (Quintana & Vera, 1999) and social capital studies of Latinas' well-being (Garcia-Reid, 2007) afford a new lens with which to choose measurements of ethnic identity and to apply a feminist action-research analysis of qualitative and quantitative data we have collected (Burns-Glover & Ochoa, 2010; Reid, 2004).

Social Capital Theory as Framework for Analysis

Social capital and familial ethnic socialization are important emerging paradigms in the field of psychological assessment of effective programs to promote academic and social well-being of minority and low income children. Social capital theory is an increasingly influential approach that "addresses social relationships that have productive benefits" (<http://www.socialcapitalresearch.com/0>). This provides an ecological approach of the intersecting and mutually influential properties of the school, parent, peer, and communities that Latina youth encounter in their daily lives (Garcia-Reid, 2007). Programs that foster the acquisition, maintenance, and expansion of these resources are increasingly recommended and preferred by advocacy groups (NWLC & MALDEF, 2009). Familial and community level ethnic socialization are important but often neglected components of this social capital analysis (Gonzales, et al., 2006). Adelante Chicas provides a unique comprehensive service model (afterschool programs, home visits, parent gatherings, communication with school district, community engagement) to Latina/Hispanic girls enrolled in the Forest Grove and Hillsboro school districts (Ochoa, 2010). Adelante Chicas is a community-based program of cultural and community based programming designed by, for, and about Hispanics living in the Forest Grove/Washington County area. It works in collaboration with families to empower their daughters. It has a focus on the development of local leadership from within the Hispanic/Latino community and was designed by and is implemented by Latinas who work for the Adelante Mujeres program (www.adelantemujeres.org).

Questions in This Study

- 1) Is the program persistence rate over 50% across all locations and age cohorts?
- 2) Do girls who persist in attendance in Adelante Chicas perform as well or better academically (GPA, classroom engagement)?
- 3) Do girls in the program report high academic aspirations?
- 4) Do girls report positive benefits (psychosocial, instrumental) from participation in the program?
- 5) Is Adelante Chicas a significant variable in promoting girls' attendance and engagement in school?

Method & Procedures

Data Timeline: September, 2009-June, 2010

Procedures: All data were dis-identified, archival data collected by Adelante Chicas. Translations were performed by local bilingual AC facilitators and by the bilingual, bicultural first author. Narrative data were coded using videotaped focus groups and participants' names were unknown to the researchers. All coding of narratives were conducted using consensual validity and inter-rater reliability checks. Translational accuracy was checked by native speakers. Academic outcomes were coded using grade reports (narrative and quantitative) from schools. The data were incomplete from the school, we report the available quantitative and qualitative data. We were provided with academic records for 111 girls (71%) and attendance data for 117 (75%). Because of the nature of academic reports, we conducted correlational analyses for the elementary, middle and high school samples only (attendance and GPA).

Quasi-experimental design: Schools the girls attended provided academic outcomes/attendance data. We used those who enrolled but did not persist as our comparison group. Persisters were those who attended >50% of sessions. Non-per sisters did not vary on relevant demographic indicator variables (e.g., Migrant status; Country of Origin).

DEMOGRAPHICS

Total Applications: 156, 132 attended at least once (84.6%)

Ages: 8-18 years; $M = 12$ years old ($SD = 2.88$)

Ethnicity: Hispanic (Mexican, Guatemalan); Mixed European-American & Hispanic.

Birth place: 44% Oregon (16% other states); 37.5% Mexico (2% other countries). **[Majority are US Born].**

Sites: All in Washington County, Or. High School (HS); Middle School (MS); Community Center (BE); Upper Elementary (UES) and Elementary (ES)

RESULTS

Attendance: School attendance rates across all ages and sites was very high (93% to 96%). Attendance rates for Adelante Chicas program varied by site. The highest was the community center (77.6%) and lowest was at the Middle School (46.3%). **Overall, the attendance rate (all sessions from application to June) was 58%** meeting the target rate of 50% retention from application to June, 2010.

Table 1: End of Year (June, 2010) GPAs

N of applicants	School	GPA	SD	Min-Max
51	High school	2.65	0.84	.75-4.14
27	Middle school	2.65	0.94	1.14-4.00
40	Upper Elementary	3.38	0.43	2.58-4.00

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Adelante Chicas' Enrollment and Academic Outcomes: The data for the Sept 09-Jan 10 AC attendance were correlated with the Middle School and High School GPA data for January GPA. The correlation was positive and significant ($r = .38$; $p = .023$). There was no significant difference between migrant and non-migrant girls' GPAs. Higher rates of attendance at both school in general and Adelante Chicas programming was positively correlated with higher grades for the girls in these grades. We analyzed the Mean weighted grades for that timeframe between persisters and non-persisters (e.g., those who had more than 50% attendance at Adelante Chicas' vs. those who attended only one) **and found that GPAs for persisters were higher ($M = 3.04$ vs. 2.05)**. This difference was statistically significant ($F = 4.07$; $p = .05$) The January-June data indicated that for the high school and middle school sample, the **Persisters in AC did better in GPA than the Non-persisters** ($F = 2.16$; $p = .10$). When we compared HS and Middle School data ($N = 70$) **we found that persisters had higher GPA in the January-June grading period ($M = 3.11$, $SD = .78$)** than non-persisters ($M = 2.84$; $SD = .76$) ($F = 2.16$; $p = .10$). Our data analysis is limited by missing data from the school and by the "proficiency" based grading system.

Attendance and Outcomes: in Elementary School: These data indicate that the -when compared with non-persisters. Of the persisters 61% are doing "satisfactory" in English, 46% are "At Grade" in Writing and Reading. Of persisters, 69% are "At Grade" in Math.

Academic Reports and Engagement: We coded comments teachers on grade reports for all enrollees (the 111 records provided). We found that **97.2%** of girls' report cards included **comments that were positive** (e.g. "hard worker"; "respectful" "pleasure to have in class"). The rate of academic comments were 41.7% noting "high level of skill" and 44% noted negative skills "Poor test performance, missing required work." Only 16% noted that absences or tardies were affecting progress.

Academic Aspirations: Focus group and narrative data were collected across sites to assess the girls' academic aspirations. In narratives and written responses, the Middle School and High School girls reported **high academic goals:** 50% want to go into Health careers (pediatrician); 22% wanted to go into creative fields (designer), 17% wanted to go into Law (immigration law), 5% into Education and 6% mentioned other career paths. All were interested in some form of education beyond high school.

Attitudes Towards Adelante Chicas Program: Narrative responses about what they liked about or what they got from being in the program were coded into four themes: Activities, Social-Emotional Support, Confidence/Skills or Motivation, and Other. As shown on Table 2, as expected, age cohorts varied in what they liked about the program. Overall, however, the program's goals appear to have been met: **providing social capital in the form of cultural pride, emotional support, and confidence to engage in community leadership and academic success.**

Table 2: Evaluation of Program

Site	Activities	Social-Emotional	Confidence	Other
HS	30.77%	53.85%	0	15.36%
MS	37.50%	37.50%	12.50%	12.50%
UES	61.54%	46.15%	23.08%	7.69%
ES	75%	25%	0	0
BE	33.33%	55.56%	11.11%	0

DISCUSSION

Available data indicate that a) the academic engagement and enhancement goals of the program have been met; b) academic achievement outcomes are good, but are complicated by new testing systems; c) girls gain the social and instrumental capital they need from the program.