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# The effects of family structure, family responsibilities, and family closeness on the college decisions of Hispanic high school students

Joanna Louise Settles  
*University of Iowa*

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THE EFFECTS OF FAMILY STRUCTURE, FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES,  
AND FAMILY CLOSENESS ON THE COLLEGE DECISIONS OF HISPANIC HIGH  
SCHOOL STUDENTS

by

Joanna Louise Settles

An Abstract

Of a thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the Doctor of  
Philosophy degree in Educational Policy  
and Leadership Studies  
in the Graduate College of  
The University of Iowa

May 2012

Thesis Supervisor: Professor David Bills

ABSTRACT

I investigate the differences between Hispanic high school graduates, both male and female, who chose not to attend college, who chose to initially enroll into a two-year college, or who chose to initially enroll into a four-year college or university. I used the 1994-1995 National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health to determine how family structure, family responsibilities and family closeness influenced the decisions made by Hispanic youth. There are five major findings regarding Hispanics and their decisions after high school graduation. The findings show that socioeconomic status (parents' education), grade point average and college aspirations influence the decision to attend college. Participating in household chores influenced males who enrolled into four-year colleges more than influencing females; females who initially enrolled into four-year colleges were more influenced by the number of household members than males. High school graduates with fewer household members were more likely to initially enroll into a four-year college and participate in more household chores compared to students who attended two-year colleges. Parental aspirations were influential for high school graduates whether they attended two- or four-year colleges. Last, living with two biological parents compared to living with a single mother was highly influential for high school graduates who initially enrolled into a four-year college. Overall, the findings indicate that family structure, family closeness and family responsibilities affect the college decisions of Hispanic high school graduates.

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Graduate College  
The University of Iowa  
Iowa City, Iowa

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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PH.D. THESIS

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This is to certify that the Ph.D. thesis of

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for the thesis requirement for the Doctor of Philosophy  
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To my Grandma Lou, who wanted to go to college in 1942, but was told she had to be a secretary or a nurse

Faith is taking the first step even when you don't see the whole staircase.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

## ABSTRACT

I investigate the differences between Hispanic high school graduates, both male and female, who chose not to attend college, who chose to initially enroll into a two-year college, or who chose to initially enroll into a four-year college or university. I used the 1994-1995 National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health to determine how family structure, family responsibilities and family closeness influenced the decisions made by Hispanic youth. There are five major findings regarding Hispanics and their decisions after high school graduation. The findings show that socioeconomic status (parents' education), grade point average and college aspirations influence the decision to attend college. Participating in household chores influenced males who enrolled into four-year colleges more than influencing females; females who initially enrolled into four-year colleges were more influenced by the number of household members than males. High school graduates with fewer household members were more likely to initially enroll into a four-year college and participate in more household chores compared to students who attended two-year colleges. Parental aspirations were influential for high school graduates whether they attended two- or four-year colleges. Last, living with two biological parents compared to living with a single mother was highly influential for high school graduates who initially enrolled into a four-year college. Overall, the findings indicate that family structure, family closeness and family responsibilities affect the college decisions of Hispanic high school graduates.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Introduction

“Today the most urgent challenge for the American educational system has a Latino/a<sup>1</sup> face” (Gándara & Contreras, 2009, p.1). The number of Latinos/as living in the United States has increased 43 percent over the past ten years, which means that 1 in 6 Americans are of Latino/a heritage (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). By the year 2050, the United States will be a “nation of minorities” with less than half of the population representing non-Hispanic whites (Marx, 2002). Despite the Latino/a community being the largest, youngest, and fastest growing ethnic minority in the United States, alarmingly, it is the lowest performing academically (Santiago, 2006; Gándara & Contreras, 2009). Gándara and Contreras (2009) states that a big cause for concern is the fact that Latinos/as have not increased their college graduation rates in three decades, while other ethnic groups have. Since the 1970’s, Latino/a high school graduates’ college enrollment rates have plateaued and continue to lag dangerously far behind other groups (Gándara & Contreras, 2009). Understanding the college enrollment of Hispanics requires a thorough investigation of the factors that influence their decision to enroll at a four-year college or university, enroll at a community college or not enroll into college compared to whites and blacks, and how these factors differ for Latinos and Latinas.

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<sup>1</sup> The use of “Hispanic and “Latino/a” are interchangeable in this dissertation. Not all Hispanics speak Spanish; Latinos/as can be “white, black, Indian or any mix of these; their culture and customs also vary according to the country they have come from” (Tiedt & Tiedt, 2005, p. 24).

College has become the key that unlocks the door to a middle-class job and middle-class income (Gándara & Contreras, 2009). In order to function in “today’s increasingly complex society and technological workplace,” more than minimal skills are required (Laird, Lew, Debell & Chapman, 2001). “If these children’s educational futures prove to be as discouraging as those of their older brothers and sisters, or of their parents, the economic and social consequences for them, and for the country as a whole, will be grave” (Gándara & Contreras, 2009, p. 2). Why aren’t Hispanic students aspiring to something better? What is holding them back from a college education?

Scholars have suggested many factors that influence the college enrollment of Hispanics. Socioeconomic status (SES) and academic achievement are often cited as strong predictors of college attendance. SES is typically defined by income and parental education (Cavanagh, Schiller & Riegle-Crumb, 2006). On the average, Latinos/as have significantly lower family incomes and resources than whites to pay for college tuition (Swail, Cabrera & Lee, 2004). Being concerned or having difficulties with affording college negatively influences Latino/as student’s aspirations or expectations in college (Cabrera, La Nasa & Castandeda, 1993; Longerbeam, Sedlacek & Alatorre, 2004). Other studies have shown that access to teachers and guidance counselors are integral in Hispanics’ decisions to attend college (Ceja, 2001; Gonzales, Stoner & Jovel, 2003). Also, parental factors such as parental involvement in the student’s education, parental expectations for the student’s education and parental saving for college help predict college entry (Cabrera & La Nasa, 2000; Perna, 2000).

### Two-Year Community Colleges

When Hispanic high school graduates decide to attend college, their choice of a two-year or four-year college has serious implications. “Contrary to popular belief, community colleges have not served as the gateway to a Bachelor’s degree for large numbers of lower-income and ethnic minority populations” (Arbona & Nora 2007, p. 248). Students at two-year institutions enter with lower academic preparation compared to those enrolled into four-year institutions. Beginning at a four-year college increases the chance of finishing a degree in a set period of time by 15 to 20 percent (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). By initially enrolling into a community college, Cuccar-Alamin (1997) found that students were “twice as likely as their four-year peers to take more than six years to complete their degrees” (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005, p. 376). There is a disproportionate representation of Hispanics at two-year colleges compared to the general population (Arbona & Nora, 2007), which leads to a disproportionate number of Hispanics not receiving their college degree. This feeds the education gap between Hispanics and other ethnic groups. While the decision to enroll into a two-year community college is a solid first step, students aspiring to a four-year degree have a much better chance of earning that degree if they initially enroll into a four-year college.

Research on Latinos/as suggests many reasons for initial enrollment into community colleges over four-year colleges and low college retention rates (Sy & Romero, 2008). Two-year colleges are appealing to Hispanics because they accept students with lower grades point averages and lower college admission scores (Falbo, Contreras & Avalos, 2003). Other reasons why community colleges are appealing for Hispanics include attachment to family and community (since they are more likely to be

near the student's home than are four-year institutions), economic need, and lower tuition than four-year colleges. Community colleges accommodate for part-time enrollment. There is a focus on job skills, and many evening classes allow students to work during the day. (Fry, 2002).

#### Four-Year Colleges or Universities

As ethnic and cultural diversity in America increases, post-secondary education has not been able to capitalize on this growth, especially at four-year selective institutions (Kimura-Walsh, Yamamura, Griffin, & Allen, 2009). The factors leading to college enrollment choices by Hispanics may help explain this lack of a positive correlation between the increase of the total number of Hispanics and their college completion and point toward a deeper level of understanding. "Unfortunately, the resources necessary to translate college goals into a reality are not equitably distributed, further exacerbating the disparities between Latinas and their peers in college access" (Kimura-Walsh et al., 2009, p. 299).

Postsecondary institutions in the United States expect college students to become more independent, choose academics over family, and separate from family (Sy & Romero, 2008). This idea of self-reliance is not in harmony with the Latino/a cultural expectation that family needs should remain above personal needs (Ginorio, Guterrez, Cauce, Acosta, & Landrine 1995). *Familismo*, a cultural value emphasizing family closeness and loyalty, is a characteristic valued by many Latino populations (Vega, 1990). Latinos place more value on *familismo* than non-Hispanic whites, and this influences their everyday actions and career decisions (Fuligni, Witkow, & Garcia,

2005). “*Familismo* requires an individual family member to put the needs of the family first-even if it means making personal sacrifices” (Sy & Romero, 2008, p. 214).

Arbona and Nora (2007) argue that in order to promote upward social mobility and academic achievement for Hispanics, research needs to focus on factors that predict a student’s enrollment in a four-year college instead of a two-year college and more importantly on the factors that lead to a Hispanic student receiving his or her Bachelor’s degree. By better understanding how parental family structure, family responsibilities, and family closeness influence the decision to attend two- or four-year colleges, educators and policy makers will better understand how college choice affects the chance of Hispanic students completing a Bachelor’s degree.

Little is known about the reasons why individual Latinos/as enroll into college from those who do not (Zarate & Gallimore, 2005). Hispanic females (Latinas) are underrepresented in college enrollment, retention, and four-year completion (Sy & Romero, 2008; Otero, Rivas & Rivera, 2007; Turner & Garcia, 2005). Latinas are the least likely to enroll into four-year colleges directly following high school graduation (Vasquez, 2002). In the small, but growing research, scholars have suggested that family connections and responsibilities are paramount in the educational success of Latinas (Sy, 2006; Zambrana & Zoppi, 2002). Sy (2006) reported that Latina students who spent more time with their family were more likely to pursue higher education, which makes researching family closeness an important topic.

Many authors have examined the link between family structure and adolescents’ educational experiences. The research documents that adolescents who live in non-intact families (i.e., those who reside with a single parent or a stepparent) have more problems

in school than those from intact families (those who live in two-biological-parent families) (Cavanagh et al., 2006; DeLeire & Kalil, 2002; Björklund, A., Ginther D., & Sundström, 2006; Astone & McLanahan, 1991; Coleman 1988). Children who grow up with both biological parents have higher educational attainment compared to those who grow up with a single parent or stepparent family (McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994).

Parental involvement is part of the equation that leads to college success, which helps students enhance their productivity (Coleman, 1988), assist their upward mobility (DiMaggio & Mohr, 1985; Lamont & Lareau, 1988) and understand economic returns (Lin, 2001a). Studies have shown that family factors have an impact on children's academic achievement (e.g., Baker, 2003; Acock & Kiecolt, 2001; Lew, 2003; Gloria & Ho, 2003; Woo, 2000). Parental closeness influences their children's course-taking decisions and school achievement (Cavanagh et al., 2006; Kelly, 2004). Consistently, researchers have found that perceived family support predicts social adjustment and institutional attachment to college more strongly for Latinos/as and other ethnic minority groups than for whites (Kenny & Stryker, 1996), making family structure another category for research on Hispanics. Kenny and Stryker (1996) suggest that social adjustment during the first year of college is associated more with family support characteristics than with college friendships for Latinos/as, like with European Americans.

Much of the research on family obligations has focused on children and young adolescents, with little focus on how these obligations influence Latinos/as beyond high school graduation (Sy & Romero, 2008). Studies show that family responsibilities fall more often and more consistently on Latinas than Latinos in fulfilling family obligations,

but these studies show no gender differences with regard to the way they value family (Raffaelli & Ontai, 2004; Valenzuela, 1999). To date, there has been little research on familial obligation attitudes and family responsibilities and how they influence adolescents' decisions after high school (Arnett, 2006).

These statistics necessitate the following questions to be answered: Why do Hispanics have low educational attainment with their increasing population? Why aren't more Hispanics earning college degrees which are important in today's economy? Why do Hispanics have low college enrollment numbers and even lower completion rates? Why do a majority of Hispanics who enroll in post-secondary education enroll in two-year institutions instead of enrolling at four-year institutions? How do the cultural expectations of Hispanics differ from those of non-Hispanic whites? And finally, how do family characteristics play a role in college enrollment of Hispanics?

#### Problem Statement

Hispanics are graduating from college at low rates, so by learning more about college enrollment, policy makers and educators can better understand the factors guiding Latinos/as to enroll in two- or four-year institutions. This study will enhance the understanding of how family characteristics affect college enrollment differently for Latinos and Latinas. "Understanding the sources of racial-ethnic group differences in college enrollment is critical..." (Perna, 2006, p. 52). Empirical research rarely focuses on Hispanic gender differences. What distinguishes Latinos and Latinas who enroll in college from those who do not? Researchers have investigated factors that lead to college degree attainment of Hispanics, the college progress of immigrants, how family plays a role in college choice success, and how Latinos' and Latinas' academic influences differ.

Next, there will be a summary of recent articles that leave room for further research. Then a review of all literature, more thoroughly and critically in Chapter II, with the most important highlighted here. Arbona and Nora (2007) focused on the pre-college and college factors that influence Hispanic college degree attainment, rather than enrollment. Fuligni and Witkow (2004) researched the postsecondary educational progress of youth from immigrant families, which included many racial/ethnic groups. Perna and Titus (2005) examined the relationship between parental involvement as social capital and college enrollment between racial/ethnic groups but did not look at the differences between Latinos and Latinas.

Many studies have focused on family structure, family closeness and family responsibilities. Exploring the link between family-structure history and adolescents' academic status, Cavanagh, Schiller and Reigle-Crumb (2006) used high school graduation as their academic outcome, not college enrollment. Kapinus and Gorman (2004) examined the associations between closeness with parents, teen beliefs, and consequences of pregnancy. Espinoza (2010) used qualitative analysis to study family obligations of Latinas in higher education. A study by Sy and Romero (2008) examined different types of family responsibilities among Latina college students from immigrant families. A qualitative article on family obligation attitudes of Latinos/as during the transition from high school and beyond found family obligations to be a central theme in deciding about college choices after high school, without differentiating between males and females (Sanchez, Esparza, Colon, & Davis, 2010).

The factors that influence the college enrollment of Latinos and Latinas are often grouped together. Hamrick and Stage (2004) found gender differences between Latinos'

and Latinas' college tendencies, such as the influence of community participation and mentors, but did not scrutinize family factors, such as family structure, family closeness or family responsibilities. Zarate and Gallimore (2005) also found gender differences in factors leading to the college enrollment of Latinos and Latinas. They found that academic achievement, parental factors and language proficiency consistently predicted college enrollment for Latinos, while teacher-rated classroom performance and college counseling during high school were predictors for Latinas. They studied only two groups: college and non-college. My study will use three groups: students who enroll into a two-year institution, who enroll into a four-year institution, or who do not enroll into college. Zarate and Gallimore (2005) urge future research to focus on gender differences between Latinas and Latinos with regard to nonacademic factors like parental and teacher interactions.

#### Purpose statement

The purpose of this dissertation is to investigate the differences between Hispanic high school graduates, both male and female, who chose not to attend college, who chose to initially enroll into a two-year college, or who chose to initially enroll into a four-year college. White and black subgroups, disaggregated by gender, are also included for comparison across groups.

#### Research Questions

Building on past research, this study is centered on the hypothesis that there are differences between Latinos' and Latinas' college enrollment with regard to family structure, family closeness and family responsibilities. To test this hypothesis, four research questions focus on family characteristics through family structure, family

closeness and family responsibility. Throughout this study, I will define postsecondary enrollment in three ways, with students beginning two-year institutions, beginning four-year institutions, or not attending any postsecondary institution after high school graduation (Engberg & Wolniak, 2009).

The first question asks how family structure, family closeness and family responsibility are associated with Hispanic high school graduates' decision to initially enroll or not enroll in a two- or four-year post-secondary institution. For perspective, I compared those results to white and black high school graduates' decisions. "Like Perna (2000), Perna and Titus (2005) found that the predictors of college enrollment vary across racial-ethnic groups." The first research question shows overall comparisons among the three groups. Including whites and blacks for comparison offers a point of reference. For example, when Desmond and Turley (2009) studied the importance of students living at home during college, they found that Hispanic high schoolers were 74 percent more likely to state that living at home during college was important compared to blacks and whites. Seventy-four percent means little outside of some context. When adding that 56 percent of blacks and only 46 percent of white high schoolers stated that living at home during college was important, 74 percent takes on greater meaning. To sum, the only way to determine if relationships are specific to Latino populations is to compare them to other groups.

Perna (2000) prompts future research to use the three categories of Hispanics, white, and blacks in order to better understand their differences. Comparing Hispanics to whites and blacks adds context to college enrollment decisions across racial and ethnic groups (Perna & Titus, 2005). "Most existing databases, including those that the U.S.

Department of Education sponsors, includes insufficient numbers to perform detailed quantitative examinations of the college enrollment experiences of ...subgroups within the heterogeneous Hispanic...category” (Perna, 2007, p. 62-63).

The second question compares only females of the same three groups. Sy and Romero (2008) suggest that there needs to be more within-group variation so researchers can better understand Latinas’ college decisions. The third question compares the Hispanic males with white males and black males, again another within-group comparison. The final research question compares Hispanic females and Hispanic males. “This within-group analysis helps to explain why some Latinos/as manage to enroll in college when the group as a whole is underrepresented” (Zarate & Gallimore, 2005, p. 388).

#### Research Questions

In what ways are family structure, family closeness and family responsibility associated with the decision of initially enrolling into a two- or four-year post-secondary institution versus no enrollment-for:

1. Hispanics compared to whites and blacks?
2. Hispanics females compared to white females and black females?
3. Hispanics males compared to white males and black males?
4. Latinas compared to Latinos?

#### Significance of the Study

This research is significant because it investigates differences between Latinos’ and Latinas’ college enrollment choice in order to help increase college enrollment of both Latinos and Latinas. College preparation programs should look at the differences across groups to help increase college enrollment (Perna & Titus, 2005; Lopez, Scribner, & Mahitivanichcha, 2001). Rodriguez and Morrobel (2004) note that current research

on Latino students focuses on the negatives rather than the assets. The following paragraphs summarize existing research that leaves room for further research.

We know little about the differences in college enrollment between Latinos and Latinas (Zarate & Gallimore, 2005). Most of the research examines factors mediating between Latinos and Latinas compared to other ethnic groups (Perna, 200; Hurtado & Gauvain, 1997). According to Gonzalez et al. (2003), there could be gender differences in educational experiences that are understudied.

Existing research focused specifically on a Latina's experiences in college indicates that family responsibilities and connections are important to their educational success (Sy & Romero, 2008; Sy, 2006; Zambrana & Zoppi, 2002). Further quantitative, descriptive research should investigate how family structure influences the family responsibilities of Latina college students (Sy & Romero, 2008). Sy and Romero (2008) suggest further research to focus on how family structure influences Latina's family responsibilities, and how the fulfillment of these responsibilities affects decisions during their transition to college.

Cavanagh, Schiller and Reigle-Crumb (2006) encourage future research to focus on the relationships between family structure history and adolescents' educational careers. Although Gandara and Contreras (2009) report that family is an important aspect of college enrollment, we must do more research about how family influences college choice (Warburton, Bugarin, & Nunez, 2001). Researchers need to look into the choices that emerging adults make and the factors that hinder these decisions, especially how family obligation attitudes affect Latinos/as (Sanchez, et al., 2010).

Family structure variables are similar to the variables by Cavanagh, Schiller and Riegle-Crumb (2006) use. Family closeness variables are similar to research used by Perna and Titus (2005). The family responsibilities category includes only one variable: family chores. The study considered the number of hours worked by students as a variable but does not necessarily indicate family responsibility, as a job could be for personal gain. So using family chores is the best variable to define family responsibilities using the Add Health data (Sy & Brittan, 2008).

### Outline of the Study

This study researches the college enrollment and family characteristics of Hispanics. Following this introductory chapter, the dissertation proceeds as follows.

In Chapter II, I examine the educational pipeline for Hispanics in American education including factors that influence college enrollment. The study discusses the advantages and disadvantages of enrolling into two-year and four-year colleges as well as specific barriers to education for Hispanics. Next, it explains the influence of family structure, family closeness and family responsibilities on education, and finally explains the conceptual framework.

Chapter III describes the Add Health data and methods included in this study. It gives a definition of variables to help explain which variables may influence the decision of college enrollment of Hispanics compared to whites and blacks. An explanation of multinomial logistic regression models follows. Last, I share a list of the studies' limitations.

Chapter IV begins with an analysis of the results. Descriptive statistics and multinomial regression analyses with tables provide information for Hispanics, whites

and blacks. Then the study disaggregates data by gender. The researchers make comparison results across groups and finally share the five key findings. A reexamination of all research questions listed in Chapter II occurs.

Finally, Chapter V summarizes the study and further examines the research questions. A discussion on how this study relates to the literature follows. A final summation includes the implications for action, recommendations for further research, and concluding remarks.

### Summary

This introductory chapter sounded the alarm for the rationale for further research on college enrollment of Latinos/as and how family structure, family closeness and family responsibilities influence college choice differently for Latinos and Latinas. After presenting information on the low educational attainment of Hispanics, the study shares problem statement, research questions, purpose statement, and its significance of the study. Chapter I concludes with an outline of the study. The next chapter reviews the literature.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Introduction

We are a nation of immigrants. We take pride in the diversity of our country, and since the beginning, immigrants have settled in America to build a better future for their families. Currently, Hispanics are the fastest growing immigrant population in America (United States Census Bureau, 2011). Experts project the Mexican-Latinos in the United States to increase from 10.6 million in 2004 to more than 22 million in 2050 (Passel, 2005). This rapid growth demands attention as the educational attainment of Latino/a students lags behind that of non-Latino/a Anglos (Chapa & De La Rosa, 2004). “No country can ignore a large potential workforce, and with the shift from a manufacturing to a technology-based economy, it is vital that every segment of society be educated to its full potential” (Chapa & De La Rosa, 2004, p. 148).

Higher education determines earning capacity, affects our society’s wellbeing, and correlates to our longevity (Swail, Redd & Perna, 2003). According to Swail, Redd and Perna (2003), “Education has a profound impact on both the individual and society at large, and it is one of the surest ways to increase one’s social and economic levels and overcome the barriers of poverty and deprived social conditions” (p. 4). Following the educational pipeline (a student’s path through school), there are many places where an educational chasm exists between Latinos/as and whites: high school dropout rates, high school completion rates, college enrollment in four-year postsecondary institutions and completion of four-year colleges (Swail, Cabrera, Lee & Williams, 2005).

Next, we look at the specifics of Latinos and whites in education at the aforementioned chasms in education. In 2007, the high school dropout rate for Hispanics was more than four times greater than non-Hispanic whites at only 6 percent (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009). In 2009, 94.6 percent of whites had a high school diploma or equivalent while only 68.9 percent of Latinos/as did (National Center for Education Statistics, 2009). In postsecondary education, Hispanic enrollment is high; as 63.9 percent were enrolled in either a two or four-year college in October immediately following high school completion compared to 71.7 percent of whites (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2010).

Do these high numbers of college enrollment of Hispanics lead to a Bachelor's degree? Although minority students are enrolling into postsecondary schools at a similar rate as whites and Asians, they "earn college degrees at a ratio between 1:2 and 1:3 compared with white and Asian students" (Swail, Redd & Perna, 2003, p. 2). As the United States becomes significantly "less white" over the next fifty years, issues of color must be a priority (2003). The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) reports an amazing 86 percent increase of Bachelor's degree attainment for Hispanics students versus a 25 percent increase for whites between 1997-98 and 2007-08 (2009). However, college completion rates for students of color and low-income students have always lagged behind those of whites (Gladieux & Swail, 1998), and continue to do so.

According to Astin and Oseguera (2003), Hispanics are among the least likely to finish their Bachelor's degree. Between 1971 and 2009, the gap in Bachelor's degree attainment between whites and Hispanics widened from 14 to 25 percentage points (National Center for Education Statistics, 2010). Only 12.2 percent of Hispanics versus

37.2 percent of whites have attained a bachelor's degree of 25- to 29-year-olds (NCES, 2009). Furthermore, while nearly half of whites (47.3 percent) graduate with a four-year degree, not even a fourth (23.2 percent) of Latino/a postsecondary students earn their degree within ten years of high school graduation (Swail et al., 2005).

Why are these educational gaps so wide between Latinos/as and whites? In order to better understand the students under investigation, I examine the path college-aspiring Hispanic students take after high school graduation: the factors that influence whether they enroll at a four-year college or university, enroll at a community college, or do not enroll into college, and how that decision ultimately impacts whether or not they earn a Bachelor's degree. Then, I researched the advantages and disadvantages of community colleges and four-year colleges. Last, I focus on three factors that influence Hispanic students' decisions after high school: family structure, family closeness and family responsibilities and why this warrants further research in this area.

#### Factors That Influence College Enrollment

“In the United States, entering college represents a major developmental transition, often involving increased independence, physical distance from family members, and greater personal responsibility for success and failures” (Sy & Romero, 2008, p. 213). What factors influence the decision to enroll in college or not?

Studies often cite socioeconomic status (SES) and academic achievement as strong predictors of college attendance, typically defined by income and parental education (Cavanagh et al., 2006). Other studies have shown that access to teachers and guidance counselors is integral in Hispanics' decisions to attend college (Ceja, 2001; Gonzales et al., 2003). These studies show that counselors and teachers can also restrict

these students from their access to college knowledge. Studies show that even in today's hyper information age, high school counselors share surprisingly little college guidance to low-income and minority students (Venezia & Kirst, 2005). This limited access to information and a lack of understanding of college choice may disadvantage certain students (Hill, 2008), and these differences in information resources may partially explain disparities in college enrollment among low-income, black, and Hispanic students (Perna, 2006).

Parental factors help predict college entry (Cabrera & La Nasa, 2000; Perna, 2000). Both studies singled out parental encouragement, involvement and parental support as class-based variables that are predictors (Zarate & Gallimore, 2005). Many variables dictate Hispanic high school graduates' transition into adulthood. Cerna, Perez and Saenz, (2007) report that it is important to consider Latino/a student's pre-college aspirations, perceptions and values when examining outcomes of degree attainment. The academic resources, such as quality and rigor of high school curriculum, students bring to college is one of the strongest predictors of Bachelor's degree attainment (Warburton, Bugarin, & Nuñez, 2001).

University tuition costs have dramatically increased in recent years, (Gándara et al., 2005; Shulock & Moore, 2005), which is especially challenging for Hispanics. On the average, Latinos/as have significantly lower family incomes and resources than whites to spend for college tuition (Swail et al., 2004). Latinos/as are over-represented among people living in poverty (Perez & De La Rosa Perez, 2000; Passel, 2005; Ramirez, 2004) with 22.6 percent of Latinos/as in poverty compared with 12.4 percent of the total population (Ramirez, 2004). "Like many other first-generation and low-income

students, research highlighted that Latinos/as were more likely to attend less-selective institutions with high drop-out rates, to opt for an institution with lower average tuition, and to attend school part-time” (Perez & McDonough, 2008).

When balancing the effects of pre-college factors and college factors, many issues play a part in a student’s persistence toward a college degree. Lotkowski, Robbins and Noeth, (2004) argue that the best indicators of college persistence are pre-college factors: socioeconomic status, high school grade point average, college entrance examination scores; and college factors: values of institutional commitment; and factors that cross over from high school to college: individually-held academic goals, academic, self-confidence, and family and community social support.

Regardless of the reasons Hispanic high school graduates enroll into college, college completion is challenging, especially for low-income students (Tinto, 2006). The fissure between high and low income is evident in a student’s completion of a four-year degree. Among students of similar academic levels, low income students are not as likely to attend four-year institutions when compared to student who are more financially capable (Cabrera, Burkum, & La Nasa, 2005). They are also less likely to go to the most selective colleges and universities (Carnevale & Rose, 2003; Bowen, Kurzweil, & Tobin, 2005). Results from a six-year national longitudinal study of students who began college in 1995/96 demonstrate this. Over 56 percent of high-income students earn a Bachelor’s degree within six years, whereas only 25 percent of low-income students do (NCES, 2003). Socioeconomic status relates to student success such as choice of institution attended (Astin & Osguera, 2004; Perna & Titus, 2004; Teranishi, Allen, & Solórzano, 2004).

Being concerned or having difficulties regarding to affording college can negatively influence a Latino/a student's aspirations or students' expectations in college (Cabrera et al., 1993; Longerbeam et al., 2004). Socioeconomic status is closely related to race and ethnicity. Latinos/as earn considerably less, on average, than white families. This lower income impacts an individual's or family's abilities to plan, save, and invest for future security and to invest in their own personal development (Cerna et al., 2004). "Although gaps will always exist in who goes to college and who ultimately succeeds, it still holds true that education has the greatest potential to benefit all" (Cerna et al., 2004, p. 6).

Successful completion of college is a balance of pre-college factors and in-college experiences (Nora, 2003). High school experiences and family influences partially determine student success in college. (Hoffman & Lowitzki, 2005). The next few pages inspect the characteristics of Hispanics' college attendance explaining why there are low numbers of Hispanic students receiving their Bachelor's degrees. The U.S. Department of Education analyzed college persistence and identified seven "risk factors" that are negatively associated with persistence and degree attainment: 1. delayed postsecondary enrollment, 2. part-time enrollment, 3 not having a regular high school diploma, 4. working full-time, 5. being financially independent, 6. having children or dependents, and 7. being a single parent (Fry, 2003). Regrettably, Hispanics are more likely to possess these "risk factors" than whites (NCES, 2002b).

Compared to all other students, Hispanic students take longer to enroll into college and eventually graduate (Kennen & Lopez, 2005; Swail et al., 2005). Hispanic higher education students tend to be older, to work, to attend only part-time, and many

times to do so while caring for a family (Brown, Santiago, & Lopez, 2003). The aforementioned “risk factors” describe a typical non-traditional student.

College students of traditional age are more persistent in their college studies, are more likely to earn advanced degrees, and are less likely to be married and have children than those of non-traditional age (Fry, 2002). The benefit of achieving a Bachelor’s degree at a younger age allows traditional aged students to boost their earnings earlier in life (Monks, 1997). Although Latino/a high school graduates do eventually attend college, by not participating during traditional college-going ages, they are not maximizing their benefits (Fry, 2002).

College enrollment rates directly correlate with the educational levels of students’ parents. “In 1999, 82 percent of students whose parents held a Bachelor’s degree or higher enrolled in college immediately after finishing high school” (Santiago, 2008). Only 54 percent immediately entered college after high school if their parents had completed high school, yet only 36 percent immediately entered if their parents had less than a high school diploma (U.S. Department of Education, 2001). In 2005, Santiago and Cunningham reported that in 2003-2004, 49 percent of Latino/a undergraduates were first-generation college-goers compared to 35 percent of all students.

Nativity is a factor in college enrollment, with second generation Latinos/as having the highest college enrollment rates. Native-born Latino/a high school graduates enroll in college at a higher rate than their foreign-born counterparts, and even more so if they are U.S.-born children of immigrants or second generation (Fry, 2002). Nearly 42 percent of second generation Latinos/as in the 18-to-24 age range attends college, which is almost the same as the rate for whites at 46 percent (Fry, 2002). The figure is lower

both for the first generation, 26 percent, and for all those with U.S.-born parents—the third generation and higher at 36 percent (Fry, 2002).

First-generation students are more likely to have lower incomes, be married, be older and have dependents as well as to enroll in college part-time and attend two-year institutions. (Nuñez & Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998; Terenzini, Springer, Yaeger, Pascarella, & Nora, 1996). Choy (2001) shows that in 1995-96, 34 percent of students entering the nation's four-year institutions and 53 percent of students starting at two-year colleges were first-generation students. However, when first generation students began at a four-year institution, they had a better chance of earning a degree (Nuñez & Carroll, 1998).

Origin and gender matter in factors that lead to college enrollment. In two-year college enrollment, 46 percent of Mexican college students in the 18- to 24-year-old group attend two-year institutions compared to only 31 percent of Puerto Ricans and Cubans (Fry, 2002). As far as overall college attendance, Cubans participate with the highest rates at 45 percent of 18 to 24-year-old high school graduates enrolled compared to 33 percent of Mexicans and 30 percent of Puerto Ricans (Fry, 2002). Zarate & Gallimore (2005) predicted college enrollment for Latinos by three measures: academic achievement, language proficiency and parental factors. For Latinas, teacher-rated classroom performance and college counseling in high school were significant predictors as well (2005).

Attending college full-time strongly increases a student's chance of earning a degree. Once again, the U.S. Department of Education considers part-time college enrollment as a "risk factor" for dropping out of postsecondary education before earning a degree (Fry, 2002). Latino/a college students enroll full-time 75 percent of the time

compared to 85 percent of white college students ages 18 to 24 (Fry, 2002). Latinos/as commitment to work and family help explain why they enroll part-time instead of full-time.

Tinto (1993) points out that high levels of performance and preparation enable Latinos/as better access to higher quality colleges which facilitates degree completion. Fry (2004) indicated in a report on Latino/a degree attainment, “selectivity matters in and of itself, and Latino/a youth with similar academic preparation are more likely to finish if they attend a more selective college rather than a less selective college” (p. 5).

Hispanics tend to enroll in Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSI), which have high enrollments of Hispanic students and other low-income students, but these schools often have limited resources. The term HSI came into being in federal legislation in the mid-1990s. Hispanics attend public institutions and institutions with a lower average tuition compared to all other students (Swail et al., 2004). In 2006-2007, there were over 3,500 degree-granting institutions of higher education in the United States, yet 54 percent of Latino/a undergraduates were concentrated in the 7 percent of institutions defined as HSIs (Santiago, 2008).

#### College Enrollment: Two-Year Community Colleges

Due to close proximity to their homes and other attributes, a majority of Hispanic college students begin at community colleges. However, a wide chasm exists with regard to Bachelor’s degree attainment between students who begin at community colleges and those who begin at four-year institutions. At community colleges, 6 percent of Latinos/as and 12 percent of whites had finished their Bachelor’s six years after starting college,

compared to a whopping 40 percent of Latinos/as and 56 percent of whites if the student began at a public four-year college or university (NCES, 2002a).

The disproportionate representation of Hispanics at two-year colleges is concerning (Arbona & Nora, 2007). “Contrary to popular belief, community colleges have not served as the gateway to a Bachelor’s degree for large numbers of lower-income and ethnic minority populations” (p. 248). The National Center for Education Statistics (2009) reported that in the fall of 2008, 57 percent of Hispanics were enrolled in two-year colleges while 43 percent enrolled in four-year schools. Whites were a close reciprocal, as 40 percent enrolled in two-year colleges and 60 percent enrolled in four-year schools. In the fall of 2008, Hispanics represented 9 percent of all undergraduate students enrolled in four-year colleges; whites represented 61 percent (NCES, 2009).

Students at two-year institutions have lower academic preparation. These setbacks reduce a student’s chance of graduating. Starting at a two-year college decreases the chance of finishing a degree by 15 to 20 percent compared to those who begin at a four-year institution (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). By initially enrolling into a community college, Cuccar-Alamin (1997) found that students were “twice as likely as their four-year peers to take more than six years to complete their degrees” (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005, p. 376). Nearly half of all first year community college students fail to return for the second year, according to attrition statistics (Hoffman, 2003; Haycock, 2001; Venezia, Kirst, & Antonio, 2003), which disproportionately affects underrepresented subgroups of students such as Hispanics.

What makes community colleges so appealing? They often are close to home, are less expensive, and may constitute a steppingstone to a four-year institution with the

promise of a Bachelor's degree (Evans, 2009). Two-year colleges appeal to Hispanics because they accept students with lower grades and lower college admission scores (Falbo et al., 2003). Other reasons why community colleges appeal to Hispanics include attachment to family and community, economic need, lower tuition than four-year colleges, accommodations for part-time enrollment, a focus on job skills, and many evening classes allowing students to work during the day (Fry, 2002).

Despite the many advantages to community colleges, freshmen beginning on a two-year college campus are much less likely to finish their Bachelor's degree, compared to freshmen who are enrolled on a four-year campus (Fry, 2005). Community colleges make earning a bachelor's degree unlikely. According to the NELS: 88-2000 data, 57.5 percent of Hispanic high school graduates in 1992 attended a community college, compared to 39.6 percent of whites (O'Connor, 2009). Of the students who intended to complete a BA, only 15 percent of Hispanics and 26 percent of whites went on to earn their degree after starting at a community college. Most students who begin at a community college will not earn a Bachelor's degree (Fry, 2002). However, 52 percent of Hispanics and 73 percent of white students who began at four-year colleges earned their Bachelor's degree by 2000 (O'Connor, 2009). These statistics back up the statement that "bachelor's-aspiring community college students are significantly less likely to complete a Bachelor's degree" (2009). This leads to disadvantages both socially and in the labor market. Research shows that enrolling at four-year institutions leads to better completion rates (Fry, 2004).

### College Enrollment: Four-Year Colleges or Universities

Enrollment and preparedness for initial college enrollment into four-year postsecondary institutions are low for Latinos/as. Of the 82 percent of Hispanic students who graduate from high school, few graduate from a four-year college or university. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Hispanics have the lowest college enrollment into four-year institutions at 26.6 percent, compared to Asians 56.4 percent, non-Hispanic whites 42.6 percent, and blacks 33.4 percent (U. S. Census Bureau, 2007, Table 244). Only the most accomplished Hispanic high school students enroll into four-year colleges (Arbona & Nora, 2007); however, with fewer of these earning a Bachelor's degree, it is apparent that they are challenged in the college environment.

Hispanics who graduate from high school on time are less qualified than whites for college, as only 53 percent of Hispanic high school graduates are at least "minimally qualified" for admission to a four-year college, compared to 70 percent of whites (Pew Hispanic Center, 2004). This makes entering higher education more difficult for Hispanics compared to whites. Low income students are underrepresented at four-year institutions (Berkner & Chavez, 1997). In 2000, only 17.6 percent of whites were in the lowest income quintile compared to 24.6 percent of Hispanics, according to the Annual Demographic Survey, 2001 (O'Connor, 2009).

Arbona and Nora (2007) argue that in order to promote upward social mobility and academic achievement for Hispanics, research needs to focus on factors that predict a student's enrollment in a four-year college instead of a two-year college and more importantly on the factors that lead to a Hispanic student receiving his/her Bachelor's degree. They used participants from NELS: 88-2000 who participated from 1990 to 2000

and who enrolled in either a community college ( $n=517$ ) or a four-year college ( $n=408$ ) in their study. They used logistic regression analysis to test their hypothesis: the same precollege variables that predict if a student enrolls into a two-year or four-year college will also predict college degree attainment.

Of Hispanic students who began at a four-year college, 44 percent received their degree within six years compared to only 7 percent of students who began at a community college (Arbona & Nora, 2007). Six variables increased the probability of attaining a Bachelor's degree for Hispanic students who began at a four-year college. Of the six, there were two precollege and five college factors that helped predict college attainment: parental expectations and peers' plans to attend college were the precollege factors that significantly related to degree attainment. Following Arbona and Nora's (2007) lead, if parental factors affect degree attainment, they should also affect student enrollment.

Very little research has focused only on women, but research on all Latinos suggests many reasons for initial enrollment into community colleges over four-year colleges and low college retention rates (Sy & Romero, 2008). The top reasons include university fit (Torres, 2006), insignificant finances (Longerbeam et al., 2004), and home-to-school transition difficulties (Zurita, 2004-2005). Scholars have suggested that family connections and responsibilities are paramount in the educational success of Latinas, too (Sy, 2006; Zambrana & Zoppi, 2002). Latinas are underrepresented in college enrollment, retention, and four-year completion (Sy & Romero, 2008; Otero, Rivas & Rivera, 2007; Turner & Garcia, 2005). Latinas are the least likely to enroll into four-year colleges directly following high school graduation (Vasquez, 2002). "Though access to

higher education has increased, greater equality in attainment of four-year college degrees has not followed suit. For too many low-income students, access to higher education has become a revolving door, the promise of a Bachelor's degree unfulfilled" (Tinto, 2006, p. x).

Postsecondary institutions in the United States expect college students to become more independent, choose academics over family and separate from family (2008). This idea of self-reliance is not in harmony with the Latino/a cultural expectation that family needs should remain above personal needs (Ginorio et al., 1995). *Familismo*, a cultural value emphasizing family closeness and loyalty, is a characteristic valued by many Latino/a populations (Vega, 1990). Latinos/as place more value on *familismo* than non-Hispanic whites; it impacts their everyday actions and career decisions (Fuligni et al., 2005). "*Familismo* requires an individual family member to put the needs of the family first, even if it means making personal sacrifices" (Sy & Romero, 2008, p. 214).

Further research is warranted regarding family. Cabrera & LaNasa (2000) and Perna (2000) both studied parents' educational status, SES and college knowledge, but did not include parents' aspirations or marital status. Perna's 2000 study involved only four-year college or university enrollment. The general goal of the study presented here is to explore the relationship between family and a student's choice after high school graduation.

By better understanding how the parental factors of family structure, responsibilities and closeness influence the decision to attend two or four-year colleges, high school and college teachers and administrators will better understand how college choice affects the probability of Hispanic students completing a Bachelor's degree. This

dissertation will investigate how family structure, family responsibilities and family closeness influence the decision to enroll at a four-year college or university, enroll at a community college or not enroll in college.

### Family Structure

The link between family structure and adolescents' educational experiences has been examined by literature from many disciplines. The research documents that adolescents who live in non-intact families (i.e., those who reside with a single parent or a stepparent) have more problems in school than those with an intact family (those who live in two-biological-parent families) (Cavanagh et al., 2006; DeLeire & Kalil, 2002; Bjorklund, Ginther, & Sundstrom, 2006; Astone & McLanahan, 1991; Coleman 1988). Marriage correlates with better outcomes for children (Ribar, 2004). "One of the most significant trajectories of parents' lives, their marital histories, is closely connected to one of the most significant trajectories of their children's lives, their academic careers" (Cavanagh et al., 2006, p. 330).

Most family structure research finds that students in non-intact families have educational deficits. Case et al., (2001) found, after controlling for mother-fixed effects, that children who do not live with their biological mothers achieve less academically. One of the most influential studies between family structure and children's educational outcomes found that children who grow up with both biological parents have higher educational attainment compared to those who grow up with a single parent or stepparent family (McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994). Pollack and Ginther (2003) concur and add that there is no statistically significant difference between joint biological children and the stepchildren within stable blended families. The educational deficits for those in non-

intact families include an increased likelihood of becoming a high school dropout, fewer years of completed schooling, lower test scores on standardized tests and lower grades than others (Cavanagh et al., 2006; Astone & McLanahan, 1991; McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994; DeLeire & Kalil, 2002). These factors that lead to lower educational outcomes during high school many times limit occupational opportunities and lead to socioeconomic inequality as students transition to adulthood (Cavanagh et al., 2006).

Cavanagh, Schiller and Riegle-Crumb (2006) studied family structure and used high school graduation as their endpoint; however, the differences in family structure and their related benefits continue past high school. Many studies have shown that children who are living with both parents are more likely to attend college compared to those who grow up in single-parent families (Ginther & Pollak, 2004; McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994; Coleman, 1988; Astone & McLanahan, 1991). Further research on family structure with regard to college entry of Hispanics will advance our understanding of their association. Using the Add Health data to better grasp this relationship will provide information from a current, important data source, which includes students' high school transcripts, college information and family structure, family closeness and family responsibilities details.

#### Family Closeness

Studies have shown that family factors have an impact on children's academic achievement (e.g., Baker, 2003; Acock & Kiecolt, 2001; Lew, 2003; Gloria & Ho, 2003; Woo, 2000). Parental involvement is part of the equation that leads to college success, which helps students enhance their productivity (Coleman, 1988), assist their upward mobility (DiMaggio & Mohr, 1985; Lamont & Lareau, 1988) and understand economic

returns (Lin, 2001b). Family instability can have an effect on closeness between parents and adolescents (Amato, 2000; McLanahan and Sandefur, 1994). Because of changes in the parents' lives, such as lack of help, time constraints and the possible parent-child strained relationship because of a divorce, the start of a new relationship, single parents, or those with new partners may struggle in the closeness of their relationship with their adolescents. (Cavanagh et al., 2006; Amato, 2000; Astone & McLanahan, 1991; McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994). Regardless of their efforts, parents may become less involved in the educational careers of their children. Parental closeness influences their children's course-taking decisions and school achievement (Cavanagh et al., 2006; Kelly, 2004).

The importance of family support and encouragement provides Latino students with the financial, emotional, and psychological support they need to deal with academic and other stressful demands of college (McDonough, 2004; Nora, 2004; Hurtado & Carter, 1997; Ceja, 2001). Consistently, researchers have found that perceived family support predicts social adjustment and institutional attachment to college more strongly for Latinos/as and other ethnic minority groups than for whites (Kenny & Stryker, 1996).

Perna and Titus (2005) studied the ways in which parental involvement influences the college enrollment of African-Americans and Hispanics. They base their work on Bourdieu (1986), Coleman, (1988), and Lin (2001a, 2001b) to show how parental involvement as social capital may influence college enrollment. They used a multilevel multinomial analysis which shows that the likelihood of enrolling into a two-year or four-year college depends on social capital, i.e., parental involvement, and also the other forms of capital. Using data from NELS:88, they found that student levels of parental

involvement are related to college enrollment. The relationship between parental involvement as social capital and the likelihood of enrolling in college varies across racial/ethnic groups. “African Americans and Hispanics not only possess fewer of the types of capital that promote college enrollment, but also attend schools with fewer of the resources that promote college enrollment” (p. 509).

Disaggregating parental closeness by gender reveals many differences. Parental closeness with their child(ren) and communication may differ depending on the gender of each party. Females are more likely to identify better with small groups of intense relationships, such as family and friends (Kapinus & Gorman, 2004). People’s attitudes are influenced by persons they are close to, according to empirical research from social psychologists (Kapinus & Gorman, 2004; Sherif, 1935; Asch, 1956). Therefore, parents may have more influence on their daughter’s decision to go to college or not and which type to attend than on their son’s decision.

Gender of the parent may also be relevant in college decisions for all races. Same-sex parent-child relationships are important for all races. Kapinus (2004) shows that the father-son relationship had more of an impact on their sons’ attitudes toward divorce than did the mother-son relationship. By studying gender differences in the parental support of college bound students, she learned that mothers play a significant role in Latinas’ educational experience (Gandara, 1982). In addition to family closeness and family structure, family responsibilities are also important for Latinos/as.

### Family Responsibilities

Family obligation attitudes are “the extent to which family members feel a sense of duty to assist one another and to take into account the needs and wishes of the family when making decisions” (Fulgini & Pedersen, 2002, p. 856). Studies show that family responsibilities fall more often and more consistently on Latinas than Latinos in fulfilling family obligations, but there are no gender differences with regard to the way they value family (Raffaelli & Ontai, 2004; Valenzuela, 1999). Females have to help with household chores, translation for their parents and childcare for their younger siblings (Sy & Romero, 2008). Much of the research on family obligations has focused on children and young adolescents with little focus on how these obligations influence Latinos beyond high school graduation (2008). One of the few articles on family obligation attitudes of Latinos during the transition from high school and beyond found family obligations to be a central theme in making decisions about life after high school (Sanchez et al., 2010).

A recent study showed that compared to European-Americans and Asian-American females, Latinas more frequently fulfilled family obligations during their freshman year in college (Sy & Brittan, 2008). The study shows that too many family responsibilities are detrimental to students in college. Family responsibilities and working off-campus make it difficult for students to integrate socially and academically, causing them to contemplate dropping out of college (Nora & Wedham, 1991). Hispanic women who reported taking care of a family member were 83 percent more likely to leave college than their counterparts without such responsibility (Nora, Cabrera, Hagedorn, & Pascarella, 1996).

Typically, Latino cultures define the primary role for women as family caretakers (Cammarota, 2004). Mainstream U.S. culture broadly concurs, but the Latino culture expects women to “prioritize family needs above their own individual needs” (Sy & Romero, 2008, p. 216). This creates added pressure to Latina adolescents with college aspirations. There needs to be a balance of reducing the family responsibilities placed on Latinas, while maintaining a strong sense of family closeness (Fulgini & Pedersen, 2002).

This strong emphasis on family may lead Hispanics to favor the well-being of the family over their own work or school (Sanchez et. al., 2010). In a study on urban Latino students at a community college, students who were forced to work jeopardized their school performance (Trillo, 2004). Tseng (2004) found that family responsibilities negatively affected grades even though family obligation attitudes encouraged ethnically diverse immigrant students to do well in college.

In Sanchez et al., (2010) qualitative study, a Latina high school senior, Maribel, who worked at a nursing home, illustrates how family obligation attitudes and family affect the student:

There is a nurse that asked me if I was still in school and I told her no...I have to help my mom for her to raise up this house and she told me that that was not my responsibility. That my responsibility was to be in school, not helping her. And I didn't like that because I know that it is my responsibility for the simple fact that [she] is my mother and she is the only person I have (p. 870).

Family responsibilities are also financial as Maribel later commented:

I don't have a lot of responsibilities at home, at home I just...clean or do whatever I have to do, sleep and go to work. And give my mom half of my paycheck to pay the bills of the house or give her all my paycheck for her to pay the bills. That's it (Sanchez, et. al., 2010, p. 873).

To date, there has been little research on familial obligation attitudes and family responsibilities and how they influence adolescents' decisions after high school (Arnett, 2006). Sy and Romero (2008) suggest further research to focus on how family structure influences Latina's family responsibilities and how the fulfillment of these responsibilities affects decisions during their transition to college. Therefore, this research will fill a gap in the literature by focusing on the family responsibilities of Latinos and Latinas and how it affects college enrollment.

#### Conceptual Framework: Emerging Adulthood

As high school students emerge into adulthood, they make decisions that have lifelong implications. Those who invest in a college education receive economic and social benefits. According to Arnett (2000), emerging adulthood takes place between 18 and 25 years of age and "is a time of life...when the scope of independent exploration of life's possibilities is greater for most people than it will be at any other period of the life course" (p. 469). Five features make emerging adulthood distinct: (a) identity exploration, (b) instability, (c) focus on self, (d) feeling in-between, (e) possibilities (Arnett, 2007). Emerging adults' focus on self is not selfish but rather a time of independence, personal decision making about one's own future, frequent change and exploration (Arnett, 2000). Both ethnicity and social class play a part in emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2000). Typically, emerging adults have time to defer adult roles, check out work options and explore educational opportunities, but the more advantages they have economically, the longer the period lasts (2000).

Fulgini and Pederson (2002) demonstrate that Latinos uphold a strong sense of familial duty as they emerge into adulthood. This "duty" may sway Hispanic high school

graduates to choose work over postsecondary schooling or to choose a local community college over a four-year university. Hispanic students may make decisions that favor the family's well-being instead of their own (Sanchez et al., 2010). Investigating the role of family and SES during emerging adulthood for Hispanics will build on previous studies and will fill existing gaps in research.

“Low-income, ethnic minority and immigrant populations may have a harder time to defer adult roles and to fully explore opportunities and life possibilities” (Sanchez, et al., 2010, p. 859). Family structure, closeness and responsibilities may play a role in the decisions Hispanic high school graduates make about whether to attend college or not. Research shows that being black, Native American or Latino, having less-educated parents, and attending public schools decrease the probability of earning a Bachelor’s degree (Sandefur, Eggerling-Boeck, & Park, 2005). A lack of family resources and early parenthood delays or ends the postsecondary educational aspirations of ethnically diverse young people in New York and leads to downward social mobility (Mollenkopf, Waters, Holdaway, & Kasinitz, 2005). Experiences during emerging adulthood make a difference well into adulthood (Sanchez et al., 2010). It is important to understand how family structure, responsibilities and closeness influence the trajectory of Latinos into adulthood.

### Summary

By 2025, 22 percent of the U.S. college-age population will be Latino, a number already surpassed in California, Florida, New York, and Texas (Santiago, Lopez, & Skoloda, 2009). Many barriers stand in the way of these students earning their degrees, such as going to college part-time, being a first-generation student, attending public institutions, working, being of nontraditional college age, and attending a two-year versus

a four-year college (O'Connor, 2009). Santiago, Lopez and Skoloda (2009) say, “given the importance of college degree completion for U.S. society and economic competitiveness, meeting the country's future human capital and workforce needs make it imperative to improve outcomes for Latino/a students” (p. 322).

Chapter II described the conceptual framework of emerging adulthood which is typically a time of independence but can be different for different cultures (Arnett, 2000, 2003). By better understanding how family structure, family closeness and family responsibilities impact Hispanic high school students, we will better understand why these students attend four-year colleges or universities, two-year community colleges or do not enroll into college. In learning more, educators can better aid Hispanic students in college enrollment and give them an opportunity to maximize their opportunity for degree completion (Olivas, 1997).

## CHAPTER III

### DATA AND METHODS

#### Introduction

Chapter III builds on the literature review and empirical considerations in Chapter II. It explains the data and methods used in this study, which analyzes the influences of family structure, family closeness and family responsibilities on the college enrollment choices of Hispanic high school graduates. First, I will describe the research method and data, followed by a definition of all variables included and then I will cover the statistical methods and data analysis procedures. Finally, there is a discussion of the limitations of the study.

#### Data

This quantitative study will use the Add Health data to examine how family structure, family responsibilities and family closeness influence the decision of Hispanic high school graduates to enroll at a four-year college or university, enroll at a community college or not enroll in college. I chose Add Health over the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88). Although NELS:88 is a more comprehensive educational data set, Add Health is more current. NELS:88 includes a range of topics from school, work and home experiences; educational support and resources; educational aspirations; parental education; and student perceptions. Add Health is a longitudinal survey with data on respondents' social, economic, psychological and physical well-being with contextual data on the family, school, and friendship relationships of adolescence and how they are linked to health and achievement outcomes in young adulthood. For this research, Add Health includes the needed variables for the research design. NELS:88 includes data from 1988, 1990, 1992, 1994 and 2000, where Add Health's data is from 1994 to 2008. Another advantage of the Add Health data is the

large number of Hispanic students. I chose the restricted-use data set over the public-use data set in order to increase the total number of observations in Wave I from 6,500 to 20,745 and in Wave III from 4,882 to 15,197.

Add Health is a nationally representative sample of adolescents who were in grades 7-12 in 1995. Add Health explores the effects of health and health behaviors of adolescents (Bearman, Jones, and Udry, 1997). It uses a stratified, school-based, cluster sampling design to select 80 high schools in 80 communities and then to select another 52 schools that feed these high schools. Add Health researchers collected in-school questionnaires from approximately 90,000 young people. About one year later, Add Health selected a nationally representative sample from this pool of students to participate in three in-home interviews. Wave I ( $n=20,475$ ) occurred between April and December 1995. All Wave I respondents, except those in 12<sup>th</sup> grade, underwent a process of being reinterviewed at Wave II, between April and September 1996 ( $n=14,738$ ). Wave III interviews happened between August 2001 and April 2002 ( $n=15,170$ ). Approximately 74 percent of the original Wave 1 sample completed this questionnaire.

For this study, Wave I will provide information for family structure, family responsibilities and family closeness of Hispanic students as well as for whites and blacks. The study included only participants interviewed at both Wave I and Wave III. Hence, the final analytic sample of adolescents will be 1,886 Hispanics, 7,086 whites and 2,666 blacks, for a total number of 11,683.

Since the main purpose of this study is to explore the association between family and post-secondary educational choices, restricting the data to a sample of adolescents living in family types with a large enough sample size to support a stratified analysis.

Questions asked about the parent-child relationship differ by family structure, which prohibits a pooled analysis that includes a control for family structure. The case base will include children living with (1) two biological parents (2) step-parents, (3) a single mother, or (4) other.

### Predictor Variables

To examine quantitative differences between Hispanic high school graduates' decisions to enroll into college or not, they study used only one tertiary dependent variable. The dependent variable measures whether an individual student decides not to enroll into college after high school, enroll into a two-year community college, or enroll into a four-year college or university. (See Figure 3.1). Hispanic high school graduates or those who completed their GED comprise the group that did not enroll into college. The two-year community college group includes students who were currently enrolled in a two-year college during the Wave III interview and those who had earned an Associate's degree. The four-year college or university group included Hispanic high school graduates who were either currently enrolled in a four-year school during the Wave III interview or who had earned their Bachelor's degree.

Control variables include race/ethnicity, age, gender, language spoken at home, parents' education, the adolescent's grade point average (g.p.a.), their college aspirations, and Hispanic background. (See Figure 3.1). Hispanics are the ethnic group of interest in this paper; whites and blacks provide the comparison groups. The age of their Wave I interview defines the concept of age, where students varied in age from 12 to 21. Each student reported gender as male or female. As stated in the literature review, there are many differences in college enrollment based on gender (Hearn, 1988; Beattie, 2002).

The study included the language spoken at home (1 = English spoken at home, 0 = non-English spoken at home).

The parents' socioeconomic status (SES) as reported by the student defined the student's socioeconomic level. Family income was not used for SES because it was a question asked only to parents, in which there was a lot of missing data. During the Wave I interview, the interviewers asked both the parents and the adolescents their parents' educational level, but because of a high number of missing data, the parental educational level reported by the parents had too much missing data. Using SES as a variable related to college enrollment is advantageous because it helps measure family resources and wealth (Terenzini, Carera, & Bernal, 2001), and individual tendencies of college enrollment (Perna & Titus, 2004), and is connected to the occupational attainment of individuals (Adelman, 1999). Parental education used the average grade of completed schooling of the respondent's mother and father (0 = no school, 8 = eighth grade or less, 10 = less than high school, 9 = vocational school, 12 = high school graduate/GED, 13 = community college, 14 = some college, 16 = university graduate, 18 = more than university graduate. High school grade point average is the average of four grades (English, Science, Math and Social Studies) during the Wave I interview, where A = 4, B = 3, C = 2, D = 1, no grade reported = 1. Regarding college aspirations, respondents answered the question, "On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is low and 5 is high, how likely is it that you will go to college?" Descriptive variables for all control variables are found in Appendix A.

The independent variables of interest are family structure, family closeness, and family responsibilities. Family structure breaks down into two subcategories: structure of

parents and the number of household members. Researchers recoded family structure of residential parents into four dummy categories: two biological parents, step parents, single mothers, and other family structure. Household members are a count of the people living in their house with a range of 0-17.

Household chores define family responsibilities. Household chores add the answers from the following questions to form a range of 0-3: “During the past week, how many times did you do work around the house, such as cleaning, cooking or laundry; yard work; or caring for a pet?”

Family closeness variables are used to test the hypothesis that close parent-child relationships influence students’ decision to attend a two- or four- year college or not. Because parent-child relationships are multifaceted, I investigate three aspects of the parent-child relationship: parental closeness, parental control, and parental attitudes toward education. Kapinus and Gorman (2004) used these three measures to show an association between closeness and attitudes towards pregnancy. Parental closeness consists of eleven variables (“how close a respondent is to his/her mother,” “how much does mother care about respondent,” “mother is warm and loving,” and “satisfied with communication with mother,” “satisfied with relationship with mother,” “how close respondent is to his/her father,” “how much does father care about respondent,” “father is warm and loving,” “satisfied with communication with father,” “satisfied with relationship with father,” “parents care about respondent”). The answers were coded on a scale of 1-5, where 1=strongly agree, 2=agree, 3=neither agree nor disagree, 4=disagree, and 5=strongly disagree (Chronbach's alpha = .84). The group created a dummy measure where 1=very strong parental closeness and 0=all others.

Parental control is related to time spent with parents, but warrants a separate measure. Parental control consists of a summary measure of seven yes-no questions on whether parents could make students' decisions about weekend curfew, friends, what clothes to wear, how much TV to watch, which TV programs to watch, bedtime, and what to eat (Kapinus & Gorman, 2004). Higher scores represent higher levels of parental control, with scores ranging from 0-7 (Chronbach's alpha = .68). The final category of family closeness is parental educational aspirations for the adolescent. This measure consists of four items ("How disappointed would your mother [father] be if you did not graduate from high school?" and "How disappointed would your mother [father] be if you did not graduate from college?"). Answers ranged from 1 = low disappointment to 5 = high disappointment (Chronbach's alpha = .71).

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Control Variables:

1. SES (Parents' education)
2. Gender
3. Language spoken at home
4. Age at Wave I interview
5. High school g.p.a.
6. College aspirations

Independent Variables:

1. Family Structure
  - a. Household members
  - b. Family structure of parents
2. Family Responsibilities
  - a. Household chores
3. Family Closeness
  - a. Parental closeness
  - b. Parental control
  - c. Parental aspirations for child

Dependent Variables:

1. No college
  2. Started at two-year college
  3. Started at four-year college or university
- 

Figure 3.1. *Control Variables, Independent Variables and Dependent Variables for Hispanic, White and Black High School Graduates*

### Research Questions

As stated in the introduction, this study centers on the hypothesis that family relationships affect Hispanics more so than other ethnic groups. To test this hypothesis, three research questions focus on family characteristics through family structure, family closeness and family responsibility. Throughout this study the researchers define post-secondary enrollment in three ways with students beginning two-year institutions, four-year institutions, or not attending any postsecondary institution after high school graduation (Engberg & Wolniak, 2009).

### Research Questions

In what ways are family structure, family closeness and family responsibility associated with the decision of initially enrolling into a two- or four-year post-secondary institution versus no enrollment-for:

1. Hispanics compared to whites and blacks?
2. Hispanics females compared to white females and black females?
3. Hispanics males compared to white males and black males?
4. Latinas compared to Latinos?

### Data Analysis

The data will be analyzed using multinomial logistic regressions. This model is the best choice because it “simultaneously estimates binary logits for all possible comparisons among the outcome categories” (Long, 1997, p. 149). The study will compare whites to Hispanics, Hispanics to black, Hispanic females to white females and to black females, Hispanic males to white males and to black males, and finally Hispanic males to Hispanic females. Because multinomial logit is an extension of the binary logit model, it is more complex due to the large number of comparisons (1997). “With three outcomes, multinomial logit is roughly equivalent to running three binary logits

comparing outcomes 1 to 2, 1 to 3, and 2 to 3. With four outcomes, one must add three more comparisons: 1 to 4, 2 to 4, and 3 to 4” (Long, 1997, p.149). With more outcomes, the numbers become even larger. Because I am making seven main comparisons for each variable, multinomial logistic regression makes the comparisons simpler. Also, list wise deletion eliminated the missing data.

### Limitations

The data has limitations in a number of ways. First, because of the phrasing of the Wave III question, students who enrolled into a two- or four-year college and dropped out before earning an A.A. or B.A. the survey did not count them as “began at a two-year institution” or “began at a four-year institution,” rather they are in the “did not attend college” category. Second, because of the set-up of the study, some students may have enrolled into college a few years after graduating from high school but would not have been counted as enrolled into college. For example, during Wave I, students were in grades 7-12, and in Wave III (six years later), they were freshmen in college through two years out of college. So, the older students would have had more of an opportunity to attend college compared to the younger students.

Another limitation is the variables chosen for this paper. Although the variables used had their origin in previous literature, there are potentially more family characteristics that could influence students' decisions after graduating from high school and are included in the Add Health data. I chose to include only the variables needed to sufficiently answer my research questions. Also, including only high school graduates or students who have completed their GED during Wave III limits the research. Some

students not included in this study may have completed high school or their GED and attended college at a further date.

### Summary

Chapter III explained the data and methods used in this study, which analyzed the influences of family structure, family closeness and family responsibilities on the college enrollment choices of Hispanic high school graduates. The research originates from Add Health data from a nationally representative sample of adolescents who were in grades 7-12 in 1995. An analysis using multinomial logistic regressions occurred. Last, there was a discussion of the limitations of the study. Chapter IV will describe the conceptual framework, which was based on Arnett's (2000) emerging adulthood, which focuses on 18-25 year-olds as they make decisions that have lifelong impact. Following the conceptual framework, the results I will share compare and summarize the results.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

#### Introduction

This chapter shares the results of all analyses. First, I show descriptive statistics for all the variables in this study of high school graduates or those who have completed their GEDs, who choose not to attend college, who initially choose to attend a two-year college or who initially choose to attend a four-year college. Next, I present multinomial regression models for three general groups of Hispanics, whites and blacks, followed by six specific groups of young adults: Hispanic females and males, white females and males, and black females and males.

Whites and blacks served in this study as comparison groups for Hispanics. Their comparison offers a point of reference. For each group I estimate two models, one without the control variables (Model 1, see Figure 4.1) and one with the control variables included (Model 2, see Figure 4.2). Similar to Kapinus and Gorman (2004), Model 1 compares the family variables on the outcome variables (initial enrollment into two- or four-year colleges or no enrollment). Model 2 adds the control variables. The point of Model 1 is to determine if the family variables add to the prediction of the outcome variables. The rationale for Model 2 is to determine if the family variables continue to help predict the outcome variables after adding the control variables. I then compare the results across groups. Finally, I summarize the key findings of the research.

The results include information from both Wave I and Wave III. In 1994, during Wave I of the Add Health research, students were in grades 7-12. Six years later, during Wave III, the same students ranged from freshmen in college to two years out of college.

The purpose of this dissertation is to investigate the differences between Hispanic high school graduates, both male and female, who choose not to attend college, initially enroll into a two-year college, or initially enroll into a four-year college. The research included black and white subgroups for comparison across groups.

### Descriptive Statistics

Means, standard deviations, and ranges for all variables for the whole sample ( $n=11,683$ ) appear in Table A.1 in the Appendix. Descriptive statistics appear for the whole group and are broken down by Hispanics, whites and blacks, listed in tables in the Appendix. (See Appendix, Tables A.1 to A.4). Overall, I present nine different sub-population samples: Hispanics, whites, blacks, then Hispanic females, Hispanic males, white females, white males, black females, and black males.

Sixteen percent of the population is Hispanic, with 23 percent identified as black and 61 percent as white. Of the high school graduates in this analytic sample, 53 percent did not attend college, 27 percent were enrolled in or had completed a two-year college and 20 percent were enrolled in or had completed a four-year college or university. Hispanics had the highest number of non-college attendees (53 percent), then blacks (51 percent), followed by whites (46 percent). Hispanics had the largest percentage of high school graduates initially enroll into a community college (27 percent), whites had fewer (20 percent), and blacks had the least (18 percent). Initial enrollment into four-year institutions was the highest for whites (34 percent), then blacks (32 percent), and Hispanics (20 percent). These results are similar to results in previous research (Arbona & Nora, 2007).

Fifty-four percent of the overall sample group was female, with blacks having the most females in this study (57 percent). The mean educational level of parents was high school diploma with some college experience, either at a community college or four-year institution-with Hispanics having the lowest numbers. Grade point averages were also the lowest for Hispanics 2.67, compared to whites 2.95 and blacks 2.68. College aspirations had a mean of 4.25, while Hispanics had the lowest aspirations 4.06 compared with whites 4.28 and blacks 4.31.

Overall, family structure breaks down as 54 percent of students living with their two biological parents, 10 percent living with a single parent, 24 percent with a single mother and 12 percent living with “other” family members. When Hispanics, whites and blacks become separate categories, there are many differences. The family structure for Hispanics was 59 percent living with two biological parents, 8 percent with a step parent, 22 percent living with a single mother and 11 percent living with “other” family members. For the group of white students, 60 percent lived with two biological parents, 11 percent lived with a step parent, 17 percent dwelt with a single mother and 12 percent with “other”. Thirty-six percent of black students lived with two biological parents, 8 percent lived with a step parent, 42 percent lived with a single mother and 14 percent with “other” family members. With the groups combined, the mean for the number of house members was four, with Hispanics having the largest households (4.51), then blacks (4.12), then whites (3.79).

According to the student respondents, blacks had the most household responsibilities (2.13), followed by whites (2.08) and Hispanics (1.94). Parental closeness differed among the three groups, with white the closest to their parents (37

percent), then Hispanics (31 percent), and last blacks (24 percent). As mentioned in Chapter III, parental closeness is a culmination of eleven variables (“how close a respondent is to their mother,” “how much does mother care about respondent,” “mother is warm and loving,” and “satisfied with communication with mother,” “satisfied with relationship with mother,” “how close respondent is to their father,” “how much does father care about respondent,” “father is warm and loving,” “satisfied with communication with father,” “satisfied with relationship with father,” “parents care about respondent”). As a reminder, the answers ranged from a scale of 1-5, where 1=strongly agree, 2=agree, 3=neither agree nor disagree, 4=disagree, and 5=strongly disagree (Chronbach's alpha = .84). A created dummy measure indicated where 1=very strong parental closeness and 0=all others. Hispanics and black parents reported to having more control over their everyday decisions than did the parents of white students. Finally, parental aspirations were all high on the 1-5 scale, blacks (4.36), whites (4.32) and Hispanics (4.30).

### Research Questions

In what ways are family structure, family closeness and family responsibility associated with the decision of initially enrolling into a two- or four-year post-secondary institution versus no enrollment for:

1. Hispanics compared to whites and blacks?
2. Hispanics females compared to white females and black females?
3. Hispanics males compared to white males and black males?
4. Latinas compared to Latinos?

When comparing results across groups, there are four main comparisons: all Hispanics compared to whites and blacks, Hispanic females compared to white and black females, Hispanic males compared to white and black males and last, Hispanic females

compared to males (Latinas compared to Latinos). Each of the four comparisons provides information in four ways: dependent variables in Model 1 (no control variables) and Model 2 (control variables included) for students who initially enrolled into two-year colleges and dependent variables in Model 1 and Model 2 for students who initially enrolled into four-year colleges or universities.

#### Results of Research Question #1:

In what ways are family structure, family closeness and family responsibility associated with the decision of initially enrolling into a two- or four-year post-secondary institution versus no enrollment-for Hispanics compared to whites and blacks?

#### Multinomial Regression Results for Hispanics

There is one significant effect in Model 1 compared to six significant effects in Model 2 for Hispanics who initially enroll in community colleges ( $n=1,866$ ). (See Table 4.1). In Model 1, having parents with high aspirations is associated with the likelihood of Hispanics attending a two-year college versus not attending college at all by 12 percent. With the control variables added, in Model 2, neither of these variables shows significance. However, all six control variables do: age, gender, language, parents' education, g.p.a., and college aspirations. This means that the control variables use up all the variance. In other words, once the control variables become a part of the study, the family variables do not add much to our understanding of college decisions.

For students who initially enroll into four year institutions, the story is a little different. In Model 1, having fewer household members indicates an increase in enrollment of 10 percent. Having two biological parents is associated with an increase in college enrollment of 75 percent compared to students who live with a single mother. Doing household chores is associated with an increase in enrollment of 18 percent

compared to those who do not, and having parents with high aspirations increases enrollment by 39 percent compared to students whose parents have low aspirations for them. In Model 2, the only variable that retains its significance is living in a house with two biological parents, which shows a 78 percent higher chance of enrollment into a four-year college compared to a student living with a single mother. Five out of the six control variables are significant: age, gender, parents' education, g.p.a, and college aspirations. So, once again the control variables account for most of the variance, except for the family structure of living with two biological parents.

#### Multinomial Regression Results for Whites Compared to Hispanics

Comparing the results of research question #1 for Hispanics with whites and blacks gives more meaning to the results. The multinomial regression results for whites reveal many variables that are related to the decision to enroll into two- or four-year colleges compared to those who do not attend college ( $n=7,086$ ). (See Table 4.1). First, for students who attend two-year colleges, Model 1 finds significance based on a smaller number of household members, living with two-biological parents, doing household chores, being close with one's parents and having parents with high parental aspirations. Living with fewer household members is associated with a 6 percent increase in the likelihood of attending a community college. Whites indicate a 42 percent increase in the likelihood of beginning at a community college if they reside with both biological parents compared to a single mother. Doing household chores is associated with an increase of 17 percent of initially enrolling into a community college and those who are really close with their parents show a 25 percent increase in their likelihood to enroll. Parents who have high aspirations for their children are associated with an increase in the likelihood

that their students will initially enroll in community colleges compared to those living with a single mother by 19 percent.

In Model 2, the control variables (age, gender, parents' education, g.p.a. and college aspirations) show statistical significance with only two dependent variables keeping theirs: living with two-biological parents and doing household chores, for whites. In Model 2, students residing with their biological parents are associated with a 37 percent increase in the likelihood of initial enrollment and doing more household chores shows an increase of the likelihood of student enrollment by 8 percent. To sum, Hispanics only report one independent variable that shows significance in Model 1 for two-year college enrollment compared to five independent variables for whites.

When comparing white students who initially enroll into four-year colleges instead of not attending college, more variables show associations compared to Hispanics. In Model 1, the number of household members, living with two-biological parents, doing household chores, being close with one's parents, having parents who are not controlling, and having parents with high aspirations all show a significant effect. Having fewer people in one's home is associated with an increase in the likelihood of enrollment into a four-year college by 6 percent. Among white students, living with two biological parents is associated with the chance of initially enrolling into a four-year college by 74 percent. White students who do more household chores indicate a 12 percent increase in their likelihood to enroll compared to those who do fewer tasks. White students who are close to their parents are associated with 37 percent increase in the likelihood of initially enrolling into a four-year college than not attending college. Adolescents who were allowed to make more of their own decisions show a 6 percent

increase in the likelihood of enrollment. Students who have parents with high aspirations indicate a 55 percent increase in the likelihood of initially enrolling into a four-year school. Three of these variables stay significant for whites when adding the control variables: two biological parents (which drops to 63 percent), parents that are not controlling (8 percent) and parents with high educational aspirations for their child (10 percent), compared to only one independent variable for Hispanics. Once again, the control variables are accounting for much of the variance, especially for Hispanic students.

#### Multinomial Regression Results for Blacks Compared to Hispanics

Little effect emerges with blacks who initially enroll into community colleges versus not attending college in Model 1 ( $n=2,666$ ) comparable to Hispanics. (See Table 4.1). Only the variable of living with two biological parents shows significance, which shows an increase of enrollment of 34 percent compared to those living with a single mother. In Model 2, living with two biological parents is still significant at 32 percent along with all of the control variables.

Blacks attending four-year colleges compared to those who do not attend college, show more effects, similar to the results for Hispanics. Family structure is important, as having fewer house members is associated with an increase of enrollment at a four-year institution by 12 percent. Among blacks, living with two biological parents relates to an increase in the likelihood of enrollment by 76 percent compared to single mother homes, and not living in “other” family structures increases the likelihood by 42 percent. Model 1 also shows significance for students whose parents have high educational aspirations, associated with increasing their chances of enrollment by 32 percent.

In Model 2, among black students, fewer household members indicates an increase of enrollment of 6 percent, living with two biological parents is associated with an increase of enrollment of 61 percent, not living with “other” family members remains significant and relates to increasing their chance of enrollment by 38 percent. Five of the control variables show significance. Younger black students during Wave 1 indicate an increase in the likelihood of attending a four-year college. Black students with higher g.p.a.’s, higher aspirations and whose parents have higher educational attainment are also associated with higher rates of initial enrollment into four-year colleges. To compare, more similarities appear between blacks and Hispanics than whites and Hispanics. The main comparisons between the three groups arise when students enroll into four-year colleges. Hispanics, whites and blacks are all associated with an increase in enrollment in four categories in Model 1 (the number of house members, living with two biological parents, doing household chores and having parents with high aspirations for them) and one category in Model 2 (living with two biological parents). (See Tables 4.1 & 4.5).

#### Results to Research Question #2:

In what ways are family structure, family closeness and family responsibility associated with the decision of initially enrolling into a two- or four-year post-secondary institution versus no enrollment-for Hispanics females compared to white females and black females?

#### Multinomial Regression Results for Hispanic Females

In Model 1, one variable shows significance for Hispanic females ( $n=966$ ) in whether they began college at a two-year institution compared to those who did not attend college: parental aspirations. (See Table 4.2). Among Hispanic female students, high parental expectations are associated with an increase of 18 percent in the likelihood of initial enrollment into a community college. When adding the control variables in

Model 2, none of the independent variables makes a significant difference on their college enrollment. Only the control variables of parents' educational attainment and college aspirations are significant.

When comparing Hispanic women as to who began at a four-year college or university or who did not attend college, those who had fewer house members, lived with two biological parents and had parents who held high educational aspirations for their child are significant in Model 1. Living with two biological parents is associated with an increase of 65 percent in enrollment. Among Latinas, having fewer household members relates to an increase in enrollment of 10 percent and parents' high aspirations are associated with an increase in enrollment of 34 percent. Model 2 reveals that living with two biological parents has a significant impact on initially enrolling into a four-year institution instead of not choosing to attend college out of all the independent variables. It shows an increase of Hispanic females' chance of enrollment by 70 percent compared to those living with a single mother. The control variables of parents' education, g.p.a., and high college aspirations are also significant.

#### Multinomial Regression Results for White Females Compared to Hispanic Females

White females ( $n=3,788$ ) reveal more variables with significance compared to Hispanic and black females. (See Table 4.2). In Model 1, living with two biological parents compared to living with a single mother, having a close relationship with their parents, and having parents with high educational aspirations for them are all significant factors for students who initially enrolled into a community college versus not enrolling in college. Among white females, living with two biological parents is associated with an increase of two-year college enrollment of 36 percent, parental closeness shows a 39

percent increase, and having parents with high aspirations is related to an 11 percent increase.

When adding the control variables in Model 2, living with two biological parents remains significant (35 percent), while the control variables of being older, having parents with higher levels of education, a high g.p.a., and high college aspirations all show significance. White females have more independent variable categories that show significance compared to Hispanics females which means that the dependent variables account for more of the variance for Latinas than white females.

When white females initially enroll into four-year colleges or universities, having fewer house members, living with two biological parents, being close with their parents and having parents with high parental aspirations for them all have p values of less than .05. For white females, having fewer household members is associated with a 7 percent increase in enrollment and students residing with their two biological parents indicate a 77 percent increase in enrollment into four-year colleges. Those who are close with their parents show a 45 percent increase in enrollment while students who parents had high aspirations for them are associated with a 45 percent increase in enrollment.

Model 2 reveals eight variables of significance for white females compared to only four for Hispanic females. Living with two biological parents and doing household chores such as cleaning, cooking, laundry, yard work or caring for a pet is associated with an increase in the likelihood that white females would begin at a four-year institution. Among white females, living with two biological parents indicates an increase of 75 percent in enrollment compared to those living with a single mother. White females who complete more household chores show a 14 percent increase in enrollment; students with

more control are associated with a 7 percent increase in enrollment. The more control white females have in issues regarding weekend curfew, friends, clothing choices, television, bedtime and food choices, the more likely they are to initially enroll into a four-year college than not to attend college at all. Being younger, speaking English at home, having parents with high levels of education, having a high grade point average, and having high college aspirations are the control variables that exhibit significance. So, when comparing initial enrollment into four-year colleges, white females have more independent variables that show significance compared to Hispanic females. Again, meaning that the family variables do not add much to the prediction of the outcome variables beyond the control variables, with little exception.

#### Multinomial Regression Results for Black Females Compared to Hispanic Females

For black females ( $n=1,517$ ) who initially enrolled into community colleges instead of choosing not to attend college, two variables show significance in Model 1: living with two biological parents instead of with a single mother and having parents with high educational aspirations. (See Table 4.2). For black females, living with two biological parents is associated with an increase in the odds of enrollment by 45 percent; high parental aspirations increase the odds by 9 percent. In Model 2, living with two biological parents shows significance along with four control variables: speaking English at home, parents with high education levels, high grade point averages and high college aspirations. Living with two biological parents shows an increase of community college enrollment by 42 percent. Black females do not offer a lot of points of comparison with Hispanic females because the variables that are significant are different for the two subgroups.

When comparing black females who initially enroll into four-year colleges or universities, Model 1 reveals that living with fewer house members, living with two biological parents or not living with “other” family members and having parents with high educational aspirations for them are all significant. Among black females, living with fewer household members is associated with an increase of 14 percent in enrollment and living with two biological parents shows an 88 percent increase. Not living with “other” family members relates to an increase of enrollment by 42 percent, while high parental aspirations are associated with an increase in enrollment of 34 percent. Model 2 displays that living with fewer house members and living with two biological parents are significant factors leading to college enrollment. Living with two biological parents indicates an increase in enrollment of 78 percent after adding in the control variables and having fewer household members is associated with an 8 percent increase. Also, all five control variables are significant.

To sum, Hispanic and white females in Model 1, who initially enroll into community colleges, show significance for parental aspirations. Hispanic females and black females show more similarities in enrollment into four-year colleges than two-year colleges. Hispanic, white and black females all show three independent variables of significance in Model 1 (smaller number of house members, living with two biological parents and high parental aspirations) for initial enrollment into four-year schools. In Model 2, living with two biological parents compared to living with a single mother significantly impact all three groups as well as the control variables of parents’ education, g.p.a., and college aspirations. (See Table 4.6). Not as many similarities appear with males in the study.

### Results for Research Question #3:

In what ways are family structure, family closeness and family responsibility associated with the decision of initially enrolling into a two- or four-year post-secondary institution versus no enrollment-for Hispanics males compared to white males and black males?

#### Multinomial Regression Results for Hispanic Males

Interestingly enough, Model 1 shows no significance for any of the dependent variables for Hispanic males ( $n=920$ ). (See Table 4.3). In Model 2, control variables show differences for Hispanic males starting at two-year colleges or not enrolling into college. Hispanic males who were older, had parents with more education, had higher high school grade point averages, and had higher college aspirations were all more likely to enroll into community college.

Significant variation occurs for Hispanic males with regard to family structure, family responsibilities and family closeness for those who initially enroll into four-year colleges compared to those who do not attend college. In Model 1, Latinos who participated in household chores, during Wave 1, who lived with two-biological parents and who had parents with high aspirations for them were associated with an increase in initial enrollment into four-year colleges. Among Latinos, those living with their two biological parents are 100 percent more likely to enroll into a four-year college. Latino students who participated in more household chores show an increase in enrollment of 32 percent; students' parents with high aspirations are associated with an increase of 52 percent. For Hispanic males in Model 2, living with two biological parents is associated with an increase of initial enrollment into a four-year college or university of 97 percent, while having parents with more education, having a higher g.p.a. and having high college aspirations are also significant.

### Multinomial Regression Results for White Males Compared to Hispanic Males

White males ( $n=3,298$ ) have more categories that demonstrate significance than Hispanic males, both at the community college level and at four-year colleges. (See Table 4.3). In Model 1, white males who lived with two biological parents, those who participated in more household chores and parents with high educational aspirations for them all show significance. White males indicate a 50 percent increase in enrollment into two-year colleges if they lived with two biological parents compared to living with only a single mother. Students who participated in more household chores are associated with a 22 percent increase in enrollment, while white male students whose parents had high educational aspirations for them are associated with a 30 percent increase in initially enrollment as well.

Model 2 keeps living with two biological parents and doing household chores as significant factors leading to initial enrollment into community colleges as well as being older, having parents with high levels of education, having a high g.p.a., and high college aspirations. However, when adding the control variables, living with two biological parents shows an increase in enrollment of 44 percent compared to males from single mother homes; those who participated in household chores are associated with a 16 percent increase in the likelihood of enrollment into a community college. While comparing initial enrollment into two-year colleges in Model 1 and 2, five independent variables show significance for white males while none do for Hispanic males, meaning that the family variables (with some exceptions) do not add much to our understanding of college decisions for Latinos.

For white males beginning at four-year institutions, six dependent variables prove significant in Model 1: living with two biological parents instead of living with a single mother, not living with “other” family members, doing more household chores, and all three family closeness variables: being close with their parents, having parents who are not too controlling, and having parents with high educational aspirations for them. In Model 2 there are nine significant variables: living with two biological parents or not living with “others” compared to living with a single mother, having parents with less control, having parents with high educational aspirations, being younger, speaking English at home, having parents with high educational levels, having a high grade point average and having high college aspirations. Again, more variables show significance for white males than Hispanic males meaning family variables add more to the prediction of college decisions for white males than for Hispanic males.

Among white males in Model 1, those living with two biological parents are associated with a 100 percent increase in initial enrollment in four-year colleges compared to those from single mother homes, and in Model 2, after adding the control variables, the number is 97 percent. White males show a 42 percent increase in enrollment if they did not live with “other” family members. In Model 1, white males who participated in household chores are associated with an increase of 20 percent in enrollment; those who are close with their parents are associated with a 34 percent increase in enrollment. In Model 1, the less controlling the parents are, the more association there is in enrollment (9 percent), and in Model 2 the association increases to 10 percent. White males whose parents had high expectations for them are associated

with a 68 percent increase in initial enrollment into a four-year college (Model 1), when adding the control variables in Model 2, there is a 19 percent increase.

#### Multinomial Regression Results for Black Males Compared to Hispanic Males

Results for black males ( $n=1,149$ ), who attended community colleges initially reveal no variables with significance in Model 1, but three in Model 2: age, parents' education, and college aspirations. (See Table 4.3). For black males beginning at four-year colleges, four dependent variables show significance in Model 1, while four control variables show significance in Model 2: having fewer house members, living with two biological parents instead of a single mother, doing household chores and having parents with high educational aspirations for them. Among black males, fewer household members show a 9 percent increase in enrollment; those living with two biological parents are related to a 60 percent increase. Black males who help with chores are associated with a 9 percent increase in four-year college enrollment; those whose parents have high aspirations for them are associated with a 31 percent increase. Model 2 control variables with significance are age, parent's education, g.p.a., and college aspirations.

The results for black males are more similar to Hispanic males than white males, meaning that for black and Hispanic males, the family variables do not add much to their college predictions. For males initially enrolling into four-year institutions in Model 1, living with two biological parents, doing household chores and high parental aspirations are significant for all three groups. Once again the similarity in Model 2 for Hispanics and whites are living with two biological parents compared to living with a single mother. (See Table 4.7).

#### Results for Research Question #4:

In what ways are family structure, family closeness and family responsibility associated with the decision of initially enrolling into a two- or four-year post-secondary institution versus no enrollment-for Latinas compared to Latinos?

When comparing Latinas and Latinos, no similarities are found in Model 1 for two-year colleges because males do not show significance for any of the variables. (See Table 4.4). In Model 2, the control variables account for most of the variance, with both Latinas and Latinos showing significance for both parents' education and college aspirations. In Model 1, comparing Latinas and Latinos who initially enroll into four-year institutions, living with two biological parents and parental aspirations are significant. Latinas show a 65 percent increase in enrollment and Latinos a 100 percent increase in enrollment. Parental aspirations indicate a 34 percent increase for Latinas and a 52 percent increase for Latinos. In Model 2, living with two biological parents compared to living with a single mother is significant for both groups; Latinas are associated with a 70 percent increase in enrollment and Latinos a 97 percent increase.(See Table 4.9).

#### Summary of Key Findings

I will summarize the key findings in four separate ways (all Hispanics compared to whites and blacks; Hispanic females compared to white females and black females; Hispanic males compared to white males and black males; and Latinas compared to Latinos).The number of household members, living with two biological parents compared to living with a single mother, doing household chores and parental aspirations are the four core variables that are associated with whether or not students enroll into a four-year college in Model 1. In Model 2, when adding control variables, living with two

biological parents instead of with a single mother is related to students entering four-year colleges. Also, most of the control variables are significant.

When broken down by gender, females are associated with an increase in enrollment if they have a large number of house members (for those initially enrolling into four-year colleges or universities only), live with two biological parents compared to a single mother (four-year only), and have high parental aspirations (Model 1). In Model 2, living with two biological parents compared to living with a single mother is a significant factor associated with women enrolling into four-year colleges. Parents' education, g.p.a. and college aspirations are also statistically significant control variables.

For males, household chores, living with two biological parents and parental aspirations in Model 1 is related to initial four-year college entrants; living with two biological parents compared to living with a single mother is associated with students initially enrolling into four-year colleges in Model 2. Age, parents' education, g.p.a. and college aspirations are also significant.

When comparing Latinas and Latinos, the variables that relate to Hispanics enrolling into college are living with two biological parents and parental aspirations, in Model 1, for four-year college entrants. In Model 2, living with two biological parents compared to living with a single mother is associated with more Hispanics initially enrolling into a four-year college or university. Parents' education, g.p.a. and college aspirations account for most of the variance in Model 2, again suggesting that family variables do not add much to the prediction of the outcome variables. Overall, using two models is helpful because a lot of the variance in Model 2 originates because of the control variables.

Therefore, having Model 1 allows the readers to see if there is an association with the independent variables without the controls. Also, comparing the data in four different ways allows for more specific differences to be observed. In all there are five main findings:

1. The control variables of parents' education, g.p.a, and college aspirations account for most of the variance.
2. Model 1: Gender differences: Among males, participating in household chores is related to an increase of four-year college enrollment. While females with fewer house members are associated with an increase of four-year college enrollment.
3. Model 1: Two-year vs. four-year differences: Overall, four variables in Model 1 are significant for students initially enrolling into a four-year college (house members, living with two biological parents compared to living with a single mother, household chores and parental aspirations) compared to only one variable for students initially enrolling into a community college: parental aspirations.
4. Model 2: Two-year vs. four-year differences: Living with two biological parents compared to living with a single mother for high school graduates who initially enroll into four-year colleges or universities indicate an increase in enrollment, not for those who initially enrolled into community colleges. (See Table 4.8).
5. Latinas and Latinos initially entering four-year colleges (in Model 1) is associated with living with two biological parents compared to living with a single mother and parental aspirations. (See Table 4.9)

The three most influential control variables are parents' education, g.p.a. and college aspirations. As all three account for a lot of the variance, g.p.a. had the highest percentages of association. In Model 2, having a high g.p.a. is associated with an increase in the likelihood of enrolling into a four-year college or university by 112 percent for Hispanic females and 109 percent for Hispanic males. High college aspirations indicate an increase of Hispanic males' chance of enrollment by 70 percent, white males by 60 percent and black males by 48 percent. Hispanic females with high college aspirations are associated with a 43 percent increase in the likelihood of attendance at a four-year institution, with white females increasing their chances by 69 percent and black females by 65 percent. Last, parents' educational attainment is related

to an increase in the chance of enrolling into a four-year college by 13 percent for Hispanics, 26 percent for whites and 23 percent for blacks.

Gender differences are present, as doing household chores is associated with males enrolling into college, while the number of house members is related to an increase for females. Among Hispanic males, participation in household chores is associated with a 32 percent increase in enrollment into a four-year institution (in Model 1). Among white males participation in household chores are associated with a 20 percent increase in the same situation, and black males are 9 percent more likely to enroll. Among Hispanic females, those with a smaller number of house members show a 10 percent increase in enrollment into a four-year college (in Model 1).

Another observation is between high school graduates who initially enroll into two-year colleges compared to those who enroll into four-year colleges or universities. Among students at four-year colleges or universities those with fewer house members, those who participate in household chores, those who live with their biological parents and those who have parents with high aspirations for them show an increase in enrollment. Students who initially enroll into two-year colleges are associated with having parents with high aspirations for them. When Hispanics have a smaller number of house members, they are 10 percent more likely to enroll into a four-year institution in Model 1, compared to students with a larger number of house members. Hispanics are associated with a 75 percent increase in the likelihood of initially enrolling into a four-year college if they lived with their biological parents compared to living with a single mother. Among Hispanics, those who participated in household chores show an 18 percent increase in the likelihood of enrolling into a four-year college; they are associated

with a 39 percent increase in the likelihood of enrolling if their parents had high educational aspirations for them. Among Hispanics initially enrolling into two-year colleges, those who had parents with high aspirations for them indicate a 12 percent increase in the likelihood of enrolling.

Among Hispanics, whites and blacks, living with two biological parents compared to living with a single mother is associated with an increase of enrollment into four-year colleges or universities. In Model 2, Hispanics are related to a 78 percent increase in enrollment, whites 63 percent and blacks 61 percent. Breaking the findings down by gender shows that Latinas are associated with a 70 percent increase in the likelihood of initially enrolling into a four-year college if they live with their biological parents during high school compared to living with a single mother. Latinos are associated with a 97 percent increase in the likelihood of enrolling into a four-year if they lived with their biological parents during that time.

To sum, the main findings shed light on the many variables that relate to high school graduates' decisions to initially enroll into a two-year or four-year college. Differences occur between genders and two-year and four-year college enrollment. Three of the control variables are significant. The independent variable associated with initial college enrollment into four-year colleges in Model 2 for all subgroups, including Latinas and Latinos, is for students who live with their biological parents compared to those who live with a single mother. The discussion of all of the results will begin in Chapter V.

Table 4.1

*Logistic Regressions for Hispanic, White and Black High School Graduates Initially Enrolling into a Two-Year or Four-Year College (n=11,638)*

|                        | <u>Two-Year Colleges</u>    |                          |                          | <u>Four-Year Colleges</u>   |                          |                          |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
|                        | <u>Hispanic</u><br>COV (SD) | <u>White</u><br>COV (SD) | <u>Black</u><br>COV (SD) | <u>Hispanic</u><br>COV (SD) | <u>White</u><br>COV (SD) | <u>Black</u><br>COV (SD) |
| <b>Model 1</b>         |                             |                          |                          |                             |                          |                          |
| House Members          | -.04 (.03)                  | -.06 (.02)*              | -.04 (.03)               | -.10 (.04)**                | -.06 (.02)**             | -.12 (.03)***            |
| Two Biological Parents | .28 (.15)                   | .42 (.10)***             | .34 (.14)*               | .75 (.18)***                | .74 (.09)***             | .76 (.12)***             |
| Step Parents           | -.09 (.24)                  | .10 (.13)                | -.18 (.22)               | .15 (.28)                   | -.17 (.12)               | .13 (.18)                |
| Other Family Structure | .16 (.21)                   | .01 (.12)                | -.20 (.16)               | .15 (.26)                   | -.25 (.12)*              | -.42 (.15)**             |
| Household Chores       | .07 (.06)                   | .17 (.04)***             | .08 (.06)                | .18 (.07)**                 | .12 (.03)***             | .04 (.05)                |
| Parental Closeness     | .19 (.13)                   | .25 (.07)***             | .01 (.15)                | .01 (.14)                   | .37 (.06)***             | -.06 (.12)               |
| Parental Control       | .03 (.03)                   | -.04 (.02)               | -.04 (.03)               | .04 (.04)                   | .06 (.02)**              | .02 (.03)                |
| Parental Aspirations   | .12 (.06)*                  | .19 (.04)***             | .07 (.05)                | .39 (.08)***                | .55 (.04)***             | .32 (.05)***             |
| <b>Model 2</b>         |                             |                          |                          |                             |                          |                          |
| Age                    | -.09 (.04)*                 | -.09 (.02)***            | -.09 (.03)**             | -.09 (.04)*                 | -.07 (.02)***            | -.13 (.03)***            |
| Female                 | .26 (.12)*                  | .24 (.07)***             | .57 (.12)***             | .43 (.14)**                 | .05 (.07)                | .42 (.11)***             |
| Language               | .25 (.13)*                  | .39 (.25)                | .99 (.48)*               | .21 (.15)                   | .82 (.23)***             | .82 (.53)                |
| Parents' Education     | .08 (.02)***                | .11 (.02)***             | .10 (.02)***             | .13 (.03)***                | .26 (.01)***             | .23 (.02)***             |
| G.P.A.                 | .31 (.08)***                | .41 (.05)***             | .20 (.09)*               | 1.11 (.11)***               | 1.28 (.05)***            | .94 (.08)***             |
| College Aspirations    | .30 (.06)***                | .31 (.04)***             | .25 (.06)***             | .55 (.09)***                | .65 (.04)***             | .57 (.07)***             |
| House Members          | .03 (.33)                   | -.04 (.02)               | -.03 (.03)               | -.01 (.04)                  | -.04 (.02)*              | -.06 (.03)*              |
| Two Biological Parents | .28 (.16)                   | .37 (.10)***             | .32 (.15)*               | .78 (.20)***                | .63 (.10)***             | .61 (.14)***             |
| Step Parents           | -.21 (.25)                  | .08 (.13)                | -.18 (.23)               | -.07 (.30)                  | -.18 (.14)               | .07 (.20)                |
| Other Family Structure | .20 (.22)                   | -.00 (.13)               | -.16 (.17)               | .09 (.28)                   | -.23 (.13)               | -.38 (.17)*              |
| Household Chores       | .05 (.07)                   | .08 (.04)                | .01 (.06)                | .06 (.08)                   | -.04 (.04)               | -.04 (.06)               |
| Parental Closeness     | .12 (.14)                   | .12 (.08)                | -.06 (.16)               | -.12 (.16)                  | .07 (.07)                | -.21 (.14)               |
| Parental Control       | .05 (.04)                   | .00 (.02)                | -.02 (.03)               | .05 (.04)                   | .08 (.02)***             | .04 (.03)                |
| Parental Aspirations   | -.02 (.06)                  | .00 (.04)                | -.02 (.05)               | 10 (.09).                   | 10 (.04)*                | .09 (.06)                |

Note: \*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001. Hispanics (n = 1,886), Whites (n = 7,086), Blacks (n = 2,666).

Table 4.2

*Logistic Regressions for Hispanic, White and Black Female High School Graduates Initially Enrolling into a Two-Year or Four-Year College*

|                        | Two-Year Colleges    |                   |                   | Four-Year Colleges   |                   |                   |
|------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
|                        | Hispanic<br>COV (SD) | White<br>COV (SD) | Black<br>COV (SD) | Hispanic<br>COV (SD) | White<br>COV (SD) | Black<br>COV (SD) |
| <b>Model 1</b>         |                      |                   |                   |                      |                   |                   |
| House Members          | -.03(.04)            | -.04 (.03)        | -.04 (.04)        | -.10 (.05)*          | -.07 (.03)*       | -.14 (.03)***     |
| Two Biological Parents | .26 (.21)            | .36 (.13)**       | .45 (.18)*        | .65 (.23)**          | .77 (.11)***      | .88 (.16)***      |
| Step Parents           | -.06 (.32)           | .09 (.17)         | -.08 (.29)        | -.03 (.36)           | -.06 (.16)        | .20 (.25)         |
| Other Family Structure | .33 (.28)            | .13 (.16)         | -.26 (.21)        | .28 (.32)            | -.12 (.15)        | -.42 (.20)*       |
| Household Chores       | .00 (.09)            | .07 (.05)         | .02 (.08)         | -.05 (.10)           | -.01 (.05)        | -.10 (.07)        |
| Parental Closeness     | .33 (.19)            | .39 (.10)***      | -.02 (.20)        | -.01 (.20)           | .45 (.09)***      | .02 (.17)         |
| Parental Control       | .06 (.05)            | -.02 (.03)        | -.09 (.04)*       | .03 (.05)            | .04 (.03)         | -.01 (.04)        |
| Parental Aspirations   | .18 (.08)*           | .11 (.05)**       | .12 (.06)         | .34 (.10)***         | .45 (.05)***      | .34 (.07)***      |
| <b>Model 2</b>         |                      |                   |                   |                      |                   |                   |
| Age                    | .01 (.05)            | -.08 (.03)**      | -.06 (.04)        | -.06 (.06)           | -.07 (.03)*       | -.10 (.04)*       |
| Language               | .21 (.18)            | .54 (.30)         | 9.51 (1.2)***     | .29 (.20)            | .87 (.30)**       | .929 (.99)***     |
| Parents' Education     | .08 (.03)**          | .12 (.02)***      | .09 (.03)**       | .14 (.04)***         | .28 (.02)***      | .21 (.03)***      |
| G.P.A.                 | .21 (.12)            | .56 (.07)***      | .31 (.11)**       | 1.12 (.14)***        | 1.33 (.07)***     | 1.05 (.11)***     |
| College Aspirations    | .27 (.09)**          | .27 (.05)***      | .24 (.08)**       | .43 (.11)***         | .69 (.07)***      | .65 (.09)***      |
| House Members          | .04 (.05)            | -.03 (.03)        | -.02 (.04)        | -.02 (.06)           | -.04 (.03)        | -.08 (.04)*       |
| Two Biological Parents | .25 (.22)            | .35 (.13)**       | .42 (.19)*        | .70 (.25)**          | .75 (.13)***      | .78 (.17)***      |
| Step Parents           | -.22 (.34)           | .01 (.17)         | -.17 (.30)        | -.21 (.40)           | -.12 (.18)        | .07 (.27)         |
| Other Family Structure | .32 (.29)            | .15 (.16)         | -.24 (.22)        | .16 (.35)            | -.06 (.18)        | -.40 (.22)        |
| Household Chores       | .08 (.09)            | -.00 (.05)        | -.00 (.08)        | -.04 (.11)           | -.14 (.05)**      | -.12 (.08)        |
| Parental Closeness     | .30 (.20)            | .19 (.11)         | -.14 (.21)        | -.14 (.22)           | .07 (.10)         | -.25 (.19)        |
| Parental Control       | .05 (.05)            | .02 (.03)         | -.06 (.04)        | .03 (.06)            | .07 (.03)*        | .04 (.05)         |
| Parental Aspirations   | .07 (.09)            | -.06 (.05)        | .03 (.07)         | .07 (.11)            | .03 (.06)         | .10 (.07)         |

*Note:* \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ . Hispanic Females ( $n = 966$ ), White Females ( $n = 3,788$ ), Black Females ( $n = 1,517$ ).

Table 4.3

*Logistic Regressions for Hispanic, White and Black Male High School Graduates Initially Enrolling into a Two-Year or Four-Year College*

|                        | Two-Year College      |                   |                   | Four-Year College    |                   |                   |
|------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
|                        | Hispanics<br>COV (SD) | White<br>COV (SD) | Black<br>COV (SD) | Hispanic<br>COV (SD) | White<br>COV (SD) | Black<br>COV (SD) |
| <b>Model 1</b>         |                       |                   |                   |                      |                   |                   |
| House Members          | -.04 (.04)            | -.06 (.04)        | -.07 (.05)        | -.08 (.06)           | -.04 (.03)        | -.09 (.04)*       |
| Two Biological Parents | .34 (.28)             | .50 (.15)***      | .26 (.24)         | 1.00 (.41)*          | .70 (.14)***      | .60 (.05)**       |
| Step Parents           | -.12 (.40)            | .15 (.20)         | -.23 (.36)        | .52 (.54)            | -.31 (.18)        | .05 (.27)         |
| Other Family Structure | .05 (.31)             | -.16 (.20)        | -.10 (.26)        | .09 (.45)            | -.42 (.18)*       | -.39 (.24)        |
| Household Chores       | .06 (.09)             | .22 (.06)***      | .03 (.10)         | .32 (.11)**          | .20 (.05)***      | -.09 (.04)*       |
| Parental Closeness     | .14 (.19)             | .13 (.11)         | .19 (.23)         | .17 (.22)            | .34 (.09)***      | -.04 (.19)        |
| Parental Control       | .00 (.05)             | .13 (.11)         | .02 (.05)         | .07 (.06)            | .09 (.03)**       | .02 (.42)         |
| Parental Aspirations   | .04 (.09)             | .30 (.03)***      | -.01 (.86)        | .52 (.15)***         | .68 (.06)***      | .31 (.09)***      |
| <b>Model 2</b>         |                       |                   |                   |                      |                   |                   |
| Age                    | -.18 (.05)***         | -.11 (.03)***     | -.13 (.05)*       | -.12 (.07)           | -.07 (.03)*       | -.16 (.05)***     |
| Language               | .31 (.19)             | .18 (.46)         | .39 (.64)         | .19 (.25)            | .78 (.34)*        | .44 (.58)         |
| Parents' Education     | .09 (.03)***          | .10 (.02)***      | .12 (.04)**       | .11 (.04)**          | .23 (.02)***      | .25 (.04)***      |
| G.P.A.                 | .41 (.12)***          | .22 (.07)**       | .03 (.14)         | 1.09 (.16)***        | 1.25 (.08)***     | .85 (.13)***      |
| College Aspirations    | .32 (.09)***          | .35 (.05)***      | .30 (.10)**       | .70 (.14)***         | .60 (.06)***      | .48 (.10)***      |
| House Members          | .02 (.05)             | -.06 (.04)        | -.05 (.05)        | .01 (.07)            | -.04 (.04)        | -.02 (.05)        |
| Two Biological Parents | .36 (.24)             | .44 (.16)**       | .26 (.25)         | .97 (.33)**          | .50 (.15)**       | .36 (.22)         |
| Step Parents           | -.24 (.37)            | .16 (.20)         | -.21 (.36)        | .24 (.49)            | -.30 (.21)        | .01 (.30)         |
| Other Family Structure | .16 (.33)             | -.21 (.20)        | -.02 (.27)        | .01 (.49)            | -.46 (.21)*       | -.29 (.27)        |
| Household Chores       | .03 (.09)             | .16 (.06)**       | -.01 (.10)        | .23 (.12)            | .07 (.06)         | .08 (.09)         |
| Parental Closeness     | -.07 (.20)            | .01 (.11)         | .06 (.24)         | -.16 (.24)           | .10 (.11)         | -.15 (.21)        |
| Parental Control       | .06 (.05)             | -.02 (.03)        | .06 (.06)         | .10 (.07)            | .10 (.04)**       | .05 (.05)         |
| Parental Aspirations   | -.11 (.09)            | .07 (.06)         | -.11 (.09)        | .21 (.16)            | .19 (.07)**       | .09 (.10)         |

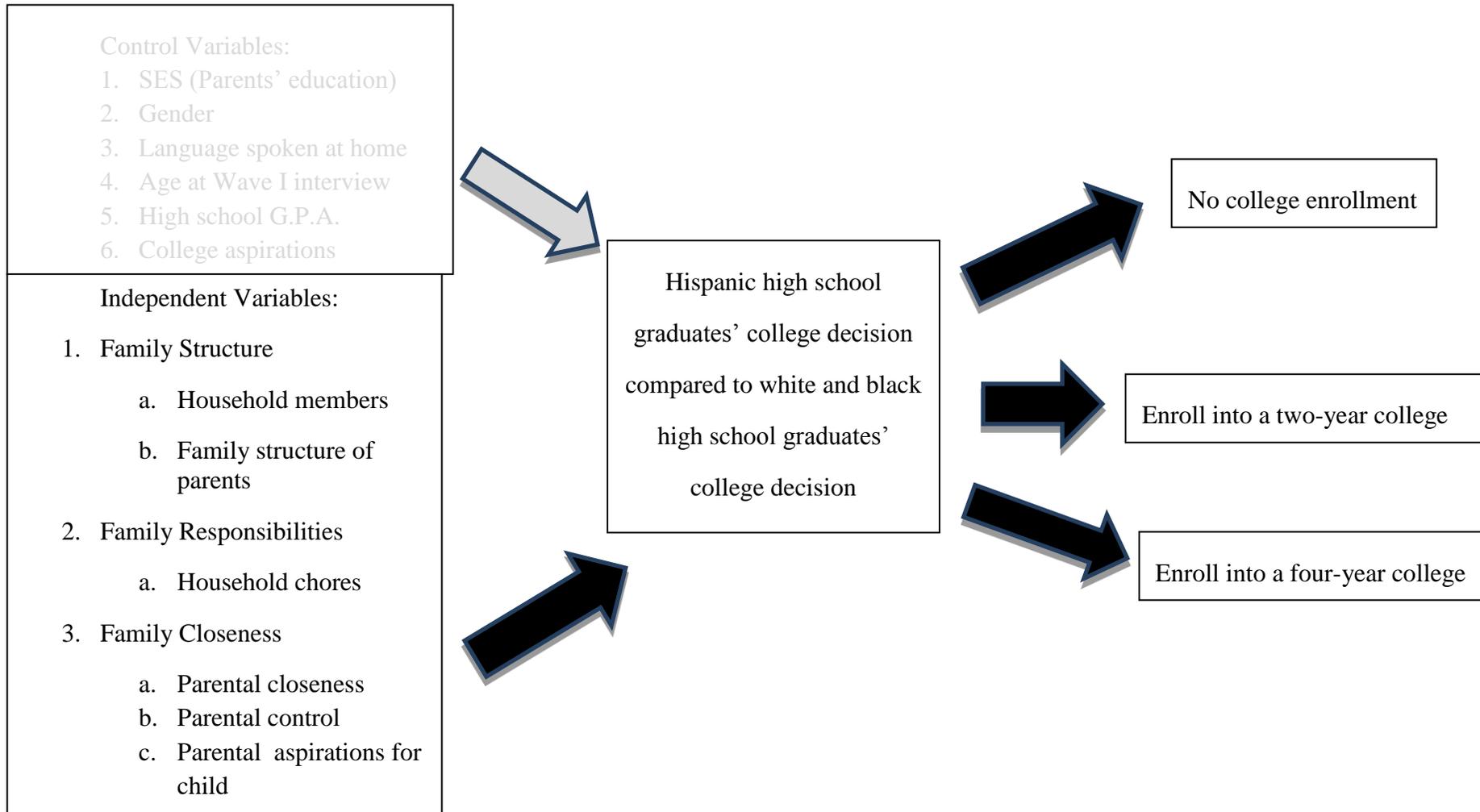
*Note* : \*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001. Hispanic Males (n = 920), White Males (n = 3,298), Black Males (n = 1,149).

Table 4.4

*Logistic Regressions for Latina and Latino High School Graduates Initially Enrolling into a Two-Year or Four-Year College*

|                        | Two-Year College   |                    | Four-Year College  |                    |
|------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
|                        | Latina<br>COV (SD) | Latino<br>COV (SD) | Latina<br>COV (SD) | Latino<br>COV (SD) |
| <b>Model 1</b>         |                    |                    |                    |                    |
| House Members          | -.03 (.04)         | -.06 (.04)         | -.10 (.05)*        | -.08 (.06)         |
| Two Biological Parents | .26 (.21)          | .27 (.22)          | .65 (.23)**        | 1.00 (.41)*        |
| Step Parents           | -.06 (.32)         | .11 (.37)          | -.03 (.36)         | .52 (.54)          |
| Other Family Structure | .33 (.28)          | .02 (.29)          | .28 (.32)          | .09 (.45)          |
| Household Chores       | .00 (.09)          | .07 (.08)          | -.05 (.10)         | .32 (.11)**        |
| Parental Closeness     | .33 (.19)          | .15 (.18)          | -.01 (.20)         | .17 (.22)          |
| Parental Control       | .06 (.05)          | .00 (.04)          | .03 (.05)          | .07 (.06)          |
| Parental Aspirations   | .18 (.08)*         | .05 (.08)          | .34 (.10)***       | .52 (.15)***       |
| <b>Model 2</b>         |                    |                    |                    |                    |
| Age                    | .01 (.05)          | -.18 (.05)***      | -.06 (.06)         | -.12 (.07)         |
| Language               | .21 (.18)          | .31 (.19)          | .29 (.20)          | .19 (.25)          |
| Parents' Education     | .08 (.03)**        | .09 (.03)***       | .14 (.04)***       | .11 (.04)**        |
| G.P.A.                 | .21 (.12)          | .41 (.12)***       | 1.12 (.14)***      | 1.9 (.16)***       |
| College Aspirations    | .27 (.09)**        | .32 (.09)***       | .43 (.11)***       | .70 (.14)***       |
| House Members          | .04 (.05)          | .02 (.05)          | -.02 (.06)         | .01 (.07)          |
| Two Biological Parents | .25 (.22)          | .36 (.24)          | .70 (.25)***       | .97 (.33)**        |
| Step Parents           | -.22 (.34)         | -.24 (.37)         | -.21 (.40)         | .24 (.49)          |
| Other Family Structure | .32 (.29)          | .16 (.33)          | .16 (.35)          | .01 (.49)          |
| Household Chores       | .08 (.09)          | .03 (.09)          | -.04 (.11)         | .23 (.12)          |
| Parental Closeness     | .30 (.20)          | -.07 (.20)         | -.14 (.22)         | -.16 (.24)         |
| Parental Control       | .05 (.05)          | .06 (.05)          | .03 (.06)          | .10 (.07)          |
| Parental Aspirations   | .07 (.09)          | -.11 (.09)         | .07 (.11)          | .21 (.16)          |

*Note* : \*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001. Latinas (n = 966), Latinos (n = 920).



*Figure 4.1.*

*Model 1: Effects of Independent Variables on the Outcome Variables of Hispanic High School Graduates*

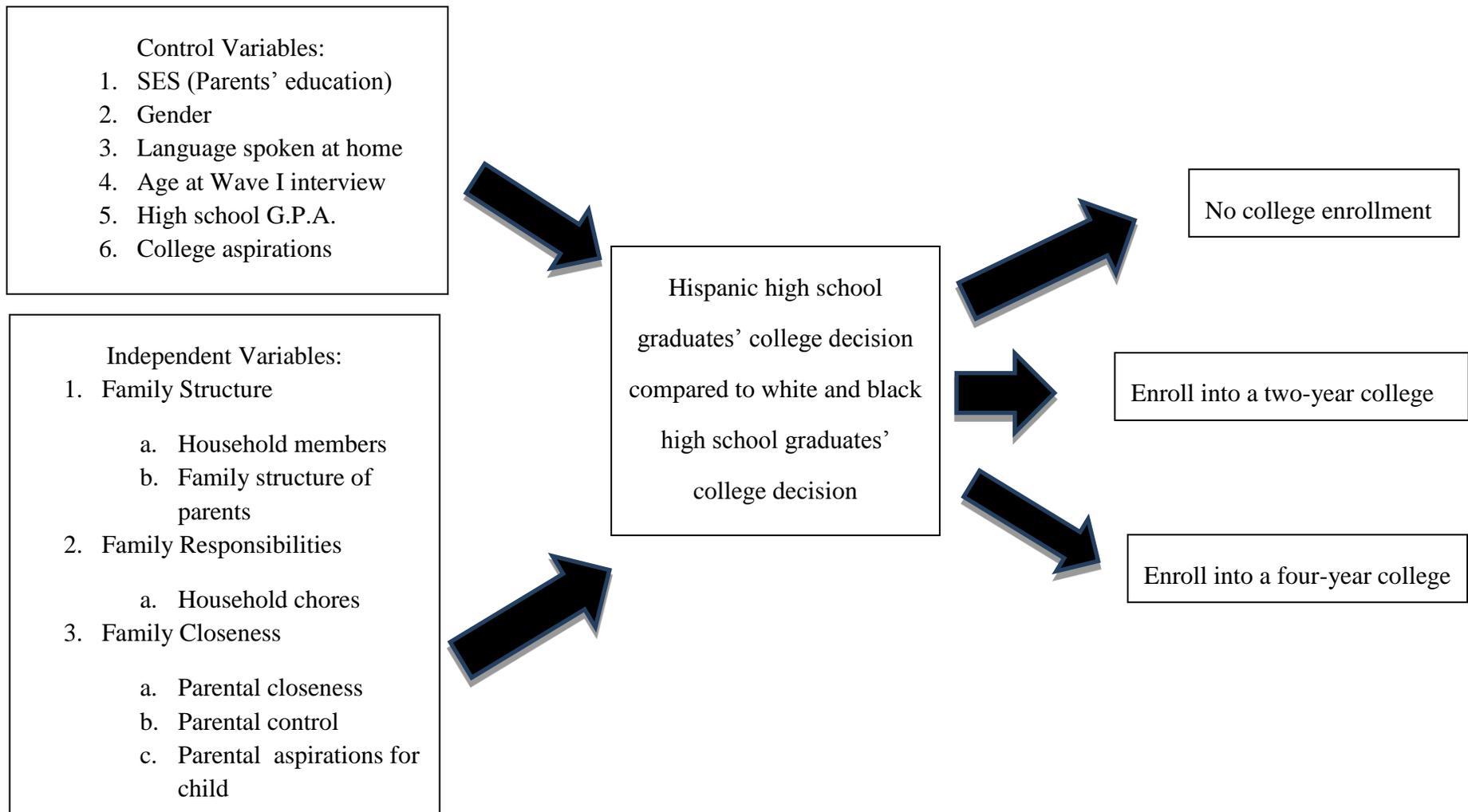


Figure 4.2.

*Model 2: Effects of Control Variables and Independent Variables on the Outcome Variables of Hispanic High School Graduates*

Table 4.5.  
*Effect of Independent Variables on Initial Enrollment into Four-Year Colleges for Hispanics, Whites and Blacks (Model 1)*

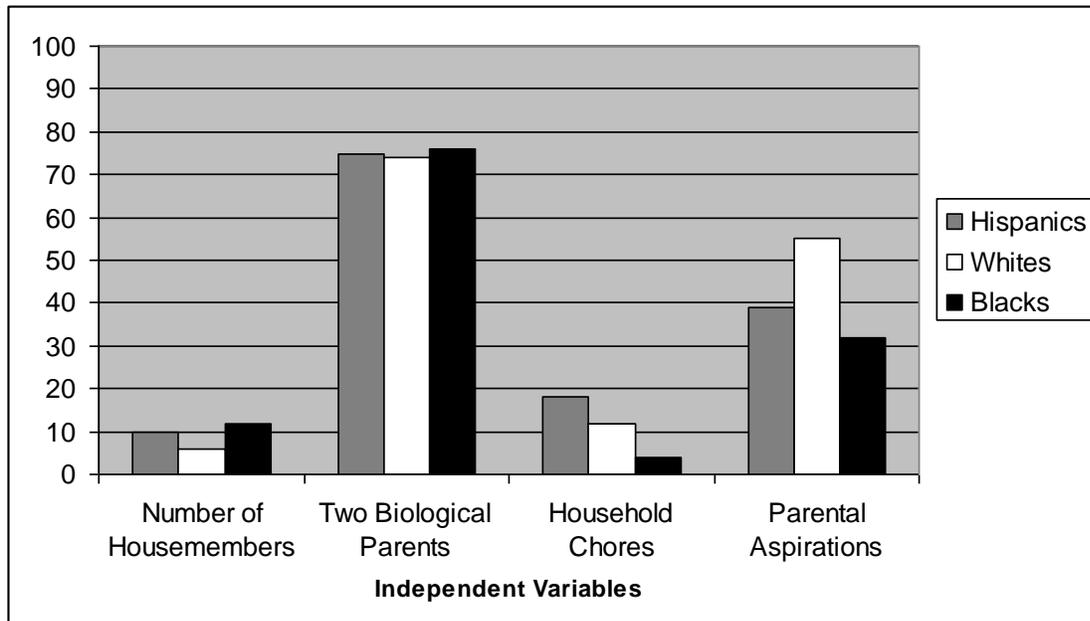


Table 4.6.  
*Effect of Independent Variables on Initial Enrollment into Four-Year Colleges for Hispanic, White and Black Females (Model 1)*

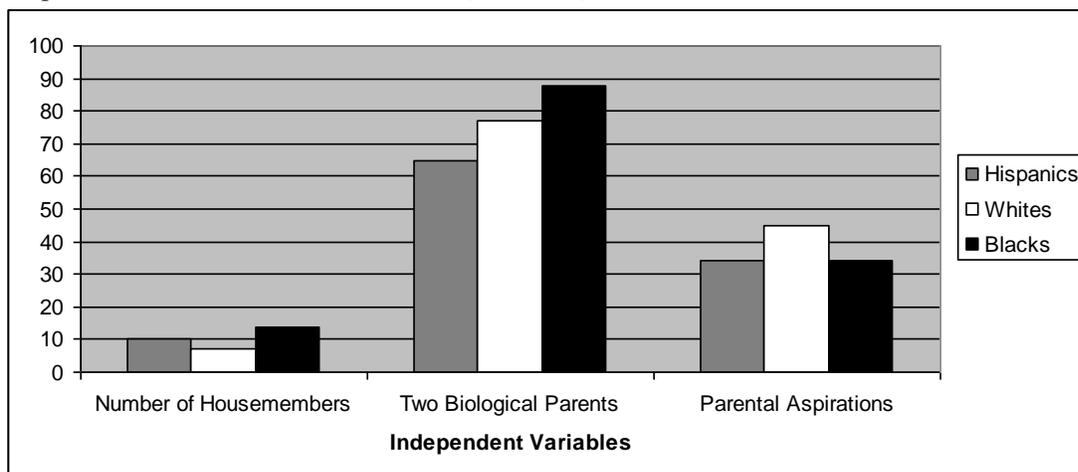


Table 4.7.  
*Effect of Independent Variables on Initial Enrollment into Four-Year Colleges for Hispanic, White and Black Males (Model 1)*

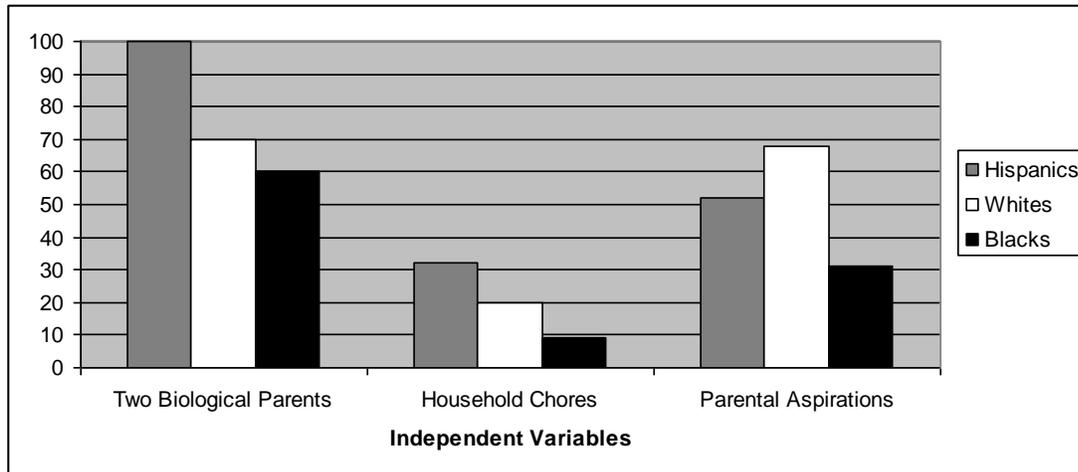


Table 4.8.  
*Effect of Living with Two Biological Parents on Initial Enrollment into Four-Year Colleges for Hispanics, Whites and Blacks (Model 1)*

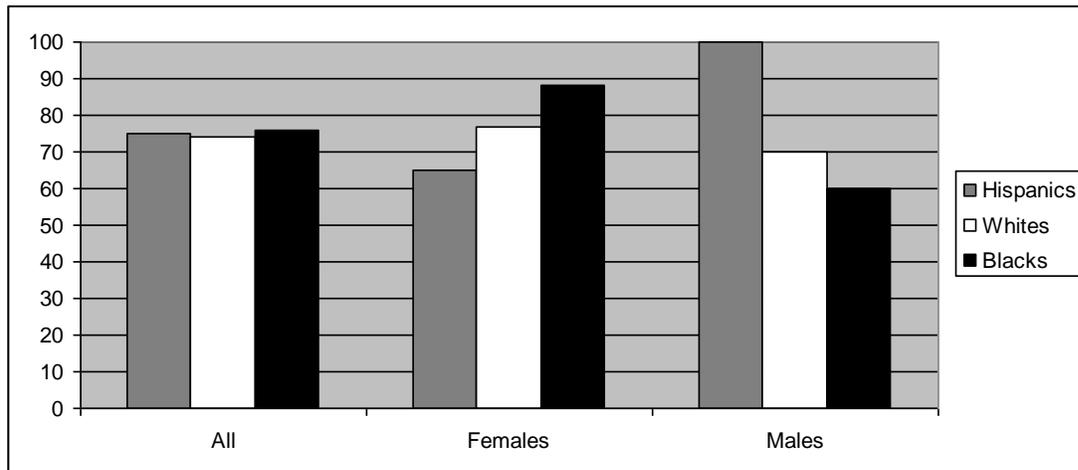
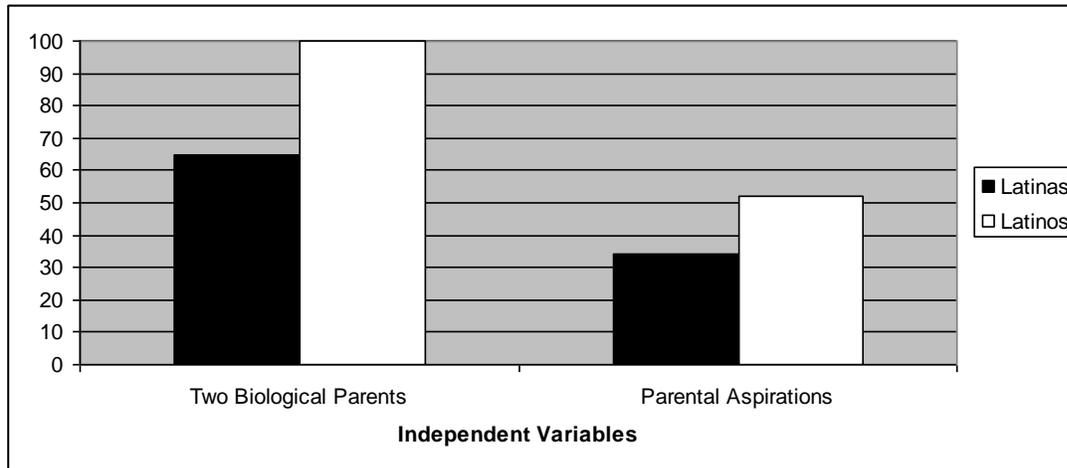


Table 4.9.  
*Effects of Independent Variables on Initial Enrollment into Four-Year Colleges for Latinas and Latinos (Model 1)*



## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

#### Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the study including an overview of the problem, purpose statement, research questions, and major findings. Findings drawn from the data in Chapter IV relate to current literature. Chapter V ends with a final summation, discussion of the implications for action, recommendations for further research and final remarks.

#### Summary of the Study

##### Overview of the Problem

The underrepresentation of Hispanic students in postsecondary institutions continues to be a topic of concern in education (Zarate & Gallimore, 2004). As the Hispanic population continues to soar in the United States, this racial-ethnic group gap in educational attainment needs attention. Most research groups Latinos and Latinas together, so by investigating the differences between genders, more insight arises on how family structure, family closeness and family responsibilities affects Hispanics and their college enrollment decisions.

##### Purpose Statement

The purpose of this dissertation was to investigate the effects of family structure, family closeness, and family responsibilities on Hispanic high school graduates, both male and female, who chose not to attend college, who chose to initially enroll into a two-year college, or who chose to initially enroll into a four-year college. Black and white subgroups provided for comparison across groups.

## Research Questions

In what ways do family structure, family closeness and family responsibility influence the likelihood of initially enrolling into a two- or four-year post-secondary institution versus no enrollment-for:

1. Hispanics compared to whites and blacks?
2. Hispanics females compared to white females and black females?
3. Hispanics males compared to white males and black males?
4. Latinas compared to Latinos?

## Findings Related to Literature

I have listed the findings related to literature so as to correspond to the Summary of the Five Major Findings. Supporting Cabrera and La Nasa (2000) and Perna (2000), these results find parental factors like parental aspirations for their child influential to college enrollment. Gender differences in educational experiences seem to be understudied (Gonzalez et al., 2003), so this study contributes to the current knowledge base by concluding that participating in household chores had more influence on Latinos, not Latinas, who enrolled into college. This finding is surprising because studies show that family responsibilities fall more often and more consistently on Latinas than Latinos when it comes to fulfilling family obligations (Raffaelli & Ontai, 2004; Valenzuela, 1999). Obviously, it is not doing the household chores that increases college enrollment, but what is represented by this action: possibly responsibility or obligation to family. To date, there has been little research on family responsibilities and how they influence adolescents' decisions after high school (Arnett, 2006). Other gender results report that females are more likely than males to attend a community college or four-year institution.

Two-year institutions compared to four-year institutions reveal differences in high school graduates who enrolled into a four-year college were more likely to have fewer house members and were more likely to participate in household chores. The findings support the idea that family factors have an impact on children's academic achievement

(e.g., Baker, 2003; Acock & Kiecolt, 2001; Lew, 2003; Gloria & Ho, 2003; Woo, 2000).

This research extends prior research by focusing on factors that differentiate between college enrollments into two- or four-year institutions (Arbona & Nora, 2007).

The control variables of parents' education (SES), g.p.a, and college aspirations soaked up most of the variance. The findings support the idea that SES (parents' education in this study) influences college enrollment. Cerna et al. (2007) reports that it is important to consider Latino/a student pre-college aspirations, perceptions and values when examining outcomes of degree attainment. This study concurs with their research. Lotkowski, Robbins and Noeth, (2004) argue that the best indicators of college persistence are pre-college factors: socioeconomic status, high school grade point average, college entrance examination scores; college factors: values of institutional commitment; and factors that cross over from high school to college: individually-held academic goals, academic, self-confidence, and family and community social support. Again, this research supports prior research.

Living with two biological parents compared to living with a single mother generally increased the likelihood that high school graduates would initially enroll into a four-year college. The findings strongly support McLanahan and Sandefur's (1994) results that children who grow up with both biological parents have higher educational attainment compared to those who grow up with a single parent or stepparent family. These findings also support the many studies that have shown that children who are raised with both parents are more likely to attend college compared to those who grow up in single-parent families (Ginther & Pollak, 2004; McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994; Coleman, 1988; Astone & McLanahan, 1991). The biggest surprise in this finding is not

the fact that living with two biological parents increases one's likelihood of attending college, but the magnitude of living with two biological parents compared to a single mother. Latinas are 70 percent more likely to initially enroll into a four-year institution if they live with their biological parents compared to living with a single mother; Latinos are 97 percent more likely to enroll.

### Summary

#### Final Summation

According to Astin and Oseguera (2003), Hispanics are among the least likely to finish their Bachelor's degree, with only 12 percent of Hispanics versus 37 percent of whites having attained a Bachelor's degree by the age of 25- to 29-year-olds (NCES, 2009). Furthermore, while nearly half of whites (47 percent) graduate with a four-year degree, not even a fourth (23 percent) of Latino/a postsecondary students earn their degree within ten years of high school graduation (Swail et al., 2005). By learning more about college enrollment, policy makers, educators and parents can better understand the factors guiding Latinos/as to enroll in two- or four-year institutions or not enroll at all.

Because empirical research rarely focuses on Hispanic gender differences, this study attempted to understand how family characteristics affect college enrollment differently for Latinos and Latinas compared to whites and blacks, females and males. "Understanding the sources of racial-ethnic group differences in college enrollment is critical..." (Perna, 2006, p. 52). The research also shed more light on the differences in nonacademic influential factors between Latinos/as and college enrollment (Zarate & Gallimore, 2005). This research analyzed differences across groups with a goal of

helping to increase college enrollment (Perna & Titus, 2005; Lopez et al., 2001), specifically for Latinos/as.

This research filled a gap in the literature by focusing on the family structure, family responsibilities and family closeness of Latinos/as and how it affects college enrollment. While each category showed some significance, family structure made the biggest impact for Latinos/as who initially enrolled into a four-year college, the best choice on the path to earning a Bachelor's degree. Consistently, researchers have found that perceived family support predicts social adjustment and institutional attachment to college more strongly for Latinos/as and other ethnic minority groups than for whites (Kenny & Stryker, 1996). Family structure predicts initial college enrollment into four-year colleges or universities more strongly for Latinos/as than whites.

Cavanagh et al. (2006) found that, "One of the most significant trajectories of parents' lives, their marital histories, is closely connected to one of the most significant trajectories of their children's lives, their academic careers" (p. 330). In sum, if Hispanics, whites and blacks all increase their chances of initially enrolling into a four-year institution, if they live with two biological parents compared to living with a single mother, then, since Hispanics place more value on *familismo* (a cultural value emphasizing family closeness and loyalty) than non-Hispanic whites, this variable holds even greater influence for Hispanics than whites or blacks.

As we have already discussed, it is very revealing that even with their work and family responsibilities, 27 percent of Hispanic students initially enroll in a community college, which is the highest among whites, blacks, and Hispanics. This demonstrates that there is a strong desire among Hispanics to continue to prosper their families while at

the same time pursuing educational desires. The research is clear that social capital and what goes on in the home impacts further educational success. Hispanics who have parents with college aspirations for them are 39 percent more likely to attend college. As the educational systems continue to increase in Hispanic enrollment, there must be a change in focus toward the family and school relationship. Educators have to find a way to connect with parents and present the benefits of a four-year degree. They must teach parents how to become advocates for their children and how to raise their expectations. By keeping the educational process status quo, only small percentages of Hispanics will attend post-secondary institutions. If the schools reach out and work together with parents and put a plan into place, the percentages will change, benefiting Hispanics' educational outcomes.

#### Implications for Action

This research is significant because it investigates differences between Latinos' and Latinas' college enrollment choice in order to help increase college enrollment of both Latino/as by viewing family characteristics as an asset (Rodriquez & Morrobel, 2004). Policy makers, educators and parents need to continue to view family as an asset and include them in the educational process for Hispanic adolescents. Schools need to encourage students to aspire to post-secondary education. Educators also need to focus on the importance of parental aspirations for their child and the importance of those aspirations in their child's educational trajectory. Practical suggestions include sharing information on the importance of parental aspirations during a Parent/Teacher Night through a short video, handout or a meeting with an administrator. Guidance counselors and teachers also need to meet individually with students regarding their personal college

aspirations throughout middle and high school. With the large student-to-counselor ratio, at times 500 to 1, assigning each student to a teacher advisor may help students correlate their class choices to their academic goals.

#### Recommendations for Further Research

Policy makers and educators need to continue to search for answers that can close the racial-ethnic education gap. Researchers and college preparation programs should continue to investigate gender differences to help increase the college enrollment of Hispanics (Perna & Titus, 2005; Lopez et al., 2001). Why aren't more Latinos attending college? What factors aid in the large number of Latina students enrolling into community college? How does family play a part?

Future research should continue to focus on the relationships between family attributes, such as loyalty, and the educational success of Hispanics, since family is such an important aspect of college enrollment (Gandara & Contreras, 2009). A qualitative study on Latinas who have earned their Bachelor's degrees and how family loyalty motivated them throughout the process would be interesting. It would add to the results of Sy (2006) and Zambrana and Zoppi (2002) which affirm that the educational success of Latinas is dependent on family connections and family closeness.

Other research could investigate the specifics of parental closeness for Hispanics and if students are influenced more by closeness with their mothers or with their fathers. Other research could look at the role guidance counselors play in the college aspirations of Hispanics compared to the aspirations of other races. A qualitative study of Hispanic students who are currently in or have completed postsecondary education and how their

guidance counselor assisted them in the process to initially enroll into college could be helpful.

Last, further research should focus on the importance of college aspirations and parents' aspirations for their adolescent. Future studies should investigate Hispanic students who have earned their college degrees and when and how their aspirations came into being. How did family play a part in their aspirations? Also, when did parents of offspring with a Bachelor's degree begin to communicate their high educational aspirations for their child? In what ways did they communicate these aspirations?

#### Concluding Remarks

My purpose in researching Hispanics' educational success came from my experience as an English as a Second Language teacher. All my students were Hispanic. There was such an imbalance of academic ability and achievement that it has driven me to find more answers, to find more ways to increase Hispanic students' chance of attending college, a choice many take for granted. Many of my students had high levels of academic ability but very few were enrolling into college. We, as educators, must continue to find ways to help our students succeed.

This dissertation explained some of the different influences that help Latinos/as enroll into college after high school graduation, especially the importance of *familismo* and living with two biological parents. Given the magnitude of college degree attainment in our global society, it is imperative to continue to improve outcomes for Hispanic students (Santiago et al., 2009). In continuing to learn more, policy makers and educators can help Hispanics increase their chance of educational success, assisting more Hispanic

students to achieve to the level of their academic ability, thereby narrowing the educational gap between Hispanics and whites.

APPENDIX  
TABLES

*Table A.1. Descriptive Statistics for Hispanic, White and Black High School Graduates (N=11,638)*

|                                   | Observations | Mean  | SD   | Min. | Max. |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|-------|------|------|------|
| <b>Initial College Enrollment</b> |              |       |      |      |      |
| No College                        | 11638        | 49%   |      | 0    | 2    |
| Two-Year College                  | 11638        | 20%   |      | 0    | 2    |
| Four-Year College                 | 11638        | 31%   |      | 0    | 2    |
| <b>Family Structure</b>           |              |       |      |      |      |
| Housemembers                      | 11638        | 3.98  | 1.64 | 0    | 17   |
| Two Biological Parents            | 11638        | 54%   |      | 0    | 1    |
| Step Parent Family                | 11638        | 10%   |      | 0    | 1    |
| Single Mother                     | 11638        | 24%   |      | 0    | 1    |
| Other Family Structure            | 11638        | 12%   |      | 0    | 1    |
| <b>Family Responsibilities</b>    |              |       |      |      |      |
| Household Chores                  | 11638        | 2.06  | .89  | 0    | 3    |
| <b>Family Closeness</b>           |              |       |      |      |      |
| Parental Closeness                | 11638        | 33%   |      | 0    | 1    |
| Parental Control                  | 11638        | 5.12  | 1.61 | 0    | 7    |
| Parental Aspirations              | 11638        | 4.32  | .95  | 0    | 5    |
| <b>Race</b>                       |              |       |      |      |      |
| Hispanic                          | 11638        | 16%   |      | 0    | 1    |
| White                             | 11638        | 61%   |      | 0    | 1    |
| Black                             | 11638        | 23%   |      | 0    | 1    |
| Age                               | 11638        | 16.11 | 1.70 | 11.5 | 21   |
| Female                            | 11638        | 54%   |      |      |      |
| Language                          | 11638        | 1.08  | .29  | 1    | 3    |
| Parents' Education                | 11638        | 13.25 | 2.61 | 0    | 18   |
| G.P.A.                            | 11638        | 2.85  | .75  | 1    | 4    |
| College Aspirations               | 11638        | 4.25  | 1.08 | 1    | 5    |

*Table A.2.*  
*Descriptive Statistics for Hispanic High School Graduates*

|                            | Observations | Mean  | SD   | Min. | Max. |
|----------------------------|--------------|-------|------|------|------|
| Initial College Enrollment |              |       |      |      |      |
| No College                 | 1886         | 53%   |      | 0    | 2    |
| Two-Year College           | 1886         | 27%   |      | 0    | 2    |
| Four-Year College          | 1886         | 20%   |      | 0    | 2    |
| Family Structure           |              |       |      |      |      |
| Housemembers               | 1886         | 4.51  | 1.89 | 0    | 17   |
| Two Biological Parents     | 1886         | 59%   |      | 0    | 1    |
| Step Parent Family         | 1886         | 8%    |      | 0    | 1    |
| Single Mother              | 1886         | 22%   |      | 0    | 1    |
| Other Family Structure     | 1886         | 11%   |      | 0    | 1    |
| Family Responsibilities    |              |       |      |      |      |
| Household Chores           | 1886         | 1.94  | .91  | 0    | 3    |
| Family Closeness           |              |       |      |      |      |
| Parental Closeness         | 1886         | 31%   |      | 0    | 1    |
| Parental Control           | 1886         | 4.97  | 1.72 | 0    | 7    |
| Parental Aspirations       | 1886         | 4.30  | .97  | 0    | 5    |
| Age                        | 1886         | 16.46 | 1.67 | 11.5 | 21   |
| Female                     | 1886         | 51%   |      | 0    | 1    |
| Language                   | 1886         | 1.45  | .52  | 1    | 3    |
| Parents' Education         | 1886         | 11.47 | 2.99 | 0    | 18   |
| G.P.A.                     | 1886         | 2.67  | .74  | 1    | 4    |
| College Aspirations        | 1886         | 4.06  | 1.10 | 1    | 5    |

*Table A.3.*  
*Descriptive Statistics for White High School Graduates*

|                            | Observations | Mean  | SD   | Min. | Max.  |
|----------------------------|--------------|-------|------|------|-------|
| Initial College Enrollment |              |       |      |      |       |
| No College                 | 7086         | 46%   |      | 0    | 2     |
| Two-Year College           | 7086         | 20%   | .40  | 0    | 2     |
| Four-Year College          | 7086         | 34%   | .47  | 0    | 2     |
| Family Structure           |              |       |      |      |       |
| Housemembers               | 7086         | 3.79  | 1.43 | 0    | 15    |
| Two Biological Parents     | 7086         | 60%   |      | 0    | 1     |
| Step Parent Family         | 7086         | 11%   |      | 0    | 1     |
| Single Mother              | 7086         | 17%   |      | 0    | 1     |
| Other Family Structure     | 7086         | 12%   |      | 0    | 1     |
| Family Responsibilities    |              |       |      |      |       |
| Household Chores           | 7086         | 2.08  | .86  | 0    | 3     |
| Family Closeness           |              |       |      |      |       |
| Parental Closeness         | 7086         | 37%   |      | 0    | 1     |
| Parental Control           | 7086         | 5.21  | 1.58 | 0    | 7     |
| Parental Aspirations       | 7086         | 4.32  | .92  | 0    | 5     |
| Age                        | 7086         | 16.06 | 1.70 | 12   | 20.75 |
| Female                     | 7086         | 53%   |      | 0    | 1     |
| Language                   | 7086         | 1.01  | .15  |      |       |
| Parents' Education         | 7086         | 13.56 | 2.35 | 0    | 18    |
| G.P.A.                     | 7086         | 2.95  | .75  | 1    | 4     |
| College Aspirations        | 7086         | 4.28  | 1.09 | 1    | 5     |

*Table A.4.*  
*Descriptive Statistics for Black High School Graduates*

|                            | Observations | Mean  | SD   | Min.  | Max.  |
|----------------------------|--------------|-------|------|-------|-------|
| Initial College Enrollment |              |       |      |       |       |
| No College                 | 2666         | 51%   |      | 0     | 2     |
| Two-Year College           | 2666         | 18%   |      | 0     | 2     |
| Four-Year College          | 2666         | 32%   |      | 0     | 2     |
| Family Structure           |              |       |      |       |       |
| Housemembers               | 2666         | 4.12  | 1.86 | 0     | 15    |
| Two Biological Parents     | 2666         | 36%   |      | 0     | 1     |
| Step Parent Family         | 2666         | 8%    |      | 0     | 1     |
| Single Mother              | 2666         | 42%   |      | 0     | 1     |
| Other Family Structure     | 2666         | 14%   |      | 0     | 1     |
| Family Responsibilities    |              |       |      |       |       |
| Household Chores           | 2666         | 2.13  | .88  | 0     | 3     |
| Family Closeness           |              |       |      |       |       |
| Parental Closeness         | 2666         | 24%   |      | 0     | 1     |
| Parental Control           | 2666         | 5.00  | 1.64 | 0     | 7     |
| Parental Aspirations       | 2666         | 4.36  | 1.02 | 0     | 5     |
| Age                        | 2666         | 16.04 | 1.69 | 12.17 | 20.92 |
| Female                     | 2666         | 57%   |      | 0     | 1     |
| Language                   | 2666         | 4.31  | 1.02 | 1     | 5     |
| Parents' Education         | 2666         | 13.70 | 2.46 | 0     | 18    |
| G.P.A.                     | 2666         | 2.68  | .69  | 1     | 4     |
| College Aspirations        | 2666         | 4.31  | 1.02 | 1     | 5     |

*Table A.5.*  
*Correlation Matrix for Hispanic, White and Black High School Graduates*

|                            | 1     | 2     | 3     | 4     | 5     | 6     | 7     | 8     | 9     | 10    | 11    | 12    | 13    | 14    |
|----------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. College Enrollment      | 1.00  |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| 2. Race                    | -.08* | 1.00  |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| 3. Age                     | -.12* | .07*  | 1.00  |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| 4. Female                  | .09*  | -.00  | -.06  | 1.00  |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| 5. Language                | -.03* | .46*  | .09*  | -.00  | 1.00  |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| 6. Parents' Education      | .30*  | -.24* | -.11* | -.03* | -.29* | 1.00  |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| 7. G.P.A.                  | .40*  | -.17* | -.13* | .14*  | -.06* | .18*  | 1.00  |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| 8. College Aspirations     | .35*  | -.06* | -.08  | .12*  | -.06* | .25*  | .35*  | 1.00  |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| 9. Two Biological Parents  | .19*  | -.08* | -.04* | -.02* | .07*  | .04*  | .15*  | .10*  | 1.00  |       |       |       |       |       |
| 10. Step Parent Family     | -.06* | -.04* | .01   | -.02* | -.03* | -.00  | -.02* | -.01  | -.36  | 1.00  |       |       |       |       |
| 11. Single Mother Family   | -.09* | .11*  | -.02  | .03*  | -.04* | -.02* | -.11* | -.07* | -.06* | -.18* | 1.00  |       |       |       |
| 12. Other Family Structure | -.11* | .00   | .08*  | .01   | -.04* | -.03* | -.08* | -.06* | -.04* | -.12* | -.21* | 1.00  |       |       |
| 13. Housemembers           | -.03* | .16*  | -.03* | .00   | .13*  | -.12* | -.02  | -.03* | .15*  | .06*  | -.15* | -.09* | 1.00  |       |
| 14. Household Chores       | .04*  | -.04* | -.09* | .12*  | -.06* | .05*  | .09*  | .08*  | .00   | .00   | .00   | .01*  | .06*  | 1.00  |
| 15. Parental Closeness     | .12*  | -.08* | -.15* | -.07* | .99   | .06   | .15*  | .13*  | .39*  | .01   | -.39* | -.10* | .07*  | .03*  |
| 16. Parental Control       | .04*  | -.06* | .28*  | .00   | -.06  | .05*  | .02*  | .03*  | .00   | .01   | .05*  | -.06* | -.04* | -.08* |
| 17. Parental Aspirations   | .17*  | .00   | -.12* | .00   | -.01  | .16*  | .14*  | .29*  | .11*  | -.01  | .01   | -.18* | .05*  | .00   |

*Table A.6.*  
*Correlation Matrix for Hispanic, White and Black High School Graduates, continued...*

|                          | 15    | 16   | 17   |
|--------------------------|-------|------|------|
| 15. Parental Closeness   | 1.00  |      |      |
| 16. Parental Control     | -.04* | 1.00 |      |
| 17. Parental Aspirations | .10*  | .15* | 1.00 |

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