Psychology Research, June 2021, Vol. 11, No. 6, 249-263
doi:10.17265/2159-5542/2021.06.001

A Study of the Effects of the Parental Involvement on Adolescent Truancy: A Structural Modeling Investigation Examining Parental Involvement

Jiangmin Xu
Winston-Salem State Univerity, Winston Salem, USA
Liang Chen
Nantong Vocational College of Science & Technology, Nantong, P.R. China

The purpose of this study was to examine how parental involvement influences their adolescents' school truancy. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was utilized to explore the relationships among four dimensions of parental involvement, individual and family characteristics, and school truancy. The findings confirm the initial hypotheses that parental involvement has positive effects on adolescent truancy. The effects of parental involvement on school truancy, however, differed according to the dimensions of that involvement and adolescents' background characteristics.

Keywords: parental involvement, adolescents, truancy

Introduction

Despite an increasing awareness of its physical and social consequences, school truancy, as social consequences of family, school, and society, continues to occur and it remains an important social and personal problem in the United States. Students' school truancy or school unauthorized absenteeism have created a major public concern because they are often correlated with the risk of subsequent academic failure (Bell, Rosen, & Dynlacht, 1994; Lamdin, 1996), substance abuse (Bell, Rosen, & Dynlacht, 1994), school dropout (Robins & Ratcliff, 1980), and delinquent behavior (Huizinga & Jakob-Chien, 1998; Loeber & Farrington, 2000) in adolescents.

Parental involvement in and out of school has received much attention in recent decades because it is very important for reducing school truancy and ensuring their success in school. A great deal of research demonstrates that active parental involvement is related to a range of positive outcomes and performance, such as increasing cooperative behavior (Epstein, 1985), student motivation (Gonzalez-DeHass, Willems, & Holbein, 2005), lower dropout rates (Ekstrom, Goertz, Pollack, & Rock, 1986; Teachman, Paasch, & Carver, 1996), and academic achievement (Astone & McLanahan, 1991; Baker & Stevenson, 1986; Bogenschneider, 1997; Fehrman, Keith, & Reimers, 1987; Hara, 1998; Jeynes, 2005; Myers, Milne, Baker, & Ginsburg, 1987; Sui-Chu

Jiangmin Xu, Ph.D., Associate Professor, School of Health Sciences, Winston-Salem State University, Winston Salem, NC 27101, USA.
Liang Chen, MA, Lecturer., Nantong Vocational College of Science & Technology, Nantong City, Jiangsu Province, P. R. China.

& Willms, 1996). On the other hand, extensive literature found that the lack of active parental involvement was related to negative outcomes, such as drug use, conduct problems, and delinquency (Larzelere & Patterson, 1990; Laub & Sampson, 1988; Loeber & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1986; Myers et al., 1987; Patterson &Stouthamer-Loeber, 1984; Shillington et al., 2005). Researchers and educators have often attributed student misbehavior to a lack of appropriate parental involvement in and out of school (Steinberg, Lamborn, Dornbusch, & Darling, 1992).

Parental discipline and parental monitoring are two effective family management strategies that the mothers and fathers use to manage, monitor, watch, and supervise their adolescent children's after-school activities. Laub and Sampson (1988) identified three dimensions of family management discipline: supervision, monitoring, and attachment. Also, Krohn,Stern, Thomberry, and Jang (1992) discovered that family dynamics generally fall into the following three categories: parental monitoring, parental discipline practices, and the effective quality of the parent-child relationship. Studies have shown that weak parental monitoring increased the likelihood of misbehavior and delinquency (Forehand, Miller, Dutra, & Watts, 1997; Larzelere & Patterson, 1990; McCord, 1991; Patterson, 1982; Patterson & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1984; Shillington et al., 2005). Loeber and Stouthamer-Loeber (1986) reported that lack of parental supervision, parental rejection, and lack of parental involvement are the strongest predictors of delinquent behavior. Some studies also found that parental monitoring is a critical factor in child adjustment, especially for runaway and drug use adolescents (Ennett etal., 2008; Slesnick et al., 2012).

The need for connections between families and schools has often been stressed (Bauch & Goldring, 1995; Epstein, 1985; Epstein, 1990). Parental school participation, such as the parents' encouragement and reinforcement of good study habits and school rules to their teens, parents' keeping contact with teachers and school staff, and attending various school meetings and activities, plays an important role in building a strong relationship between family and school (Eccles & Harold, 1996; Jenkins, 1995; Jeynes, 2005). Stevenson and Baker (1987) discovered that students whose parents were more involved in school activities did better in school than students whose parents were less involved. Coleman (1988) contends that parental involvement in school activities and parent-child discussion about school serves as an extra source of social constraint to influence children's behaviors. Likewise, Jenkins (1995), using observational and survey data from a sample of 754 middle school students in grade 7-8, found that students with parental involvement in their schooling had a stronger commitment to school, which reduces students' risk of being involved in delinquency.

Home discussion relates to how often parents discuss school courses, programs, grades, and school activities with their children (Jeynes, 2005; Sui-Chu & Willms, 1996). Epstein (1985) described parental involvement as discussing school experiences and helping children with homework. Coleman (1988) contended that parental involvement in school activities and parent-child discussion about school serves as an extra source of social constraint on children's behaviors. Although identifying some negative effects of parents monitoring with homework, parental after-school supervision, and parental school participation, Muller (1993) found significant positive effects of parents discussing school with their children. Through home discussion, parents pass the important message to their children that they expect them to make progress both in academic study and social behavior.

There is considerable evidence that parental involvements have significant relationships with family background characteristics. Some studies found that parental conflict and parental monitoring are negatively

correlated (McCord, 1990; Minty, 1988). Milne et al. (1986) asserted that that parents' high educational expectations have significant positive effects on their children. Studying a representative national sample of adolescents, Dornbusch et al. (1985) reported that mother-only households evidenced somepatterns of family decision-making and adolescent deviance, even when family income and parental education were controlled. In contrast, adolescents in households with two natural parents, and adolescents in mother-only households, were more likely to make decisions without direct parental input and to exhibit deviant behavior. A number of studies have suggested that parents with more education are more likely to be involved with their sons and daughters in school, and are more likely to provide them with a correct method of interacting with their teachers and peers. Stevenson and Baker (1987) found that better-educated parents were more involved in children's school activities, and that the mother's educational level was a stronger predictor of parental involvement in schooling for boys than for girls. Amato and Rivera (1999) discovered that parental education was positively associated with father involvement and mother involvement. Connell, Spencer, and Aber (1994) argued that disaffected behavior in low-income African American youth could lessen parental involvement with them, which in turn created or reinforced negative self-appraisal in the young people, leading to additional disaffected behavior and, ultimately, poorer school performance. Otto and Atkinson (1997) asserted that mothers would have less time available for their children if they worked full-time, and therefore would have less influence on their children's development than mothers who did not work.In addition, family size might influence parental involvement because parents with large families (i.e., four or more children) may have less time for parents to attend school activities, or to supervise their children, or to check homework. In other words, the greater the numbers of children in a family, the less likely parents were to be involved in their children's education (Revicki, 1981).

The present study sought to develop a multi-dimensional factor structure for identifying adolescents' views of parental involvement. To develop a more elaborate model for this study, the selection of indicators of each dimension was based on a review of the literature. The study has two primary purposes: (a) examining the effects of family and individual characteristics on the different dimension of parental involvement with adolescent children and (b) examining whether the effects of parental involvement on school truancy differed according to the dimensions of that involvement, adolescents' background characteristics, and family relations.

Methodology

Data

The data used in the present study were a large, nationally representative sample of adolescents called the National Education Longitudinal Study (hereafter referred to as NELS: 88, 90, and 92). This data, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education, were collected by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) for the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). NELS employed self-administered questionnaires in classroom settings to gather information from students in a national probability sample of 1,052 public and private schools of the United States.In addition, NELS employs a two-stage stratified sample design, with schools chosen at the first stage and students chosen at the second stage. Ingels et al. (1994) provided a complete description of the data set.

The databases for this analysis include the base year 1988 and the first follow-up 1990. In 1988, a national sample of 24,599 eight-grade students, their parents, their teachers, and their school principals were surveyed. These eighth-grade students were initially asked to complete survey questionnaires about their background,

schoolwork and activities, home lives, and other information. In 1990, as part of the first follow-up, the same students (most of who were then in 10th grade), their teachers, and their school principals were surveyed. Follow-up response rates were more than ninety percent for each sample. A description of the NELS sample design and data collection procedures can be found in National Center for Educational Statistics website. Due to missing data, the analysis was restricted to a working sample of 8,184 students from 989 different schools.

Measurements

School truancy was measured by means of two items. NELS asked each student, "Since the first semester of the current school year, how often did you do the following: (1) cut or skip classes; (2) miss a day of school?" The respondents responded using a scale range from 0-5, where "0" indicated never, "1" indicated 1-2 times, "2" indicated 3-6 times, "3" indicated 7-9 times, "4" indicated 10-15 times, and "5" indicated over 15 times.

Parental involvement had four dimensions in this study. *Parental discipline*was measured with three items. The students were asked to report, "How often did your parents or guardians do the following: (1) limit privileges due to poor grades; (2) limit TV watching or video games, and (3) limit time with friends? "The respondents reported this frequency using a scale ranging from one to four, and included "often", "sometimes", "rarely", and "never". *Parental monitoring* included five items. Students were asked to indicate "Since the beginning of the school year, how often did your parents or guardians try to find: (1) who your friends are; (2) where you go at night; (3) how you spend money; (4) what you do with free time; and (5) where you are after school?" Response categories ranged from one to four, and included "not at all", "just a little", "some", and "a lot". School participationwas determined by three items. The students were asked, "Since the beginning of the school year, has either or both of your parents or guardians done the following: (1) attended a school meeting; (2) attended a school event; and (3) acted as a volunteer at school?" The students reported "never", "once or twice", or "more than twice" to each item. *Home discussion* was measured by three items. The students were asked to report "Since the beginning of the school year, how often have you discussed the following with either or both of your parents or guardians: (1) school courses; (2) school activities; (3) things studied in class; and (4) grades?" The respondents reported this frequency on a scale of 1-3, where "1" indicates not at all; "2" indicates 1-2 times; and "3" indicates 3 or more times.

Individual characteristics included ethnicity and gender. The students reported their own ethnic identification from five categories: White, Black, Hispanic, Native American, and Asian. In our analyses, five dummy variables were created to represent White, Hispanic, Asian, Black, and other (Native American) groups. The reference group was White. The students also reported their own sex, with gender coded "1" for boys and "0" for girls. The reference group was girls.

Family background characteristics included different measures during the 1988 and 1990 years, such as 1) parental conflict, 2) family structure, 3) parental educational expectation, 4) parental education, 5) yearly family income, 6) family size, and 7) mother's employment status. These variables are likely to be related to both the level of parental involvement and teen's school truancy. *Parentalconflict* was assessed by a single item, which asked the students whether their parents get along well. Response categories were 1) False, 2) Mostly false, 3) More false than true, 4) More true than false, 5) Mostly true, and 6) True. *Familystructure* was measured by a single item, which asked the youths with whom they lived.The response categories included "both my mother and father in the same household," "only my mother," "my mother and stepfather," "only my father," "my father and stepmother," "some of the time in my mother's home and some in my father's," "other

relatives," "guardian or foster parent who is not a relative," and "no parents or guardians (I live alone or with friends)." In this study, responses were grouped for comparison into two-parent biological families, stepfamilies, single-families, and other type families. The variable of two-parent biological families was used as the reference group. *Parental educationexpectation* was latent variable based on two observed indicators. Students' reports of both father and mother's educational expectations were used in analyses. Students were asked how far their father and mother want them to go. The measures were rated on a scale from 1-8, 8 being highest. The options included none, less than high school graduate, graduate from his /her school, vocational after high school, attend 2-year college, attend 4-year college, graduate from college, and post-graduate education. *Parental education* Students were asked to indicate the highest level of education completed by mother and by father. The options included some grade school, finished grade school, some high school, finished high school, some college or two-year degree, four-year college graduate, some school beyond college, and professional or graduate degree. Parental education has a scale of 1 to 8, characterizing the highest level of education a parent completed. The lowest value indicates an education level of some grade school; the highest value indicates attainment of a professional or graduate degree. *Yearly family income* was measured in dollars. Students were asked to report their yearly family income. Response categories ranged from 1 "no income" response to 15 "$200,000 or more". *Family size* was based on the students' report of the total number of people living in the household.Response categories ranged from 2 "two persons" response to 10 "ten or more" response. *Maternal employment status* was measured by asking the students whether their mothers were "working", "unemployed", "retired", or "disabled". Responses were "Yes" or "No".In this study, maternal employment status was recoded as a dummy variable, in which the value for currently working is 1 and for other responses is 0.

Modeling Strategy

Based on literature and questions from student questionnaires of the NELS, multivariate model was proposed and tested through structural equation modeling software AMOS 23.0 (Analysis of Moment Structures) (Arbuckle, 2014). By modeling the long-term effects of parental involvement on adolescents' truancy, all four dimensions of parental involvement with the other independent variables under consideration were placed in the models simultaneously to show the total effect of the parental involvement on students' truancy. This procedure demonstrates the relative predictive power of each dimension of parental involvement for truancy when considered simultaneously. Jörskog and Sörbom (1989) argued that SEM can estimate and correct measurement error, whereas other statistical methods, such as multiple regressions, assume such error to be zero. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) can combine elements of both factor analysis and regression to produce measurement and structural equation models. Moreover, SEM also has the capacity to provide estimations of both direct and indirect effects of the exogenous variables on the endogenous variables. It also can report the unstandardized or standardized estimates in the diagram of the model. Third, SEM, as a model-fitting program, can report the progress of the estimation (e.g., number of iterations) and then displays the output in a text file or a table file. Therefore, SEM was used to determine and to compare the effects of various components of parental involvement.

In this study, a structural equation model was used to examine the relationships among family background characteristics, parental involvement, and adolescent school truancy. The key endogenous variables were school truancy and the other endogenous variables in the model were four dimensions of parental involvement (parental discipline practices, parental monitoring, school participation, and parental support). Exogenous

variables were family environment factors and personal background factors. The aims of this study were to explore the long-term effects of parental involvement on the truancy in adolescents, while controlling for family background characteristics and personal factors. By modeling the long-term effects of parental involvement on adolescents' truancy, I examined the effects of four specific aspects (latent variables) of parental involvement on truancy: parental discipline, parental monitoring, school participation, and parental support. All four dimensions of parental involvement with the other independent and control variables under consideration were placed in the models simultaneously to show the total effect of the parental involvement on students' truancy. This procedure demonstrates the relative predictive power of each dimension of parental involvement for truancy and drug use when considered simultaneously. In addition, the different dimensions of parental involvement and their relatiosnhips with students' relevant family background characteristics and personal factors were explored. The students' relevant family background characteristics and personal factorssuch as parental education, mother's employment status, family structure, and race, might affect the levels of parental involvement. The figure 1 shows the multivariate model that incorporated family background, personal factors, and parent involvement activities. The multivariate model provides our understanding of relationships among family background characteristics, different dimensionsof parental involvement, and adolescent school truancy.

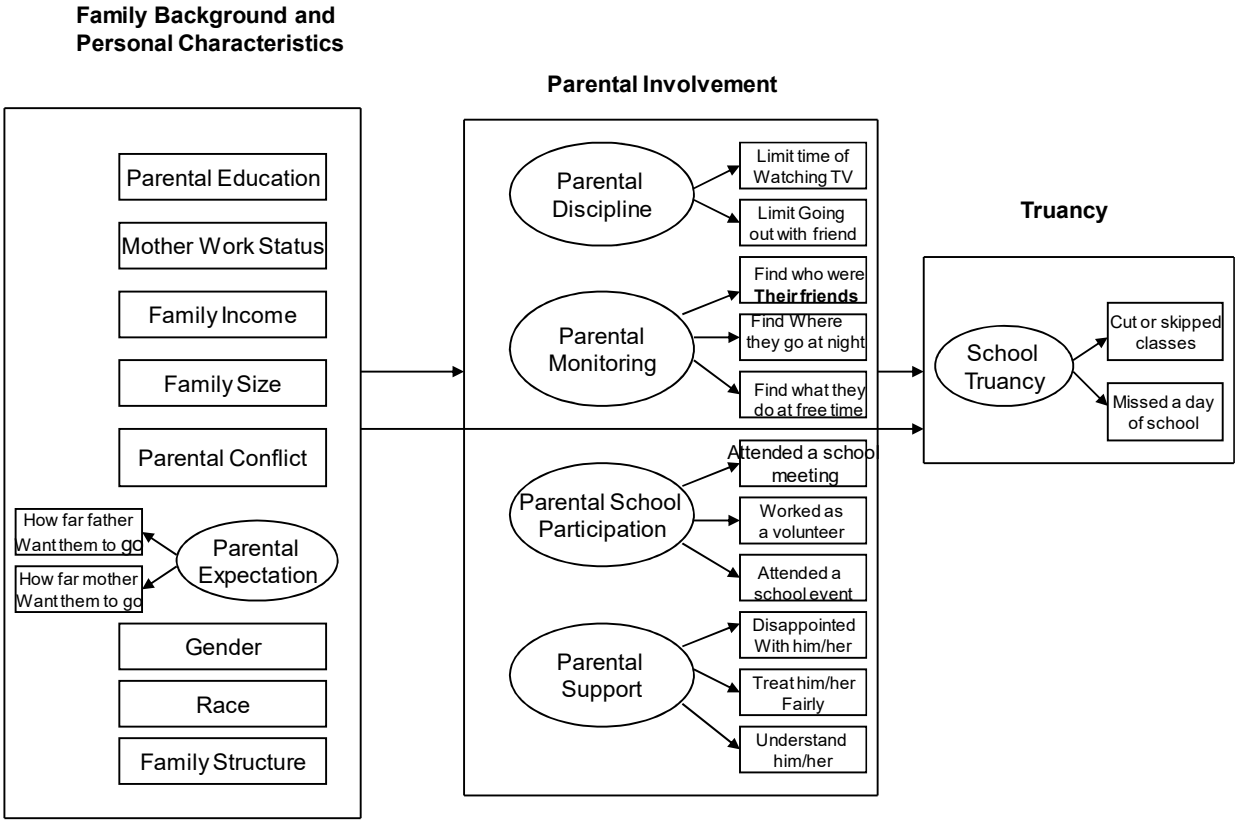

Figure 1. Structural Equation Modeling of predictors of family background characteristics and parental involvement on adolescents' school truancy.

Several fit indices were examined in evaluating the model. The primary criterion for evaluating the fit of the model was the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) (Bentler, 1990). This index is determined by comparing the fit

of the model and the fit of the independent model. The measure should be zero to one, and values above 0.90 represent a good fit. The Tucker-Lewis coefficient (TLI) (Bentler & Bonett, 1980) and Root Mean Squared Error of Approximation (RMSEA) (Steiger, 1980) are two other indicators that measure the fit between the model and the observed data. The RMSEA (Steiger, 1980) is one of the most sensitive indexes for models with mis-specified factor loadings (Hu & Bentler, 1999). The RMSEA denotes a perfect fit with 0, with values of less than 0.05 considered to be a close fit, less than 0.08 considered to be a reasonable fit, and less than 0.10 considered to be a mediocre fit (Browne & Cudeck, 1993; Marsh, Balla, & Hau, 1996).

Results

Descriptive Statistics and Sample Characteristics

Table 1 provides descriptive statistics for all background variables. Among the 8,184 students, there were 7.2% African Americans, 76.3% Caucasians, 6.4% Asians, 9.5% Latinos, and 0.6% American Indians. The sample also included 46.9% girls and 83.4% public school students. More than 18 percent of parents (17.3%) had graduated from high school or completed GED, 41.4% had received less than four-year college education, 17.5% had graduated from four-year College, and 17.4% had completed M.A. or Ph.D. or MD program. Seventy-two percent (74.1%) of the sample lived in intact families, 10.8% lived in either mother/male guardian or father/female guardian families, and 13.5% lived in single families. Table 1 shows the frequency of background variables for the selected sample characteristics.

Table 1
Background Variables for the Selected Sample Characteristics, National Educational Longitudinal Study (N=9,719)

	N	%
Ethnicity		
African American	700	7.2
Caucasian	7,415	76.3
Asian	620	6.4
Hispanic	923	9.5
American Indian	61	0.6
Gender		
Male	4,559	46.9
Female	5,160	53.1
Yearly family income		
Less than $14,999	1,301	13.4
$15,000-$24,999	1,576	16.3
$25,000-$34,999	1,891	19.5
$35,000-$49,999	2,217	22.8
$50,000-$74,999	1,590	16.4
$75,000 or more	1,144	11.8
Parents' highest education level		
Did not finish high school	625	6.4
High school graduate or GED	1,681	17.3
>High school &< 4 Yr DEG	4,025	41.4
College graduate	1,697	17.5
M.A./Equivalent	1,074	11.1

Ph.D., MD., and other	617	6.3
Table 1 to be continued		
Family size	Mean=4.57	SD=1.31
Family composition		
Two-parent biological family (mother & father)	7,203	74.1
Stepfamily (mother & male guardian or father & female guardian)	1,054	10.8
Single family (mother only or father only)	1,310	13.5
Other type family (other relative or non-relative)	152	1.6

Factor loadings, Inter-item Reliability, and Inter-correlations

An empirically derived four-dimensional structure was developed to test Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). Fifteen specific items make up the four dimensions of parental involvement and Cronbach's standardized alpha for each subscale. Table 2 shows that factor loadings were significant with standardized loadings ranging from 0.48 to 0.81. Significance tests based on robust maximum likelihood estimates. All Coefficients are standardized coefficients, and all factor loadings were significant at $p < 0.001$. A preliminary assessment of the internal consistency of the data using reliability analysis was computed to measure the parental involvement concepts. Reliability analyses of factors produced a standardized Cronbach's alpha for each factor as follows: parental discipline, 0.57; parental monitoring, 0.83; school participation, 0.66; and home discussion, 0.76.

Table 2

Factor Loadings and Factor Intercorrelations for CFA Model (N=8,189)

Parental involvement items	F1	F2	F3	F4	
	Factor loadings				Cronbach's Alpha
Parental Discipline (PD)					0.57
1. Limit privileges due to poor grades	0.48				
2. Limit time watching TV or video games	0.56				
3. Limit going out with friends	0.61				
Parental Monitoring (PM)					0.83
1. Parents try to find who their friends are		0.65			
2. Parents try to find where they go at night		0.66			
3. Parents try to find how they spend money		0.69			
4. Parents try to find what they do with free time		0.81			
5. Parents try to find where they are after school		0.70			
School Participation (SP)					0.66
1. How often parents attended a school meeting			0.64		
2. How often parents attended school event			0.61		
3. How often parents acted as volunteer at school			0.68		
Home Discussion (HD)					0.76
1. Discussed school courses with parents				0.70	
2. Discussed school activities with parents				0.73	
3. Discussed things studied in class with patents				0.70	
4. Discussed grades with parents				0.53	

Notes. χ^2=3,197.25, df=84, P< 0.001. CFI = Comparative Fit Index; GFI=Goodness of Fit Index; TLI=Tucker-Lewis Index; RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation.

all coefficients are standardized coefficients. All factor loadings were significant at $p< 0.001$. ***$p< 0.001$.

All inter-correlations among the four dimensions of parental involvement were significant at $p < 0.001$, ranging from 0.22 to 0.51. Parental discipline (PD) was significantly and positively related to Parental Monitoring (PM) ($r = 0.50$, $p < 0.001$) and Home Discussion (HD) ($r = 0.36$, $p < 0.001$). PM was significantly and positively related to School Participation (SP) ($r = 0.30$, $p < 0.001$) and HD ($r = 0.44$, $p < 0.001$). SP was also significantly and positively related to HD ($r = 0.51$, $p < 0.001$). Relatively lower correlations were found between PD and SP ($r = 0.22$, $p < 0.001$). From the inter-correlations, the relationships flow from the dimensions to the construct and the construct combines or specific dimensions into a general concept**.** Table 3 displays all inter-correlationsamong the four dimensions of parental involvement.

Table 3

Correlation Coefficient Among Parental Involvement Factors

	Factor intercorrelations			
F1 PD (Parental Discipline)	1.00	0.50***	0.22***	0.36***
F2 PM (Parental Monitoring)		1.00	0.30***	0.44***
F3 SP (School Participation)			1.00	0.51***
F4 HD (Home Discussion)				1.00
Model fit: CFI=0.925, GFI=0.902, TLI=0.912, and RMSEA=0.063.				

Model Estimations

The specific effect of each dimension of parental involvement was assessed to explore whether these dimensions were related to adolescents' school truancy. The results showed that parental discipline, parental school participation, and home discussion were negatively associated with school truancy. The results showed that the model adequately fits the data with a CFI of 0.941, GFI of 0.966, TLI of 0.930, RMSEA of 0.05, and PCLOSE of 0.306. The results of structural-equation analysis are shown in Figure 2.

Effects of Parental Involvement

The data support the predicted hypotheses regarding parental discipline, parental school participation, and parental support: Parental discipline, parental school participation, and parental support are inversely related with school truancy. The inverse sign indicates that the more parental discipline and parental support, the lower the school truancy. Conversely, parental monitoring does not significantly influence school truancy once the other dimensions of parental involvement are controlled.

Parental support and parental discipline were the strongest predictors of adolescent truancy with betas of -0.20 and -0.19. Although not surprising, the next predictor of adolescent school truancy was parental school participation. A beta of -0.13 represents an inverse and moderate relationship between parental school participation and adolescents' truancy. As expected, the more parental involvement in schooling, the less the truancy of their teenagers. These results support the hypothesis that adolescents who have higher levels of more parental involvement have less youths' school truancy. The more parents are involved with teens, the lower the level of school truancy.

Parental monitoring has a significant positive relationship with truancy, with a beta of 0.07. However, this relationship was positive, and signs were in the opposite direction than was hypothesized.This unexpected finding may be explained by a statistical phenomenon-suppression effect in this model. In fact, when a set of predictors is added to another set of predictors, suppression effects may happen.This finding shows that parental monitoring did not have a significant relationship with school truancy.I would explain these

suppression effects later.In addition, it indicated that parental monitoring is relatively unimportant in explaining school truancy, especially for high school students.

Twelve percent of the total variance was explained by school truancy model. This finding indicated that part of the variability in youths' school truancy could be explained by parental involvement, family characteristics, and personal factors. Because the explained variance was relatively small, it also suggests other unmeasured factors that determine school truancy, such as peer effect.In fact, adolescent is at time of detachment from parents, and they often become more peer-focused (Guerrero & Afifi, 1995).

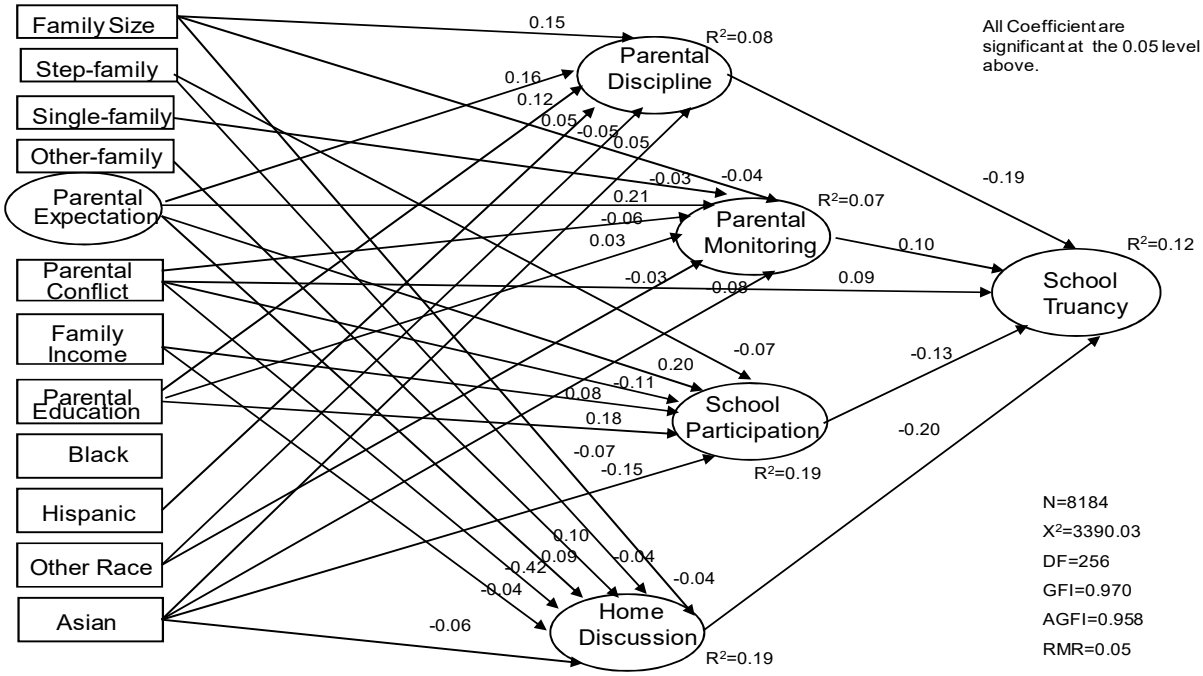

Figure 2. Mode1 of significant estimates for predicting individual and family variables and parental involvement factors on school truancy.

Effects of family characteristics

The results confirmed that family background characteristics, with the exception of parental conflict, have significant indirect relationships with adolescents' deviance through heightening levels of parental involvement. In particular, the results show that parental educational expectation was associated with all four dimensions of parental involvement. Parental educational expectation had the strongest effects on parental monitoring and school participation, followed by parental discipline and parental support. Findings from this study revealed that high parental expectation increased parental involvement. Parental education has moderate, positive effects on parental discipline, parental monitoring, and parental school participation. My finding concurs with the findings of Amato and Booth (1997), who found that parents' education was positively associated with parental involvement and that better-educated parents are more active in their children's lives. Unfortunately, we found no effects of parental education on parental support and parental monitoring. In addition, the findings suggested that parental conflict places youth at risk for deviance. Parental conflict is associated with lower levels of parental involvement and increased adolescents' school truancy. The results showed that parental conflict was the largest predictor of parental support. In addition, different from other family background characteristics, parental conflict not only had an indirect effect on adolescents' school truancy through dimensions of parental

involvement; it also had a direct effect on adolescents' school truancy. These also confirm previous reports, which consider family conflict as a prevalent source of stress on children and identify it as an important risk factor for behavior problems in children (Simons et al., 1994; Buehler et al., 1998).

Discussion

Parental involvement with youths is part of the social processes that are crucial in reducing school truancy. The extent to which parents are involved with their youths will directly reduce youths' problem behavior. However, the importance of parental involvement may at times be difficult to understand fully. Parents may not be able be heavily involved with their teenagers because of constrains imposed by family background characteristics and personal factors. In an effort to document the importance of parental involvement in their children's school truancy,particularly during the adolescent years, this research has focused on two questions: first, whether parental involvement has significant effects on students' school truancy; and second, whether parental involvement varied with students' gender or ethnicity.

The most consistent finding for this adolescent sample was the significant contributions of parental support and parental discipline to predicting youth's school truancy. The findings may be interpreted as evidence of the persistence of parental involvement. In this study, modest effect was found for the expected linked between parental support, parental discipline, and adolescents' school truancy. Although it is not as strong as expected, parental support and parental discipline turn out to be significant and important factors in deterring the development of truancy and drug use. The beneficial effects of parental discipline and parental support on truancy are similar to those of drug use. Therefore, it appears to generalize across to different types of school truancy. However, parental school participation had no effect on youths' drug use but a negative effect on truancy. This study was able to demonstrate that parental involvement is negatively related to the adolescents' behavior problems and that parental involvement exerts significant influences on youth's school truancy. Consistent with other research, this study found that adolescents tend not to be involved in delinquent acts if they received more support and discipline from their parents. Parental involvement is significant because it predicts long-term behavioral problems of adolescents.

Ethnicity has significant impacts on parental involvement. Compared with parents of White students, Asian parents provided more parental discipline at home, but less parental monitoring, less school participation, and less parental support. This finding is consistent with previous findings (Sui-Chu & Willms, 1996). Other research also found that Asian-American parents were involved the least in their children's school activities (Steinberg et al., 1992). Language barriers or differences in culture also were used to explain why Asian parents did not like school-activity participation (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991). Asian-American patients often provide less parental support because they have different parenting styles. In addition, our study suggests that Hispanic parents provide more parental discipline, but less school participation. The differences between Blacks and Whites were relatively small.

Compared with much prior research, this study also provided evidence to support the hypothesis that parental involvement has a salutary effect on adolescent school truancy. The findings reflected the pattern of effects reported elsewhere in the literature. This research suggests that parental involvement influence adolescent's school truancy. All these misbehaviors rank high on the agenda of public debate (Slesnick et al., 2012). Parents become involved with their youths differently depending on their family characteristics. Most educators believe that students do better in school when their parents are involved and that greater

communication between parents and schools leads to higher levels of positive social outcomes and lower rates of truancy. As a result, the educators often encourage parents to be involved in their children's school and home activities, such as assisting children at home with their homework and working as volunteers or participating in school governance.

These findings suggest policy implications to develop future adolescent school truancy prevention and treatment programs, as well as policies to involve parents. Youths' school truancy associated with family background characteristics was attributable to different levels of parental involvement. This discussion leads to an important policy implication: Strategies to combat school truancy can attempt either to strengthen parental involvement or to provide comparable influences from family background characteristics. At the same time, evidence suggests that active parental involvement has the important benefit of improving students' performance in school, as well as reducing youths' school truancy. The critical question for prevention strategy to reduce students' problem behaviors is to encourage parents to be more involved in their children's activities, both at home and at school. Greater understanding of parental involvement, then, will provide us with a greater understanding of the linkages between family background characteristics, parental involvement, and students' misbehaviors exhibited by young people in the United States.

Several limitations regarding this sample are worth noting because they provide directions for future research. First, the most serious limitation of analyses of data from large-scale surveys is that causal inferences are weak. However, research can strengthen this casual inference through better model specification. Second, another of the potential limitations of these findings is that youths reported on parental involvement, as well as information about their own problem behaviors. For this reason, these findings may reflect a rater bias that affected estimates of parental involvement. In this study, I tried to deal with this problem to a certain extent by allowing correlated error terms. The rater bias may account for a very small portion of the association between family factors, parental involvement, and school truancy. Therefore, the major conclusions remain intact.

This study highlights the importance of considering family environment and parental involvement in the prediction of adolescents' problem behavior. However, important avenues for future research are needed. This study accounts for only a small portion of variance in school truancy (12% for the truancy model). A more exhaustive examination of school-related contextual factors could explore whether these factors make the difference in parent involvement and adolescent school truancy. For example, some studies found considerable variation among schools in parental volunteering and attendance to PTO meeting (Sui-Chu & Willms, 1996). The future research should identify these school-related factors in which family background factors negatively affect children's deviant behavior through parental involvement. Multilevel analysis of schools and communities might be especially relevant here. Regarding the direction these future studies should take, it is interesting to include schools as a starting point.

Notes

1. This study used the students' reports of parental involvement, rather than the parents' reports that are available only for eighth- and twelfth-graders.

2. Students' self-reported data may cause potential biases. Therefore, the data still were based on subjective perceptions rather than on objective observations. Nevertheless, how a student reports parental involvement and their deviant behaviors may be a more critical predicator of student's sense of deviance. In

this study, parental involvement and deviance was thus analyzed from the adolescents' perspective.

3. The dependent variables in our analysis are restricted to the 12-grade students because adolescents during 12th grade experienced more difficulty in this period.

References

Amato, P. R., & Booth, A. (2000) *A generation at risk: Growing up in an era of family upheaval.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Arbuckle, J. L. (2014). *Amos (Version 23.0)* [Computer program]. Chicago: IBM SPSS.

Astone, N. M., & McLanahan, S. S. (1991). Family structure, parenting practices, and high school completion. *American Sociological Review, 56*, 309-320.

Baker, D. P., & Stevenson, D. L. (1986). Mothers' strategies for children's school achievement: Managing the transition to high school. *Sociology of Education, 59*, 155-166.

Bauch, P. A., & Goldring, E. B. (1995). Parent involvement and school responsiveness: Facilitating the home-school connection in school of choice.*Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 17*(1), 1-21.

Bell, A. J., Rosen, L. A., &Dynlacht, D. (1994). Truancy intervention. *Journal of Research and Development in Education, 27*, 203-211.

Bentler, P. M. (1990). Comparative fit indexes in structural models.*Psychological Bulletin, 107*, 238-246.

Bentler, P. M., & Bonett, D. G. (1980). Significance tests and goodness of fit in the analysis of covariance structures. *Psychological Bulletin, 88*(3), 588-606.

Bogenschneider, K. (1997).Parental involvement in adolescent schooling: A proximal process with transcontextual validity. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 59*(3), 718-733.

Browne, M.W., & Cudeck, R. (1993). Alternative ways of assessing model fit. In K. A. Bollen andJ. S. Long(Eds.), *Testing structural equation models* (pp. 136-162). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Buehler C., Krishnakumar, A., Stone, C., Anthony, C., Pemberton, S., & Barber, B. K. (1998). Interparental conflict styles and youth problem behaviors: a two-sample replication study. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 60(1), 119-132.

Coleman, J. S. (1988). Social capital in the creation of human capital. *American Journal of Sociology, 94*, S95-S120.

Connell, J. P., Spencer, M. B., & Aber, J. L. (1994). Educational risk and resilience in African American youth: Context, self, action, and outcomes in school. *Child Development,* 65, 493-506.

Delgado-Gaitan, C. (1991). Involving parents in the schools: A process of empowerment.*American Journal of Education, 100*, 20-46.

Dornbusch, S. M., Carlsmith, J. M., Bushwall, S., Ritter, P. L., Leiderman, H., Hastorf, A. H., & Gross, R. T. (1985). Single parents, extended households, and the control of children. *Child Development*, 56, 326-341.

Eccles, J. S., & Harold, R. D. (1996). Family involvement in children's and adolescent's schooling.In A. Booth and J. F. Dunn (Eds.), *Family-school links: How to they affect educational outcomes* (pp.3-34)*?* Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Ekstrom, R., Goertz, M., Pollack, J., & Rock, D. (1986). Who drop out of school and why: Finding from a national study. *Teachers College Record, 87*, 356-373.

Ennett, S. T., Vangie, A., Foshee, V. A., Bauman, K. E., & Hussong, A. (2008). Faris R, McNaughton Reyes HL. The social ecology of adolescent alcohol misuse. *Child Development, 79*, 1777-1791.

Epstein, J. L. (1985). Home and school connections in schools of future: Implications of research on parent involvement. *Peabody Journal of Education, 62*, 18-41.

Epstein, J. L. (1990). School and family connections: Theory, research, and implications for integrating sociologies of education and family. *Marriage and Family Review, 15*, 99-126.

Fehrmann, P. G., Keith, T.Z., & Reimers, T. M. (1987). Home influence on school learning: Direct and indirect effects of parental involvement on high school grades. *Journal of Educational Research,806*, 330-337.

Forehand, R., Miller, K. S., Dutra, R., & Watts, M. (1997). Role of parenting in adolescent deviant behavior: Replication across and within two ethnic groups. *Journal of Consulting and clinical Psychology, 65*, 1036-1041.

Gonzalez-DeHass, A. R., Willems, P. P., & Holbein, M. F. D. (2005). Examining the relationship between parental involvement and student motivation.*Educational Psychology Review, 17*(2), 99-123.

Guerrero, L.K., & Afifi, W.A. (1995). What parents don't know: Topic avoidance in parent-child relationships.In T.J. Socha and

G.H. Stamp (Eds.), *Parents, children, and communication: Frontiers of theory and research* (pp.219-245). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Hara, S. R. (1998). Parent involvement: The key to improved student achievement.*School Community Journal, 8*, 9-19.

Hu, L., & Bentler, P. M. (1999). Cutoff criteria for fit indexes in covariance structure analysis: Conventional criteria versus new alternatives. *Structural Equation Modeling, 6*(1), 1-55.

Huizinga, D., & Jakob-Chien, C. (1998). The contemporaneous co-occurrence of serious and violent juvenile offending and other problem behaviors. In R. Loeber and D. P. Farrington (Eds.), *Serious and violent juvenile offenders* (pp. 47-67). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Ingels, S. J., Dowd, K. L., Baldridge, J.I., Stipe, J. L., Bartot, V.H., & Frankel, M. R. (1994). *National education longitudinal study of 1988 second follow-up: Data file user's manual (NCES 94-374).* Washington, DC: National Center for Educational Statistics, U.S. Department of Education.

Jenkins, P. H. (1995). School delinquency and school commitment. *Sociology of Education,68*, 221-239.

Jeynes, W. (2005). Effects of parental involvement and family structure on the academic achievement of adolescents. *Marriage and Family Review,37*, 99-116.

Krohn, M. D., Stern, S. B., Thomberry, T. P., & Jang, S. J. (1992).The measurement of family process variables: The effect of adolescent and parent perceptions of family life on delinquent behavior. *Journal of Behavioral Sciences, 1*, 165-178.

Lamdin, D. J. (1996). Evidence of student attendance as an independent variable in education production functions. *Journal of Educational Research, 89*, 155-162.

Larzelere, R. E., & Patterson, G. R. (1990).Parental management: Mediator of the effect of socioeconomic status on early delinquency.*Criminology, 28*, 301-323.

Laub, J., & Sampson, R. (1988).Unraveling families and delinquency: A reanalysis of the Gluecks' data. *Criminology, 26*, 355-380.

Loeber, R., &Stouthamer-Loeber, M. (1986). Family factors as correlates and predictors of juvenile conduct problems and delinquency. *Crime and Justice,7*, 29-149.

Loeber, R., & Farrington, D. P. (2000).Young children who commit crime: Epidemiology, developmental origins, risk factors, early interventions, and policy implications.*Development and Psychopathology, 12*, 737-762.

Marsh, H. W., Balla, J. R., & Hau, K. T. (1996). An evaluation of incremental fit indices: A clarification of mathematical and empirical process. In G. A. Marcoulides and R. E. Schumacker (Eds.), *Advanced structural equation modeling techniques*(pp. 315-353). Hillsdale, N.J.: Erlbaum.

McCord, J. (1990) Crime in moral and social contexts – The American Society of Criminology 1989 Presidential Address. *Criminology 28*: 1–26.

McCord, J. (1991). "Family Relationships, Juvenile Delinquency, and Adult Criminality. " Criminology 29(3), 397-418.

Milne, Ann M., Myers, D. E., Rosenthal, A. S., & Ginsburg, A. (1986).Single Parents, working Mothers, and the educational achievement of school children. *Sociology of Education* 59, 125-39.

Minty, B. (1988).Public Care or Distorted Family Relationships: The Antecedents of Violent Crime. *Howard Journal* 27(3), 172-187.

Myers, D., Milne, A., Baker, K., & Ginsburg, A. (1987). Student discipline and high school performance.*Sociology of Education,60*, 18-33.

Muller, C. (1993). Parent involvement and academic achievement: An analysis of family resources available to the child.In B. Schneider and J. S. Coleman (Eds.), *Parents, their children, and schools*(Chapter 4). Boulder, CO: Westview.

Otto, L. B., & Atkinson, M. P. (1997). Parental involvement and adolescent development.J*ournal of Adolescent Research,* 12, 68-89.

Patterson, G. R. (1982). *Coercive family processes*. Eugene, OR: Castalia.

Patterson, G. R., &Stouthamer-Loeber, M. (1984). The correlation of family management practices and delinquency. *Child Development, 55*, 1299-1307.

Revicki, D.A. (1981). The relationship among socioeconomic status, home environment, parent involvement, child self-concept, and child achievement. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No ED 206 645).

Robins, L. N., & Ratcliff, K. S. (1980). The long-term outcome of truancy. In L. Hersov andI. Berg (Eds.), *Out of school: Modern perspectives in truancy and school refusal* (pp. 65-83). New York: John Wiley.

Shillington, A. M., Lehman, S., Clapp, J., Hovell, M. F., Sipan, C., & Blumberg, E. J. (2005). Parental monitoring: Can it continue to be protective among high-risk adolescents? *Journal of Child & Adolescent Substance Abuse,15*, 1-15.

Simons, R. L., & Christine, J. (1994). Harsh corporal punishment versus quality of parental involvement as an explanation of

adolescent maladjustment, *Journal of Marriageand the Family,* 56, 591-596.

Slesnick, N., Reed, S., Letcher, A., Katafiasz, H., Jones, T., & Buettner C. (2012). Predictors of parental monitoring among families with a runaway adolescent. *Am J Orthopsychiatry,82*(1),10-18.

Steiger, J. H. (1980). Tests for comparing elements of a correlation matrix. *Psychological Bulletin, 87*, 245-251.

Steinberg, L., Lamborn, S. D., Dornbusch, S. M., & Darling, N. (1992). Impact of parenting practices on adolescent achievement: Authoritative parenting, school involvement, and encouragement to succeed. *Child Development, 63*, 1266-1281.

Stevenson, D. L., & Baker, D. P.(1987). The family-school relation and the child's school performance.*Child Development, 58*, 1348-1357.

Sui-Chu, E. S., & Willms, J. D. (1996).Effects of parental involvement on eighth-grade achievement. *Sociology of Education, 69*, 126-141.

Teachman, J. D., Paasch, K., & Carver, K. (1996). Social capital and dropping out of school early. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 58*, 773-873.