ABSTRACT

HISPANIC MOTHERS’ NORMATIVE BELIEFS AND INTENTIONS ABOUT THE DISCUSSION OF SEX-RELATED TOPICS WITH THEIR ADOLESCENT DAUGHTERS

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Hispanic adolescent females continue to have rates of pregnancy and STIs, which exceed those of white non-Hispanic peers. When mothers engage in the discussion of sex-related topics (DSRTs) with their adolescent daughters, it has been shown to delay or decrease sexual intercourse. However, it has been found that Hispanic parents talk less with their daughters about sex-related topics (SRTs) when compared to other ethnic groups. Understanding why Hispanic mothers may or may not intend to engage in DSRTs is important in order to design culturally appropriate programs aimed at increasing their DSRTs.

A sequential mixed-methods predictive correlational design framed by The Theory of Planned Behavior and the Parent-Based Expansion of the Theory of Planned Behavior was used to determine the influence of normative beliefs and other factors on mothers’ intentions to engage in the DSRTs. In addition tests of validity and reliability were conducted on a newly constructed instrument, the Rodriguez Normative Belief Instrument (RNBI). One hundred nineteen Hispanic mothers of females in 6th through 8th grade were recruited from two Midwestern Catholic Middle Schools. The quantitative portion of the study included measures of mothers’ normative beliefs, intentions, past experience, and past behavior using the RNBI. The qualitative portion of the study consisted of two focus groups of mothers. Questions were asked about their experiences with the DSRTs.

Primary findings quantitative findings indicated that mothers’ normative beliefs were predicted by familism and past behavior. Mothers’ intention to engage in the DSRTs was predicted by past behavior and normative beliefs. The RNBI demonstrated acceptable validity and reliability for this sample. Qualitative results indicated that while mothers intend to discuss SRTs, they face barriers including cultural factors, lack of knowledge and confidence, and uncertainty about whether the DSRTs will protect their daughters or give them ideas. Based on past experiences, Hispanic mothers want to protect their daughters and have high hopes for their futures which motivates them to ask for help with the DSRTs. Taken together, the quantitative and qualitative data suggested that while normative beliefs predict mothers' intentions, there are other factors that may have a greater influence on their intentions.