The Role of Migration on the Educational Expectations of First-Generation Latino Adolescents

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ABSTRACT

Past literature suggests that educational expectations are highly predictive of students' future educational attainment. Yet few studies examine students' educational expectations. Moreover, studies on immigrants' educational outcomes tend to focus solely on post-migration factors. This paper examines how pre-migration, migration, and post-migration experiences influence Latino immigrants' educational expectations. We use data from the Latino Adolescent Migration, Health, and Adaptation Project (LAMHA), the first population-based study on the migration and health of first-generation Latino immigrant youth (ages 12-18) in a new immigrant receiving community. We find that adolescents entering the US without inspection have lower expectations than those who enter the US with some form of legal status. Pos- migration factors such as acculturation continue to play an important role as well; Latino youth who become more acculturated and feel supported by peers and teachers have higher expectations than those that are less acculturated and supported. Nevertheless, these adaptations are not sufficient to overcome the negative effects of undocumented status on expectations.

Background

While the Latino immigrant population continues to grow in the US (Ennis, Rios-Vargas, & Albert, 2010), Latino youths' student achievement remains low (NCES, 2003), and the Latino dropout rate stays at more than three times the dropout rate of white students (17.6% vs 5.2% in 2009; NCES, 2011). Surprisingly though, most Latino students have high expectations for their academic futures (Wells, Lynch, & Seifert, 2011). Compared to their higher generation peers, immigrant students on average exhibit higher student achievement (Kao & Tienda, 1995; Schwartz & Stiefel, 2006), even though they face more cultural obstacles at school including a language barrier. Furthermore, in this paper, we argue that for undocumented students, their drive to achieve and expectations for educational success decrease as the realities of their tenuous position in the US become more apparent. Recent studies of undocumented students suggest that their high dropout rates may partially be a consequence of immigration policies which dampen educational expectations of youth and decreases their opportunities in the US (Kaushal, 2008). In other words, even after learning English and acclimating to US culture, undocumented students may realize that their expectations of attending college are unattainable due to the lack of resources. About half of the immigrant children (approximately 1.5 million) in the US are undocumented (Passel & Cohn, 2009), and consequently, they encounter more obstacles than documented immigrant students. These additional hurdles lower undocumented students' educational expectations.

To increase student achievement, especially of undocumented students who, like immigrant students in general, begin school with high educational goals, policymakers have proposed legislation referred to as the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act. The DREAM Act would provide these undocumented students with a pathway to

citizenship, or at least some form of legal status in the US. Consequently, this would also give immigrant students easier access to college and indirectly, motivate students to stay in and graduate from high school. By increasing the educational attainment of immigrants, the US would not only increase the education levels of its workforce but also strengthen the US economy. Given the potential benefits that would occur from passing the DREAM act and the inevitable growth of the Latino immigrant population in the US, it is essential to understand how Latinos' educational expectations are shaped.

Educational expectations are highly predictive of students' future educational attainment and occupational status (Duncan, Featherman, & Duncan, 1972; Haller & Portes, 1973; Messersmith & Schulenberg, 2008; Mortimer, 1996; Ou & Reynolds, 2008; Reynolds & Burge, 2008; Sewell, Haller, & Portes, 1969; Sewell & Hauser, 1980). Furthermore, compared to students' educational aspirations, students' educational expectations are typically more realistic and thus, more predictive of students' future educational outcomes (Well, Lynch, & Seifert, 2009). One study showed that high school seniors expecting to receive at least a bachelor's degree were 28% more likely to apply to college than those with less than postsecondary expectations (Cabrera & La Nasa, 2001). Another study on Mexican-origin middle school students illustrated that adolescents with high educational expectations also had higher grades, and consequently, higher future educational attainment than those adolescents with low educational expectations (Suizzo et al, 2012).

Few studies examine the expectations and aspirations of Latinos, and those that do focus almost exclusively on post-migration factors (Crosnoe & Lopez-Turley, 2011). Researchers have begun to show, however, that pre-migration and migration experiences affect adolescents' mental health (Ornelas & Perreira, 2011). Additionally, empirical links between childhood

mental health and educational performance are well established (Herman, et al, 2008; Ialongo et al, 1996; Shahar et al., 2006). These findings justify further inquiry into the influence of pre-migration and migration experiences on the educational outcomes of Latin American immigrants. The following study advances this research agenda by examining the role of migration and pre-migration experiences on the educational expectations of first-generation Latino adolescents in North Carolina.

A revised form of Carlos Sluzki's framework illustrates how the migration process affects immigrant youths' development in three distinct stages. In the pre-migration stage, families make the initial decision to migrate. Typically, the reasons for migrating, whether they are to escape political unrest or economic hardships can potentially affect future decisions and outcomes. Immigrants' backgrounds and unique past experiences can influence their acculturation experiences and subsequently, their educational outcomes. Youth that immigrate to the US in hopes of finding a better future may be incentivized to achieve academically while those youth forced to leave their home countries due to violence may feel inhibited academically. In the migration stage, the physical act of migrating occurs. The possible adversities encountered during migration can have lasting and definitive effects on immigrant youths' development and their educational outcomes. The post-migration phase is defined by the new social and economic situations encountered by these immigrants. During this phase, immigrant youth encounter a new culture and may have to adjust and reexamine their values and attitudes in order to successfully acculturate. Immigrants may also experience changing social dynamics within their families and may have to take on new familial roles. In turn, these post-migration experiences influence immigrant youths' educational outcomes.

Pre-migration experiences and educational expectations

Research has consistently found that adolescents' early life experiences shape their future choices and outcomes (Sewell, 1971; Eccles, 1987; Eccles, 1994). Most research on Latinos' educational outcomes focuses heavily on the relevance of post-migration factors. Past studies attribute differences in immigrants' educational outcomes to their current cultural values and beliefs (Zhou, 1997; Goyette & Xie, 1999; Kim, 2002). Only recently has research focused on the effects of pre-migration factors on immigrants' educational outcomes (Feliciano, 2006).

Existing data on pre-migration factors is sparse. Some studies have information on only country-level pre-migration factors (Feliciano, 2006). For example, political stability in an adolescent's country of origin has been associated with higher math achievement for immigrant students (Levels, Dronkers, & Kraaykamp, 2008). However, these general factors pose a problem since a substantial amount of variation in educational expectations may be explained by an immigrant's individual-level pre-migration characteristics (Crosnoe & Lopez-Turley, 2011).

A few studies focus on how pre-migration factors relate to adolescents and their caregivers influence adolescents' educational expectations. For example, studies identified parents' pre-migration socioeconomic status as a significant indicator of whether a student expected to graduate from college (Feliciano, 2006). More generally, separation from one's parents (or caregivers) has been associated with detrimental effects on an immigrant adolescent's educational success (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001). In contrast, adolescents' previous visits to the U.S. have been shown to facilitate migration in ways that boost immigrants' educational performance (Massey, Durand, & Malone, 2002). In a study on temporary labor migrants, previous tourist visits to the US were positively associated with immigrants' aspirations to attend a 4-year college (Kandel and Kao, 2001).

Migration experiences and educational expectations

Research on the well-being of immigrant children has not previously focused on the reasons for migrating. However, like pre-migration experiences, events that occur during migration can also play an important role in shaping immigrants' future choices. Immigrants' motivations for moving are influenced by family values, goals, and expectations (Deaux, 2006). Immigrant parents who moved to the US primarily for educational reasons had children with higher levels of educational attainment than immigrant parents who moved to the US primarily for better job opportunities (Hagelskapmp, Suarez-Orozco, & Hughes, 2010). Such findings illustrate the importance of competing migration motivations on educational outcomes for immigrant youth.

Being undocumented is a life-long stressor that affects almost all parts of a student's life (Dozier, 1993; Oliverez, 2006). Parents' fears of deportation make it difficult for them to be involved in their children's academics and school. Accordingly, these students' academic achievement suffers (Orozco-Suarez et al, 2011). Undocumented parents typically work in low-wage jobs with long hours and no health benefits. Consequently, these parents spend less time with their children leading to children's increased likelihood of risk-taking behavior, lower self-esteem, and worse health outcomes (Androff et al, 2011). Finally, students' undocumented status also limits their ability to attend college due to their lack of financial resources such as federal financial aid (Androff et al, 2011). A study examining the effect of providing undocumented students with access to in-state tuition was associated with a 2.5% increase in their college enrollment (Kaushal, 2008). However, even for those undocumented Latino students who attend college, fear of deportation is a daily concern (Dozier, 1993).

Post-migration acculturation, social environment, and educational expectations

Post-migration factors related to an adolescent's acculturation are strongly associated with educational outcomes. Acculturation refers not just to students' cultural adaptation but also to their language acquisition. In general, acculturated students are more likely to hope to attend college (Valencia & Johnson, 2006) and less likely to drop out of school (Martinez, DeGarmo, & Eddy, 2004). When specifically discussing language acculturation, both fluent bilingualism (St.-Hilaire, 2002) and English fluency (Stamps & Bohon, 2006) have been found to be positively associated with educational success.

Features influencing adolescents' social environments, such as discriminatory experiences, hurt their educational outcomes. Discrimination leads to lower student achievement for both African American (Wong, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2003) and Latino youth (DeGarmo & Martinez, 2006). In particular, experiencing discrimination negatively affects every aspect of Latino students' academic wellbeing including lower grades, fewer completed homework assignments, higher dropout rates (DeGarmo & Martinez, 2006), and more behavioral problems (Vega et al, 1995). However, feelings of social support, both in general and specifically from teachers, substantially protect immigrant students against discrimination and help them build resilience against adversity (Bernard, 1995; DeGarmo & Martinez, 2006). Furthermore, social support promotes students' academic outcomes (Crean, 2004) and lowers the risk of both poor mental and physical health (Barrera, 2000; Shinn, Lehmann, & Wong, 1984). Lastly, social support positively relates to higher levels of acculturation in immigrant students (Grolnick et al, 2000; Nestmann & Hurrelmann, 1994).

Adolescents' social environments in their homes, schools, and neighborhoods also influence their educational outcomes. At home, familism, or the degree to which family members feel connected to each other, accounts for a substantial amount of variation in adolescents'

academic achievement. (Valenzuela & Dornbusch, 1994; Stanton-Salazaar &Dornbusch, 1995; Ream, 2005). The degree of familism sensed by Latino students in particular motivates them to achieve academically (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001). At school, feelings regarding school safety affect students' educational outcomes. Specifically, high perceptions of school safety lead to students' increased sense of school belonging (Whitlock, 2006), greater school attendance, higher GPAs, and fewer behavioral incidents (Bowen & Bowen, 1999; Woolley & Grogan-Kaylor, 2006). Lastly, a substantial amount of research illustrates that, like attending an unsafe school, living in an unsafe community or neighborhood predicts worse educational outcomes (Aaronson 1998; Bowen et al, 2008; Entwisle, Alexander, and Olson 1994; Garner and Raudenbush 1991; Harding 2003; Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2004; Schwartz & Gorman, 2003; Woolley & Grogan-Kaylor, 2006). Adolescents' feelings regarding safety in their neighborhoods even predict better non-cognitive outcomes such as avoiding problem behavior, attending school, and increased school engagement (Bowen & Bowen, 1999; Cook et al, 2002; Herrenkohl et al, 2000; Woolley & Grogan-Kaylor, 2006).

METHODS

Study design

We used data from the Latino Adolescent Migration, Health, and Adaptation Project (LAMHA). This is the first population-based study to focus on the mental health, migration, and acculturation of first-generation Latino immigrant youth in North Carolina, one of the newest immigrant receiving states in the US (Fortuny, 2010). The LAMHA survey includes questions on youths' immigration histories, family relationships, school and community experiences, and socioeconomic background.

Using a stratified random cluster sampling design, data were collected on 281 Latino immigrant youth (ages 12-18) and their primary caregivers from 2004 to 2006. To ensure a representative sample, high schools located in high-growth (i.e. ≥ 394% growth between 1990 and 2000) Latino communities with a population of at least 5000 Latinos were separated into urban and rural strata. Within each of these strata, high schools were randomly selected to participate in the study. For each high school chosen, the middle school feeding into that high school was also selected. A total of four urban and six rural school districts including 11 high schools and 14 middle schools participated.

Students were only eligible to participate in the study if they were foreign-born, had foreign-born parents, and were of Latino background. Additionally, only one youth per household could participate. Adolescents and their parents completed an interview-administered survey in their preferred language (English or Spanish). Further details on the survey and sampling design have been comprehensively described elsewhere (Potochnick & Perreira, 2010).

Sample

The sample for this study focuses on first-generation immigrant Latino youth in North Carolina. In our sample of adolescents, the majority (71%) emigrated from Mexico. More than half had lived in the US for less than five years (63%) and spoke only Spanish at home (58%). In terms of their caregivers, 58% lived with both biological parents. Almost two-thirds (59%) had an income below the 2006 Federal Poverty line. After deleting missing observations on the dependent variable (N=24) and the independent variables (N=5), our study sample for this analysis of educational expectations consisted of 252 Latino immigrant adolescents.

Measures

Educational expectations

Adolescents were asked, "Realistically speaking, what is the highest level of education you think you will achieve?" Students were given several choices including less than high school, high school, vocational or trade school, bachelor's, or graduate degree (e.g. Master's, Ph.D., M.D.). We created our categorical dependent variable from this question.

Pre-migration factors

We included three pre-migration factors. Following the guidelines for measuring poverty in Mexico (CONEVAL, 2010), we created a variable indicating that an adolescent had lived in extreme poverty if his pre-migration home had dirt floors and had not had indoor plumbing. Second, we considered whether an adolescent had been separated from at least one of his biological parents for at least one year. A greater percentage of Latino youths who had experienced pre-migration poverty had also been separated from a parent compared to those youth who had not experienced poverty (ANOVA: 63% vs 40%, $p < .05$). Finally, we included a variable indicating whether the adolescent had ever previously visited the US.

Migration factors

We assessed three migration factors. First, we created a variable to indicate whether an adolescent entered the US without inspection (1=yes, 0=no). Second, we included a variable to identify whether an adolescent had experienced any trauma during migration. Trauma included if the adolescent had been robbed, physically attacked, accidentally injured, or had become sick while migrating. Not surprisingly, among those entering the US without inspection, 27% had experienced a traumatic event whereas only 14% of those who had entered the US with inspection had experienced a traumatic event while immigrating (ANOVA: $p < .05$). Third, the adolescents' caregivers were asked why they decided to immigrate to the US. We created a variable indicating if a caregiver had said she moved to the US primarily so that her children

could attend a US school. Interestingly, of families who entered the US without inspection, only 7% had moved to the US for their children's education while 16% of those who had been inspected had moved to the US for their children's education (ANOVA: $p < .05$).

Post-migration acculturation factors

We included two post-migration acculturation variables. Two different scales, the 10-item Psychological Acculturation Scale (PAS; Tropp et al, 1999) and the 4-item Short Acculturation Scale for Hispanics (SASH; Marin et al, 1987), measured a student's level of acculturation. The SASH ($\alpha = .77$) concentrates more on language usage while the PAS ($\alpha = .92$) focuses on social contacts and cultural understanding. The correlation between these two scales was .43, suggesting that, overall, they measure dissimilar aspects of acculturation. For both SASH and PAS, questions were answered using a five-point Likert scale and then averaged to create a score from one to five, with a higher score indicating more acculturation. From the SASH score, we created a binary variable (SASH score<2) indicating whether an adolescent was less acculturated.

Post-migration social environment factors

We also assessed six aspects related to adolescents' post-migration social environment. We included three potential stressors. First, we asked adolescents if they had ever been discriminated against in the US because of their race/ethnicity (1=yes, 0=no). Second, we measured the safety of the adolescents' neighborhood and school. A neighborhood was identified as unsafe if an adolescent's caregiver indicated that assaults or muggings, gang activity, or drug use or dealing were a problem (1=yes, 0=no). We also measured school safety using the 9-item school safety scale ($\alpha = .89$) included in the School Success Profile (Bowen, Rose, & Bowen, 2005). School safety scores ranged from 0 to 18, with a higher score indicating adolescents felt

less safe at school. Not surprisingly, adolescents living in unsafe neighborhoods had an average school safety score of 7.6 while those living in safe neighborhoods possessed an average school safety score of 5.9 (t-test; $p < .05$). In other words, those living in unsafe neighborhoods also felt less safe at school compared to those living in safe neighborhoods. However, in contrast, no statistically significant differences were found in the percent of youth who had experienced discrimination between those living in safe neighborhoods (44%) and those living in unsafe neighborhoods (41%).

Lastly, we included three potential measures of social support— general social support, teacher support, and familism. General social support was measured using eight dichotomous items and teacher support was measured using 11 dichotomous items. Both scales are from the School Success Profile (Bowen, Rose, & Bowen, 2005). Scores ranged from 0 to 8 and from 0 to 11, respectively, with a higher score indicating more support. The Kuder-Richardson 20 formula showed the that social support measure of an internal consistency of .59, and the teacher support scale had an internal consistency of $\alpha = .79$. While the internal consistency of our general social support measure is lower than the internal consistency of our teacher support measure, .59 is still an adequate level of internal consistency (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Lastly, familism was measured on a 7-item scale ($\alpha = .91$) from Gil and Vega (1996). Scores ranged from one to five, with a higher score indicating greater familism. To confirm our results were not affected by multicollinearity, the correlations among the three social support variables and the school safety variable were checked. The highest correlation was .29, between the teacher support and general social support variables, suggesting that multicollinearity had no substantive effect on our analysis.

Demographic variables

We controlled for age, gender, and parent's education. Parent's education was measured with an indicator variable for whether at least one parent had completed high school (1=yes, 0=no).

Data analysis

First, we estimated the prevalence of the five categories of educational expectations among the Latino adolescents. We also examined the characteristics of the study sample using univariate descriptive statistics. Unadjusted ordered logit models were estimated to identify what pre-migration, migration, and post-migration factors were associated with an adolescent's expectation of obtaining a bachelor's degree. To ensure a consistent sample size across all models, 29 cases were dropped due to missing data on at least one variable. Second, we constructed four demographically adjusted ordered logit models. The first included pre-migration variables (Model 1), the second included migration variables (Model 2), the third included post-migration acculturation variables (Model 3), and the last included post-migration social environment variables (Model 4). Our demographic variables included age, gender, and parent's education and were controlled for since previous research showed significant differences among adolescents' educational expectations due to these factors. Lastly, we estimated a fully adjusted ordered logit model which included only the independent variables that were statistically significant in the demographically adjusted models 1, 2, 3, and 4. Each model's standard errors are adjusted for clustering and stratification of the data.

Results

Latinos had high educational expectations despite encountering many challenges. Among first-generation Latino adolescents, 38% expected to graduate from high school and about half expected to receive at least a bachelor's degree (Table 1). About 46% of the adolescents had

lived without one of their biological parents for more than a year, and more than half of these adolescents lived without at least one parent who had graduated from high school. The average PAS score was 2.1, showing that in general these adolescents felt a greater accord with Latin American customs and values. Lastly, after immigrating, 38% had experienced some type of discrimination.

However, these students also experienced moderate to high levels of support in most areas of their life. On the 8-point general support scale, the average score was a 5.6. Moreover, most adolescents felt high levels of support specifically from teachers and family. Additionally, few students felt that they attended a school in an unsafe environment. Finally, based on the 4-item SASH scale, only 29% of adolescents in our sample spoke, read, or thought in Spanish more than in English.

The unadjusted odds ratios illustrate how pre-migration, migration, or post-migration factors were associated with adolescents' educational expectations (Table 1). Similar to previous research, adolescents who were female (odds ratio [OR] = 3.08) or who had at least one parent who graduated from high school (OR = 4.60) had larger odds of having higher educational expectations.

Two pre-migration factors were statistically significant in our unadjusted odds ratios: being separated from a biological parent for at least a year was associated with lower odds of having high educational expectations (OR = .67). In contrast, having previously visited the US was associated with increased odds of having high educational expectations. Living in extreme poverty prior to migration decreased the odds of having high educational expectations but was not statistically significant.

Two migration factors significantly affected Latino adolescents' odds of having high educational expectations. Entering the US without inspection (OR = .26) decreased students' odds of having high educational expectations. However, parents who cited moving to the US primarily for their child's education (OR = 4.38) increased students' odds of having high educational expectations. Experiencing a traumatic event during migration was not significantly associated with adolescents' educational expectations.

Both of the post-migration acculturation factors were statistically significant in their unadjusted logits. A higher PAS score (OR = 2.07) was associated with increased odds of having higher educational expectations. Similarly, in terms of language acculturation, adolescents with a SASH score below 2 (OR = .33) had lower odds of having high educational expectations.

Finally, none of the post-migration social environment stressors and only one of the supports was associated with adolescents' educational expectations. General social support (OR = 1.32) was associated with increased odds of having high educational expectations. Also, experiencing discrimination, which we considered a potential stressor to adolescents, actually increased the odds of having high educational expectations, although this result was not statistically significant.

From our partially adjusted logit models, we found that only models including migration factors and post-migration factors had statistically significant results (Table 2). In Model 2, which only included our migration and control variables, entry without inspection (OR = .48) was associated with lower odds of having high educational expectations. In Model 3, which only included post-migration acculturation factors and control variables, less acculturation in terms of language skills (OR = .85) was associated with lower odds of expecting to obtain a bachelor's

degree. Adolescents with higher PAS scores, or who were more psychologically acculturated, were more likely to have higher educational expectations.

In Model 4, only one of the post-migration social environment factors, teacher support (OR = 1.22), significantly increased the odds of having higher educational expectations. However, while not statistically significant, both experiencing discrimination and living in an unsafe neighborhood were associated with increased odds of having higher educational expectations.

Our fully adjusted logit models only include our controls and the statistically significant migration and post-migration factors from our partially adjusted logit models. From this final model, we see that all these variables continued to be statistically significant (Table 3). The two main factors associated with lower educational expectations were whether the adolescent had entered the US without inspection (OR = .47, $p < .01$) and having a low level of language acculturation (OR = .31, $p < .01$). In contrast, while not as powerful but still statistically significant, teacher support (OR = 1.39, $p < .05$) and psychological acculturation (OR = 1.54, $p < .10$) were associated with increased odds of having higher educational expectations.

Discussion

Our study shows that about half of first-generation Latino students in North Carolina expect to graduate from a 4-year university or more. First-generation Latino adolescents with lower educational expectations were more likely to have entered the US without inspection, to have a lower level of proficiency in English, and to be less acclimated to US culture than those with higher educational expectations. Additionally, Latino students with more teacher support were more likely to have higher educational expectations. This study furthers current literature by demonstrating how the migration experience, specifically entering the US without inspection,

is associated with immigrant adolescents' educational goals. It also reinforces past studies' findings depicting the importance of post-migration factors' associations with educational outcomes.

One interesting finding from our study was the positive, although not statistically significant, relationship between higher educational expectations and experiencing discrimination. Past qualitative studies of African-Americans support this result by suggesting that experiencing discrimination can sometimes motivate minorities to do better in school (Sanders, 1997). Moreover, other quantitative studies on Latinos (Perreira, Fuligni, & Potochnick, 2008) have also found a positive and statistically significant relationship between concerns about discrimination and academic motivations. This challenges Fordham and Ogbu's (1986) study, which suggests that discrimination can lead adolescents to form oppositional identities that limit their academic success. In other words, it appears that marginalized groups can rally against discrimination by setting high educational goals. Discrimination has many harmful consequences and can significantly reduce students' capacity to succeed in school.

From a policy perspective, this study makes some contributions to developing effective policies that will further students' educational progress and success. In particular, the results of this study have two important policy implications. First, new receiving communities, such as North Carolina, need to further develop institutional and social resources that can help Latino immigrant students succeed. Past research shows that receiving communities often lack the infrastructure needed to support the adaptation of immigrant youth (Gozdziak & Martin, 2005; Perreira, Chapman, & Levis-Stein, 2006). Specifically, programs and resources, such as English as a Second Language classes (ESL), should help Latino students learn English rapidly. In past research on first- and second-generation adolescents, a low proficiency in English is the primary

reason for low student achievement (Rosenthal, Baker, & Ginsburg, 1983; Cosden et al, 1995). Research on Latino students has also attributed low English proficiency to an increased risk of dropping out (Rumberger, 1995).

Secondly, our findings support the current push for legislation that would create a path to college for undocumented adolescents. Approximately 72% of our study sample entered the US without inspection, which our analysis shows has been consistently associated with higher odds of having lower educational expectations. Without a path to college, Latino adolescents can achieve only limited educational and career success. Providing Latino adolescents with a way to become American citizens can increase their educational expectations and academic achievement. Thus, legislation such as the DREAM Act would increase the social and economic advantages of immigration and lower the disadvantages of a population with low educational attainment (Crosnoe & Lopez Turley, 2011).

Conclusion

While our study contributes to the existing literature on Latino immigrants, some potential limitations should be addressed. For example, future research on educational expectations should also include a measure of parental involvement. Parental involvement has been consistently associated with educational success for minority and immigrant groups (Jeynes, 2003; Glick & White, 2004). Furthermore, parental involvement often mediates the relationships of other predictors on educational success, such as low socioeconomic status and low parent educational attainment (DeCivita et al, 2004; Eamon, 2002; Schreiber, 2002). Thus, it is important to determine how parental involvement influences Latino adolescents' educational expectations.

Since this data collection strategy only gathered information from middle school and high school Latino students who are currently enrolled in school and missed Latino immigrant youth

who never enrolled or dropped out of school, our findings are not generalizable to the entire first-generation adolescent Latino population in North Carolina. This is particularly important since Latinos have the highest dropout rate in the US (NCES, 2011). Furthermore, the Latino youth not represented in our sample study may on average have lower educational expectations and may be more affected by their undocumented status, which positively bias our results.

Lastly, causality between educational expectations and post-migration factors cannot be established, at least directly, since our model only shows associations between variables. For example, our data are insufficient to claim that teacher support promoted Latino students to have higher education expectations. This relationship could reflect the propensity of Latino students with already high educational expectations to seek out more support and assistance from their teachers. In other words, our findings may reflect reverse causality. Future research should confirm our findings with longitudinal data.

While, in general, causality cannot be established, we would still argue that for specific migration factors, such as being undocumented, causality can be inferred. In other words, due to immigrant selection, a plausible argument can be made that being undocumented hurts students' educational expectations. Past research shows that individuals who emigrate from their home country are typically positively selected (Feliciano, 2005; Portes & Rumbaut, 1996; Treiman et al, 1986). In other words, they are more educated, motivated, and resilient than non-migrants from their respective countries of origin. Furthermore, other research has suggested that undocumented immigrants are even positively selected compared to documented immigrants since undocumented immigrants have to obtain more resources to migrate (Bray, 1984). Since these immigrants are positively selected, arguably they would also have the highest educational expectations. However, due to their undocumented status, these adolescents do not have access

to the same financial and informational resources as documented immigrants. Consequently, the harsh realities of being undocumented constrain these students' educational expectations. Again, these findings support and suggest that legislation such as the DREAM Act would benefit these undocumented students by providing them with access to college and a pathway to citizenship.

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Table 1. Sample Characteristics and Unadjusted Odds Ratios for Educational Expectations (N=281)

	Distribution				
	N	%/mean	OR	95% CI	
Educational Expectations					
Less than high school	9	2.5%	-	- -	
Complete high school	76	38.1%	-	- -	
Complete technical or vocational school	31	9.7%	-	- -	
Complete bachelor's degree	65	20.2%	-	- -	
Complete graduate degree	76	29.5%	-	- -	
Demographics					
Age	-	14.5	1.04	0.90 - 1.20	
Female	144	54.9%	3.08	1.31 - 7.22	**
Parent(s) completed high school	105	34.7%	4.60	1.59 - 13.28	***
Pre-Migration Experience					
Lived in extreme poverty	19	6.6%	0.36	0.08 - 1.57	
Previous travel to the US	36	14.5%	2.00	1.09 - 3.67	**
Separated from biological parent for at least 1 year	116	46.3%	0.67	0.45 - 1.01	*
Migration Experience					
Entry without inspection	217	74.3%	0.26	0.14 - 0.50	***
Traumatic event occurred during migration	68	22.6%	0.97	0.49 - 1.91	
Parents' moved to US primarily for adolescent's education	24	9.2%	4.38	1.01 - 19.10	**
Post-migration Acculturation					
Adolescent psychological acculturation (range 1-5)	-	2.1	2.07	1.12 - 3.84	**
Limited language acculturation (SASH score<2)	61	28.8%	0.33	0.19 - 0.59	***
Post-migration social environment					
Experienced discrimination	121	37.6%	1.68	0.57 - 4.94	
Neighborhood unsafe	63	18.3%	0.99	0.40 - 2.46	
School unsafe (range 0-18)	-	5.8	0.97	0.93 - 1.01	
Adolescent social support score (range 0-8)	-	5.6	1.32	1.02 - 1.69	**
Teacher Support (range 0-11)	-	10.3	1.21	0.92 - 1.59	
Familism (range 1-5)	-	4.3	1.37	0.87 - 2.16	

*p<.10., **p<.05., ***p<.01.

Note: Unweighted N. Weighted means and percentages. Standard errors are adjusted for clustering and stratification of sample.

Table 2. Partially Adjusted Odd Ratios for Educational Expectations (N=252)

	Model 1			Model 2				Model 3				Model 4			
	OR	95% CI		OR	95% CI			OR	95% CI			OR	95% CI		
Pre-Migration Experience															
Lived in extreme poverty	0.86	0.26	2.807												
Previous Travel to the US	1.55	0.66	3.65												
Separated from caregiver at least 1 year	0.95	0.51	1.759												
Migration Experience															
Entry without inspection				0.479	0.264	0.87	**								
Traumatic event occurred during migration				1.243	0.456	3.389									
Parents' moved to US primarily for adolescent's education				2.469	0.665	9.171									
Post-migration Acculturation															
Adolescent Psychological Acculturation (range 1-5)								1.50	0.98	2.289	*				
Limited language acculturation (SASH score<2)								0.35	0.15	0.847	**				
Post-migration social environment															
Experienced Discrimination												1.84	0.52	6.54	
Neighborhood Unsafe												1.41	0.47	4.21	
School unsafe (range 0-18)												0.99	0.94	1.04	
Adolescent social support score (range 0-8)												1.12	0.93	1.34	
Teacher Support (range 0-11)												1.22	0.98	1.51	*
Familism (range 1-5)												1.29	0.85	1.96	
F-statistic	10.8			2.72				3				6.57			
Prob > F	0.00			0.04				0.03				0.00			

*p<.10., **p<.05.

Note: Data are weighted. Standard errors are adjusted for clustering and stratification of sample. All models control for sex, age, and whether a parent completed high school.

Table 3. Adjusted Odds Ratios for Educational Expectations (N=252)

	OR	95% CI			
Migration Experience					
Entry without inspection	0.47	0.33	-	0.68	***
Post-migration Acculturation					
Adolescent Psychological Acculturation (range 1-5)	1.54	0.94	-	2.52	*
Limited language acculturation (SASH score<2)	0.31	0.13	-	0.71	***
Post-migration social environment					
Teacher Support (range 0-11)	1.39	1.06	-	1.83	**
F-statistic	4.01				
Prob > F	0.007				
*p<.10., **p<.05., ***p<.01.					

Note: Data are weighted. Standard errors are adjusted for clustering and stratification of sample. All models control for sex, age, and whether a parent completed high school.