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Meng Wu

Skidmore College, mwu@skidmore.edu

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**The Language of the American Dream: The Effects of Immigrant Parents' English
Proficiency on the Educational Attainment of their Children***

Meng Wu

Skidmore College

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*Please direct all correspondence to Meng Wu, 815 N Broadway, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866.

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ABSTRACT

What are the effects of the English proficiency of immigrant parents on the educational attainment of their 1.5 or 2.0 generation children? In this paper, I propose three hypotheses: (1) the higher the English proficiency of the immigrant parents, the higher the level of education they expect their children to achieve, (2) the higher the English proficiency of the immigrant parents, the higher the level of education the children actually attains, and (3) the higher the parental expectations, the higher the actual educational attainment of the children. Data from all three waves (1992-2006) of the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (CILS) was analyzed with 1,668 respondents attending the eighth and ninth grades (at the time of the first survey) in public and private schools in the metropolitan areas of Miami/ Ft. Lauderdale, Florida and San Diego, California. Respondents' parents also participated in the second wave of the survey through in-person interviews. Parental English proficiency is associated with higher expectations for their children's education, but not the actual attainment achieved of their children. Instead, educational attainment is the strongest predictor of their aspirations and their children's actual attainment. Parental aspirations are positively associated with children's academic achievements. Female children of immigrants are also more likely to experience higher expectations and achieve higher levels of academic success. Segmented assimilation theory and status attainment theory are explored throughout this study.

The Language of the American Dream: The Effects of Immigrant Parents' English Proficiency on the Educational Attainment of their Children

Even though the United States does not have an official national language, English proficiency is regarded as a significant marker of the American identity. Anti-immigrant rhetoric in the recent years has echoed xenophobic sentiments towards non-English languages. This rhetoric implies that for an individual to live in the U.S., they must speak English. In addition, the naturalization test — an examination of one's Americanness and qualifications of a U.S. citizenship — reaffirms the importance of English proficiency through its assessment of the applicant's English abilities. If English proficiency represents the success of an individual's assimilation into U.S. culture, how does it affect the socioeconomic outcomes of immigrant parents and their second-generation children?

The U.S. Census Bureau considers individuals who report speaking English less than "very well" as Limited English Proficient or LEP. According to the Migration Policy Institute, 16 percent of children ages 5-17 in 2013 live with at least one LEP parent (Zong and Batalova 2017). In addition, U.S.-born children with immigrant parents are more likely to be LEP themselves than foreign-born children. Among children enrolled in U.S. public schools, 77 percent of students with LEP are native-born citizens with at least one immigrant parent (Zong and Batalova 2017). This statistic proposes that immigration status does not represent low English abilities, which contradicts the idea that English proficiency is synonymous with the American identity. Additionally, immigrant minorities have been held against standards in mainstream culture such as lighter skin color, high class origins, and elite education to determine the success of their transition in the new society, and even as a qualification for their admission in the United States (Farganis 2013). Numerous researchers have documented the association of

difficulties with the English language with lower levels of socioeconomic status (Thomas 2011; Han, Lee, and Waldfogel 2012; Santiago, Gudiño, Baweja, and Nadeem 2014; Painter and Qian 2016; Hopkinson 2017). However, there is a lack of literature on the influences of parental English proficiency on the socioeconomic attainment of children of immigrants.

Furthermore, this proposes the question: what factors in the intergenerational assimilation process are affecting the social mobility of immigrant children in relation to English language attainment? Using the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (Portes and Rumbaut 1992), I hypothesize that 1) the higher the English proficiency of the immigrant parents, the higher the level of education they expect their children to achieve, (2) the higher the English proficiency of the immigrant parents, the higher the level of education the children actually attain and (3) the higher the parental expectations, the higher the actual educational attainment of the children.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Segmented Assimilation Theory

Assimilation theories over the years have attempted to generalize the experiences of second-generation immigrants, especially in relation to the effects of parental capital on children's educational outcomes. Segmented assimilation theory (Portes and Zhou 1993) suggests that the integration of newer wave immigrants is contingent upon the circumstances in which they leave their native countries and arrive in the receiving culture. The more capital they carry with them to the receiving society, the more favorable their chances of upwards social mobility. Depending on individual and environmental factors, immigrants to the U.S. "can ascend to the prosperous middle class or join in large numbers the ranks of a racialized, permanently impoverished population at the bottom of society" (Waters, Tran, Kasinitz and

Mollenkopf 2010:1169). Cross-ethnic differences exist in the assimilation experiences of the first and second-generation immigrants due to distinctive capital attainment, but also the racialization of minorities in American society (Hagelskamp, Suárez-Orozco, and Hughes 2010; Waters et al. 2010; Crosnoe and Turley 2011; Thomas 2011; Luthra and Soehl 2015). Non-white individuals are reportedly confronted with more discrimination. In addition, dark-skinned, low SES immigrants face higher risks of systemic poverty attributed to limited job opportunities, crime, drug use, alcoholism, and frustrations with unfulfilled expectations (Waters et al. 2010). Furthermore, this theory assumes the more immigrants of color are racialized with increasing time spent in the U.S., the more exposed they are to unchanging or downward assimilation. Therefore, it is predicted that immigrants of disadvantaged racial and socioeconomic backgrounds may experience sustaining, if not declining socioeconomic status beyond the second-generation.

Segmented assimilation theory also highlights three processes of acculturation — consonant, selective and dissonant — along with their outcomes — upward mobility, downward mobility, and biculturalism (Portes and Zhou 1993; A. Stepick and C. Stepick 2010). Consonant acculturation occurs when both the parents and their children learn American culture and gradually abandon their home language and native ways at the same pace. This process generally leads to upward assimilation, due to the immigrants' abilities to meet the expectations of mainstream society. When parents and children remain embedded in their ethnic communities, while pursuing integration, this selective acculturation process allows them to achieve upwards assimilation and biculturalism. Fluent bilingualism, parental support, and community resources allow children of immigrants to adopt American ways without forfeiting valuable capital from native cultures. Lastly, dissonant acculturation increases the risks of downward assimilation as

children assimilate to U.S. society and lose native culture at a faster rate than parents. Navigating through racial discrimination, bifurcated labor markets, and often nihilistic inner-city youth culture without strong parental supervision affects the development of second-generation adolescents (A. Stepick and C. Stepick 2010). Therefore, lack of English proficiency hinders parental involvement outside of home and places children of immigrants at a higher risk of downward social mobility.

Status Attainment Theory

Similarly, the status attainment theory, introduced by Blau and Duncan (1967), links the relationship between an individual's success in social mobility to one's socioeconomic origins. It suggests that one's life chances are dependent on both achieved factors, such as educational attainment, and ascribed factors, such as parental educational attainment. Individuals with highly educated parents are socialized with forms of capital that are rich in amount and quality, consequently providing the children with more positive prospects when achieving their own life outcomes. The resources held by parents are transmitted intergenerationally to their children, can influence the children's life chances positively or negatively — meaning that the transmission of low-quality capital can result in downward intergenerational social mobility. Status attainment theory can also be applied towards non-tangible influences like parental aspirations. Recent research has suggested that higher parental aspirations held for immigrant children positively correlate with their eventual educational attainment (A. Stepick and C. Stepick 2010; Hagelskamp et al. 2010; Baum and Flores 2011; Crosnoe and Turley 2011; Feliciano and Lanuza 2016). In addition, parents' expectations for their children's educational attainment are dependent on their personal socioeconomic status (SES), cultural values, and educational attainment (Sewell, Haller, and Portes 1969; Alexander et al. 2014; Feliciano and Lanuza 2017).

As status attainment theory suggests, transferrable capital, like English proficiency and educational attainment, will affect parents' aspirations, and therefore influencing their children's academic achievements.

Despite the rich literature studying the intergenerational mobility of post-1965 immigrants with relations to parents' capital attainment, there is limited research studying the direct effects of parents' English proficiency and its relationship to the educational outcomes of second-generation children. Previous literature mainly focuses on transferrable capital such as educational attainment, income, and occupational prestige as main determinants of children's socioeconomic mobility. In addition, much of the existing research on linguistic capital focuses on the effects of bilingualism on the social mobility or identity-shaping experience of immigrant children (Thomas 2010; Pines, Kam, and Bernhold 2019; Kiang, Broome, Chan, Stein, Gonzalez, and Supple 2019). Therefore, this study will analyze the relationship between the English proficiency of immigrant parents and the highest level of school, expected of and completed by, their second-generation children. In addition, segmented assimilation theory will be tested through an analysis of the acculturation processes — consonant, selective, and dissonant — and their effects on the assimilation outcomes of the second-generation. Parental expectations of adolescent attainment are also examined under the status attainment theory to assess the strength in which parental aspirations is a reliable predictor of the children's eventual educational outcomes.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Different contexts in the adaptation process and transferring of capital between immigrants and their children explain the variation in immigrant experiences. Forms of capital immigrants hold pre-migration and post-migration could also significantly impact their narratives

and life chances. Based on this, I identified the following factors that affect the form of acculturation and educational attainment achieved by children of immigrants — parental educational attainment, parental aspirations, and English proficiency.

Parental Educational Attainment

One of the most commonly used determinants of socioeconomic status is parental educational attainment. Parents' level of schooling completed represents the amount of transferable capitals such as knowledge, skills, social ties, and values. According to numerous studies, immigrant parents' educational attainment is the most important predictor of children's educational and income outcomes (A. Stepick and C. Stepick 2010; Waters et al. 2010; Baum and Flores 2011). Consistent with segmented assimilation theory and status attainment theory, parents' educational attainment increases children's socioeconomic outcomes (A. Stepick and C. Stepick 2010; Lueck 2018). Luthra and Soehl (2015) also suggest that the strength of intergenerational transmission of education between immigrant parents and children are weaker in immigrant families than in native families and differs significantly among different immigrant groups. Even with highly educated parents, the second-generation may not reproduce such attainment. This is due to post-immigration barriers experienced by parents such as the loss of social status, unfamiliarity with U.S. education, and racial discrimination. Furthermore, parents' educational attainment and socioeconomic resources protect their children from dropping out of college or university. Children whose parents possess low educational attainment and income are less likely to complete their post-secondary degree (Waters et al. 2010; Baum and Flores 2011). Financial barriers, inadequate academic preparation, unrealistic expectations and limited information on choosing suitable institutions could interrupt the academic pursuits of such children (Rumbaut and Komaie 2010; Baum and Flores 2011; Dondero and Humphries 2016).

Latinx immigrant families are less likely to save for their children's education after high school in comparison to U.S.-born white families (Dondero and Humphries 2016). In addition, the quality of support provided by less educated parents are limited due to their lack of experience with the education system, especially one in a foreign country. Their children are also often placed in low-income schools with limited resources and poor-quality classroom instructions prior to post-secondary education. In turn, the children arrive in college or university insufficiently equipped relative to their peers and are subjected to navigate through the barriers with little to no support.

Perceptions of immigrants on the basis of their education levels also affect the academic outcomes of their children. The “immigrant paradox” is an idea suggesting that immigrant children achieve higher educational outcomes than U.S.-born children or children with U.S.-born parents (Luthra and Soehl 2015; Feliciano and Lanuza 2017; Lee and Zhou 2017). For instance, Asians and African immigrant-origin youth experience higher levels of education than native youth (Crosnoe and Turley 2011). Although certain immigrant groups arrive in the U.S. with above-average educational attainment (Hagelskamp et al. 2010; Baum and Flores 2011; Feliciano and Lanuza 2017), immigrant status is not synonymous to increased levels of educational prestige. Rather, the paradox is largely an effect of U.S. immigration regulations that employ positive selection — the preferential admission of capital-rich individuals to fulfill demand for highly-skilled labor in the market (Rumbaut and Komaie 2010; Baum and Flores 2011; Crosnoe and Turley 2011; Dhingra 2018). Such individuals cannot serve as accurate representations of their native populations, since they are often better educated relative to the average educational attainment levels of their native countries. Furthermore, Feliciano and Lanuza (2017) argued that when parental attainment is placed in the context of the immigrant

parents' home countries, it is evident that no immigrant group is experiencing upward mobility. In reality, children of immigrants are recreating the attainment levels achieved by their parents prior to their move to the United States.

Parental Aspirations

Parents transmit their experiences and worldviews to their children, who make strategic decisions based on the information given (Langenkamp 2019). Therefore, their future prospects and support for their children's academic achievements are crucial to their children's educational outcomes. Immigrant parents have been found to possess and maintain equal or greater degrees of expectations for their children's education along with values emphasizing education, relative to native-born parents (A. Stepick and C. Stepick 2010; Hagelskamp et al. 2010; Raleigh and Kao 2010). Also, less educated immigrant mothers report higher aspirations than their higher educated peers (Cherng and Ho 2018), suggesting that parental expectations cut across family socioeconomic status differences among the immigrant population. Aligning with status attainment theory, higher level of aspirations held by immigrant parents reportedly predict higher levels of educational attainment of their children (A. Stepick and C. Stepick 2010; Hagelskamp et al. 2010; Baum and Flores 2011; Crosnoe and Turley 2011; Langenkamp 2019).

Despite limitations associated with immigrant status, the promising outlooks parents hold for their children's academic achievements could be attributed to "immigrant optimism". In other words, immigrant status positively affects parental aspirations (Raleigh and Kao 2010). Many immigrants move to the United States seeking a better life for themselves and their children, therefore they are driven to realize their motivations for migration. For some immigrant ethnic minorities, their aspirations are less affected by the structural oppression existent in U.S. society as a result of racialization. Therefore, the promises of the American Dream are still deeply

embedded in the ideologies of many Latinx and Black families (Feliciano and Lanuza 2016; Langenkamp 2019). To fulfill their motivations and cultivate better life chances for their children, the parents turn to education (Santiago et al 2014; Dhingra 2018; Langenkamp 2019). In one study, Hagelskamp et al. (2010) found that the frequency in which parents cite schooling as a reason for migration positively affects children's grades in school. Parents' focus on education motivates them to invest in boosting their children's academic achievements. Measures such as residing in neighborhoods with high-performing schools, signing up for afterschool programming, saving for college, and allocating family time help promote success in school (Hagelskamp et al. 2010; Crosnoe and Turley 2011). Determined to succeed in their new society, immigrant families possess higher expectations for their children, allowing them to provide adequate support for the achievement of their children's educational objectives.

Cultural values such as familism — an ideology that places family before self and fosters a sense of obligation to family — is prevalent among immigrant children and influences their academic achievements in relation to parental aspirations (Hagelskamp et al. 2010; Rumbaut and Komaie 2010; Baum and Flores 2011; Roche et al. 2012). For instance, Latinx immigrant families emphasize the importance of being responsible, working hard, and giving back to the family. In East Asian households, filial piety encompasses the similar values of being respectful and dutiful towards one's parents. As parents instill collectivist values from their native cultures in the household, their children are more likely to view family as a support structure and motivation to perform better academically (Roche et al. 2012; Santiago et al. 2014). In addition, immigrant children hold higher expectations for themselves and attain higher achievements to compensate for family sacrifices as a result of migration (Feliciano and Lanuza 2016). In contrast, Santiago et al. (2014) found that independence, material success, competition, and other

individualistic values prevalent in U.S. culture are associated with lower grades among the second-generation. Other cultural assets such as the preservation of the native tongue and English proficiency along with familism values also predicts higher levels of attainment for the children (Raleigh and Kao 2010; Roche et al. 2012; Feliciano and Lanuza 2016). High levels of parental aspirations for children's educational attainment promote a motivational environment for the academic success of second-generation immigrants.

English Proficiency

In an English-dominant society, limited English proficiency is a significant barrier to success for immigrant students. English ability is often used as an assessment of immigrants' assimilation outcomes in the United States. Therefore, life chances of immigrant children are also dependent on the English proficiency of their parents. In one study, Thomas (2011) found that White immigrants are most likely to have English proficient head of households among all immigrant groups. In addition, Black immigrant families fare better than their Asian and Latinx counterparts. Also, levels of proficiency are lowest among children of immigrants with origins in Arabic and Portuguese-speaking countries (Thomas 2010; Thomas 2011). This disparity possibly results from the prevalence of English in immigrants' home countries, as most European and African regions have prominent English-speaking populations. Previous literature indicates that parents with limited English proficiency are less involved in their children's schooling (Han et al. 2012; Chergn and Ho; Glick, Walker, and Luz 2013). Due to language barriers, they lack sufficient knowledge of the education system and the means to communicate efficiently with school faculty and staff. Thus, they may be discouraged from attending important school events like parent-teacher conferences. In regard to schoolwork, they are also less likely to provide quality academic support to their children. Low English proficiency prohibits parents from

making well-informed decisions about their children's education. Hence, children with LEP parents are often forced to navigate the education with limited parental support and supervision.

As suggested by segmented assimilation theory, second-generation immigrants face greater risks of downward mobility when they experience dissonant assimilation — a process in which parents display weaker English proficiency and assimilate at a slower pace than their children (Portes and Zhou 1993; A. Stepick and C. Stepick 2010). The parents' struggle with English learning force children to adapt to the mainstream society with limited familial support (Glick et al. 2013; Nawyn, Gjokaj, Agbényiga, and Grace 2012). Over time, as parents become increasingly dependent on their children for language assistance, they begin to surrender their power and delegate tasks traditionally performed by the head of the household to the adolescents. This role reversal, also known as language brokering, is not merely a process of linguistic translation but also represents a mediation of cross-cultural exchanges and a navigation of the unique power dynamics within the parent-child relationship (Gans 2009; Weisskirch 2013). According to Weisskirch (2013), language brokering immigrant children present high levels of efficacy and self-esteem, and such attributes increase along with increases in the frequency of brokering. However, they also reported burdensome feelings and parent-child conflicts if they felt that their contributions are not recognized or are taken for granted by their parents. Furthermore, language brokering can become a hindrance to educational attainment when immigrant parents become excessively dependent (Feliciano 2012; Feliciano and Lanuza 2016). Rumbaut and Komaie (2010) found that a majority of second-generation youth are providing significant financial support to their parents. As a result, such immigrant adolescents may have less time dedicated to schoolwork, or even prioritize paid work over education. In addition, youth may be limited in their choice of colleges as they would prefer to stay closer to home or

receive little support in the college application process (Feliciano and Lanuza 2016). Familism is a positive incentive for children with high SES parents, but it can also become an obstacle for children with parents of low English proficiency.

Recent analyses of assimilation mainly focus on the effects of parents' educational and economic resources on intergenerational educational mobility. Meanwhile, parents' English language ability is only considered as a secondary factor for the educational outcomes of second-generation children. Hence, this study seeks to examine parental English proficiency as a direct predictor of parents' expectations of their children's education and children's actual educational attainment. In addition, the influence of parental aspirations on children's academic achievements will also be analyzed.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study used the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (CILS) database (Portes and Rumbaut 1992) — a longitudinal study designed to examine the adaptation process of the immigrant Second-generation. CILS was conducted in three waves in 1992, 1995, and 2006 to a sample of children of immigrants attending the 8th and 9th grade in public and private schools in Miami/ Ft. Lauderdale, Florida and San Diego, California. Children of immigrants or second-generation immigrants are defined as children with at least one foreign-born parent or foreign-born children brought to the U.S. at a young age. In addition, 54 percent of the interviews were conducted in Miami/Ft. Lauderdale and 46 percent in San Diego. The sample size was 5,262 respondents from 77 different nationalities, and is evenly divided by sex, year in school, and birth status. All three waves were distributed mostly via self-administered questionnaires in school. The first survey intended to gather baseline information on the respondent population and the second wave follow up survey was given when most respondents were about to graduate high

school to assess levels of adaptation such as language knowledge/ preference and educational achievement. The second wave also included a parental survey with face-to-face interviews that were conducted mostly at home in six different foreign languages – due to the limited English proficiency of many parents – drawing 2,442 parents or 46 percent of the student sample. The last survey in 2006 was conducted when the respondents had reached early adulthood – at average age 24 – using a combination of mailed questionnaires, telephone, and in-person interviews. This 2006 survey retrieved 3,613 respondents representing 69 percent of the original sample and 84 percent of the second survey.

For the purpose of this study, a subset was created from the original CILS data to only include respondents who participated in all three waves of the student survey and whose parents were involved in the parental interviews. As a result, 32 percent ($N = 1,668$) of the original sample was gathered. Of this subset sample, 50.8 percent identify as Latin American, 39 percent as Asian, 8.5 percent as West Indian, 1.2 percent as European/ Canadian, and 0.6 percent as Middle Eastern/ African. The top five national origins represented are Cuban, Filipino, Mexican, Vietnamese, and Nicaraguan.

Independent Variable

The independent variable used in this study is parents' English proficiency. In the parental survey conducted in 1995, respondents were asked to rate their English proficiency in terms of four categories: understanding, reading, speaking, and writing. The values are 1 for Not at all, 2 for A little, 3 for Well, and 4 for Very well. The exact four questions were also asked of the respondent but in their assessment of the English proficiency of their spouse/ partner. To better understand the overall influences of the English proficiency within a household, I combined and averaged all eight variables that assessed the English ability of the parents and

their spouse/ partner. The new index now reports the English proficiency of both parents or of the one parent respondent (in the case of a missing spouse/ partner) as a continuous ratio variable with values 1 as Not at all, 2 as A little, 3 as Well, and 4 as Very well.

Dependent Variables

This study will analyze two dependent variables: parental expectations and children's actual educational attainment. In the parental survey, respondents were asked to indicate the highest level of education they think their children will realistically achieve. The values were 1 for Eighth grade or less, 2 for Beyond eighth grade, but no diploma, 3 for High school graduate, 4 for Less than one year of vocational, business, or trade school, and 5 for One to two years of vocational, business, or trade school, 6 for More than two years of vocational, business, or trade school, 7 for Less than two years of college, 8 for Two or more years of college, 9 for College graduate, 10 for Master's degree or equivalent, and 11 for Professional, doctoral, or other advanced degree. The second dependent variable is the respondent's highest level of schooling completed at the time the third wave of the survey was administered. The values are 1 for Some high school (no diploma), 2 for Graduated from high school, 3 for 1-2 years of post-high school vocational training or college, 4 for Graduated from 2-year college or vocational school (e.g. Associate Degree), 5 for 3 or more years of college (no degree yet), 6 for Graduated from 4/5-year-college (e.g. Bachelor's degree), 7 for Some graduate school (no degree yet), 8 for Master's degree, 9 for Professional or doctorate degree (Jd, Md, Dds, Phd), and 10 for Other. Due to the ambiguity of the response option "other", I recoded and excluded the value from this variable.

Control Variables

I controlled for parents' educational attainment, children's length of stay in the United States (at the time of the first survey), and children's sex. Parental educational attainment was made into an index with the average of the highest degree of schooling completed by the parent respondent and their spouse/ partner, similar to the English proficiency index. This allows for an examination of the combined educational outcomes of both parents and their influence on the achievement of their children. In addition, parent respondents with missing spouse/ partner data were only assessed based on their own responses. The values are continuous with 0 for No schooling, 1 for Eighth grade or less, 2 for Beyond eighth grade, but no diploma, 3 for High school graduate, 4 for Less than one year of vocational, business, or trade school, and 5 for One to two years of vocational, business, or trade school, 6 for More than two years of vocational, business, or trade school, 7 for Less than two years of college, 8 for Two or more years of college, 9 for College graduate, 10 for Master's degree or equivalent, and 11 for Professional, doctoral, or other advanced degree. The variable for the children's length of stay in the United States was reverse coded into 1 for Less than five years, 2 for Five to nine years, 3 for Ten years or more, and 4 for All my life. Lastly, the children's sex variable was recoded into 0 for men and 1 for women.

FINDINGS

Univariate Results

Table 1 displays the means, median, and standard deviations for all of the variables. The distribution of the independent variable, parents' level of English proficiency, is shown in Figure 1. The most prevalent reported level of proficiency is four or "very well" at 27.5 percent, with three or "well" as the second most popular response at 13.8 percent. The mean is 2.90 and the

standard deviation is 0.93, meaning that two thirds of the parents self-reported “not well” to “very well” English proficiency.

Insert Table 1 here

Insert Figure 1 here

Figure 2 shows the distribution of the dependent variable – parents’ aspirations for the highest level of education their children will attain. Most parents reported high levels of expectations with 38.1 percent expecting the completion of a four- or five-year degree program or the equivalent of a bachelor’s degree, 17.9 percent expecting a master’s degree or equivalent, and 20.6 percent expecting a professional, doctoral, or other advanced degree. According to Table 1, the mean and median reflect the same level of expected attainment as the modal response. In addition, two thirds of the parental aspirations fall between less than two years of college and a professional, doctoral, or other advanced degree.

Insert Figure 2 here

The second dependent variable – the children’s highest level of education attained – is depicted in Figure 3 with the largest percentage of students completing a four- or five-year degree program at 22.7 percent. The average number of students graduated from a two-year college or vocational training program, earning the equivalent of an associate degree. The median response is three or more years of college education with no degree yet. The standard deviation of 1.93 suggests that 66 percent of the child respondents has the highest level of educational attainment ranging from one- to two-years of college or vocational training to the completion of a four- or five-year college.

Insert Figure 3 here

The control variable, parents' highest level of educational attainment is shown in Figure 4. The modal response for the educational attainment of immigrant parents is completing the eighth grade or less years of schooling. Both the mean and median indicate an educational attainment level of one- to two-years of vocational, business, or trade school. The standard deviation demonstrates that two thirds of the parents have attained education ranging from beyond the 8th grade with no high school diploma to two or more years of college.

Insert Figure 4 here

The second control variable, the duration in which the child respondent has been living in the United States is depicted in Figure 5. The most common response is "all my life" with 44.2 percent, suggesting that these children are native-born U.S. citizens. On average, respondents have reportedly lived in the United States for ten or more years, which is also consistent with the median response. Two thirds of the children have lived in the U.S. from five to nine years to their entire lives, as indicated by the standard deviation of 0.92.

Insert Figure 5 here

The last control variable, shown in Figure 6, is the sex of the children. 52.8 percent of the respondents self-identifies as women, and 47.2 percent self-identifies as men.

Insert Figure 6 here

Bivariate Results

The correlation of all variables is demonstrated in Table 2. There is no indication of a multicollinearity issue because the strength of the relationships for all variables is under 0.75. All variables are tested at both the $p < .05^*$ and $p < .01^{**}$ level, given the size of the sample.

Children's Educational Attainment There is a weak to moderate, positive, and statistically significant relationship between parents' expectations and children's educational attainment. This indicates that the higher the level of education parents expect their children to achieve, the higher the level of schooling is completed by the children. There is a positive, weak, and statistically significant relationship between parents' English proficiency and children's educational attainment. The higher the level of English fluency reported by parents, the higher the level of education completed by their children. There is a positive, weak to moderate, and statistically significant relationship between parents' educational attainment and children's educational attainment. The more schooling completed by the parents also suggests more schooling completed by their children. There is a very weak, positive, and statistically significant relationship between children's duration in the U.S. and their educational attainment. The more time children spend living in the United States, the higher the level of education they complete. There is a very weak, positive, and statistically significant association between children's sex and their educational attainment. Women are more likely to complete higher levels of education than men.

Parental Expectations There is a weak to moderate, positive, and statistically significant relationship between parents' English proficiency and their aspirations. In other words, the more proficient they are in English, the higher the level of schooling they will expect their children to complete. There is a weak to moderate, positive, and statistically significant relationship between parents' educational attainment and their expectations. The higher the level of education completed by the parents, the higher the level of education they will expect from their children. There is a positive, very weak, and statistically significant relationship between children's duration in the United States and parents' aspirations. It shows that the longer the children

spends living in the U.S., the higher the level of schooling the parents expect from their children. There is no statistically significant association between the children's self-identified sex and parental expectations.

Parental English Proficiency Of all variables, parents' educational attainment and English proficiency share the strongest statistically significant relationship ($r = .641, p < .01$). The moderate to strong, positive relationship suggests that the higher the level of education attained by the parents, the more proficient they are in English. There is a moderate, positive, and statistically significant relationship between children's duration in the U.S. and parent's English proficiency. The more time the children spend living in the U.S., the more fluent their parents are in English. There is no statistically significant relationship between sex of the children and parents' English proficiency.

Control variables There is a statistically significant relationship between children's time spent in the U.S. and the parents' educational attainment. The longer the children lived in the United States, the higher the level of schooling completed by the parents. There is no statistically significant relationship between the children's sex and the educational attainment of their parents. There is a negative, very weak, and statistically significant relationship between children's time living in the U.S. and their sex. Men are more likely to have spent longer time in the United States.

Insert Table 2 here

Multivariate Results

Table 3 displays the three models of the multivariate regression analyses. Model 1 shows the regression of parental expectations on all variables, Model 2 shows the children's educational

attainment on all variables, and Model 3 shows the children's educational attainment on all variables, including parental expectation. All 3 regression models are statistically significant at the $p < .001$ level.

Insert Table 3

As shown in Model 1 ($F = 49.625, p < .001$), the R^2 of .107 indicates that 10.7 percent of the variability in parents' expectations can be explained by their English proficiency and 3 control variables. Parents' level of English proficiency are statistically significant predictors of their aspirations. The positive relationship suggests that the more proficient parents are in English, the higher the level of expectations they hold for their children's education ($\beta = .078, p < .05$). This finding demonstrates that Hypothesis (1) is true at the $p < 0.05$ but not $p < 0.01$ level. Within Model 1, the strongest statistically significant relationship is between parents' attained education and their aspirations ($\beta = .264, p < .01$), meaning that the higher the level of schooling completed by the parents, the higher they will expect of their children's educational attainment. Being a woman has a positive and statistically significant relationship with parental aspiration ($\beta = .054, p < .01$), suggesting that parents hold higher expectations for their daughters than sons. There is no statistically significant relationship between children's duration in the United States and their parents' aspirations.

Model 2 ($F = 46.169, p < .001$) shows that 10 percent of the variability in the children's educational attainment can be explained by their parents' English proficiency and 3 control variables ($R^2 = .100$). The only statistically significant predictors of children's educational attainment are parents' educational attainment and children's sex in this model. In addition, the strongest relationship is found between parents' education and their children's education (β

= .278, $p < .01$). For every level increase in the education attained by the parents, the level of education attained by their children increases as well. Being a woman is statistically significant with children's educational attainment ($\beta = .089$, $p < .01$), meaning that women achieve higher levels of schooling than men. After controlling for all variables, there is no statistically significant relationship between parents' English fluency and their children's highest degree of education completed. Therefore, Hypothesis (2), which suggests that the more proficient parents are in English, the more levels of schooling their children will complete, must be rejected. Children's duration in the U.S. is also not a statistically significant predictor of their education.

In Model 3 ($F = 63.397$, $p < .001$), the parents' expectations variable is added as an independent variable to examine its relationship with their children's educational attainment, duration in the U.S., sex and their own educational attainment. As displayed, 16 percent of the variability in children's education attainment can be explained by parental aspirations and the 3 control variables ($R^2 = .160$). Parents' expectations have a positive, statistically significant relationship with their children's educational attainment ($\beta = .260$, $p < .01$), making it the strongest association in Model 3. The higher the parents expect of their children's education, the higher the level of schooling their children will complete. Therefore, this finding supports Hypothesis (3). The second strongest relationship is between parents' educational attainment and their children's education attainment ($\beta = .209$, $p < .01$), meaning that the higher the level of schooling completed by the parents, the higher the level of schooling is completed by the children. Women achieve higher levels of education than men, as indicated by the positive, statistically significant relationship between sex and children's educational attainment ($\beta = .075$, $p < .01$). In addition, parents' English fluency and children's duration living in the U.S. are not statistically significant predictors of children's educational attainment.

DISCUSSION

After controlling for all variables, parental English proficiency is only statistically significant with parental aspiration at the $p < .05$ level (Table 3 Model 1). This suggests that the first hypothesis — the higher the English proficiency of the immigrant parents, the higher the level of educational attainment they expect their children to achieve — is true. In addition, the relationship between parental English proficiency and children's educational attainment is not statistically significant in the regression analysis, despite its correlation in the bivariate results. This finding rejects the second hypothesis — the higher the English proficiency of the immigrant parents, the higher the level of education the children actually attains. In addition, Portes and Zhou (1993) argue that English proficiency — a representation of acculturation — is a determinant of immigrants' socioeconomic mobility. Specifically, they claim that parents' lack of English fluency will lead to the downward assimilation of their second-generation children. Therefore, the findings must reject this aspect of the segmented assimilation theory.

In addition, the disparity between the bivariate and multivariate correlations of English proficiency and educational attainment is explained by the strong bivariate association between parental education attainment and their English proficiency ($r = .641, p < .01$), as seen in Table 2. Since parents' level of education completed is so highly correlated to their level of English fluency, the latter becomes significantly correlated with children's attainment and parental expectations. This finding confirms segmented assimilation theory's argument that an immigrant's adaptation success is dependent on the quantity and quality of capital they possess. Foreign-born individuals who arrive in the United States with higher quality of capital, such as high levels of educational attainment, will have better chances of adaption success in the new

society. Such capital attainment could also be translated to the next generation, improving their life chances. When controlling for all variables, parental educational attainment surfaces as the strongest predictor of parental aspirations and children's educational attainment. This could be partly explained by previous literature which suggests that second-generation individuals with highly skilled foreign-born parents possess higher levels of language proficiency (Cort 2010). Educational attainment is an assessment of parental skill level, which could be an indicator for the language adaptation of children of immigrants. As the application of the English language is one of the main for educational settings in the United States, parental capital could be an impactful determinant of the language proficiency and educational achievements of the second-generation. This confirms that ascribed factors, such as parental capital, affects the life chances of the next generation once the capital is transmitted intergenerationally, as suggested by the status attainment theory (Blau and Duncan 1967).

In Model 3, after assessing the relationships of all variables with the addition of parental aspirations as the independent variable, the association between parental expectations and children's educational attainment is found to be statistically significant. This indicates that the third hypothesis — the higher the parental expectations, the higher the actual educational attainment of the children — is true at $p < .001$. After controlling for parental aspirations, the R^2 increased from .100 in Model 2 to .160, suggesting that more of the variability in the educational attainment of the children can be explained by parental aspirations. Furthermore, the strength for parental educational attainment was reduced from .278 to .209 between the two models, while parental aspiration surpasses parental educational attainment as the strongest predictor ($\beta = .075$, $p < .01$) in Model 3. This finding makes two implications which align with the status attainment theory (1) parental aspirations are influenced by the parents' educational attainment and (2) their

expectations have a stronger impact than parental educational attainment on the educational outcomes of the second-generation. As immigrant parents expect more of their children's academic achievements, the children will in turn reach higher levels of educational attainment due to the stronger support system and motivational mechanisms. The immigrant optimism, found in previous literature, also indicates that foreign-born parents have higher aspirations for their children due to positive associations they hold of the American dream (Thomas 2010; Cherng and Ho 2018). Furthermore, children of immigrants are more motivated to please their parents through academic achievements, especially if they feel a stronger sense of familism in the home setting (Luthra and Soehl 2015).

Interestingly, being a woman is a statistically significant predictor of aspirations and children's attainment in all three regression models. Parents hold higher expectations for their daughters ($\beta = .054, p < .05$). Women also report higher levels of attainment, with ($\beta = .075, p < .01$) and without ($\beta = .089, p < .01$) the addition of parental aspirations. This female advantage is consistent with the high-achieving patterns of females in the general U.S. population (Feliciano 2012; Park, Nawyn, and Benetsky 2015). In the recent years, female children of immigrant have reported higher engagement in school, better grades, higher educational attainment, and lower dropout rates than their male counterparts (Baum and Flores 2011; Hagelskamp et al. 2010; Roche et al. 2012; Feliciano 2012; Santiago et al. 2014; Park et al. 2015). It must be noted that the achievement gap is present even among second-generation girls whose parents migrated from societies with a male advantage and traditionally male-dominant values (Fleischmann, Kristen, Heath, Brinbaum, Deboosere, Granato, Jonsson, Kilpi-Jakonen, Lorenz, Lutz, Mos, Mutarrak, Phalet, Rotheron, Rudolphi, and Van 2014). Literature suggests that girls in immigrant families receive greater delegation of domestic responsibilities and stricter regulations of their behavior,

allowing them to develop skills for their success in school (Feliciano 2012; Santiago et al. 2014). These forms of gendered socialization within immigrant household push girls to become more disciplined and responsible than boys their age. In addition, female children of immigrants feel a stronger sense of familism to please their parents through stellar academic performance. The gender gap in educational attainment is also due to the systemic obstructions that demotes boys' academic advancement. Latinx and West Indian boys are punished and criminalized by school personnel at a higher rate than girls, leading them to form negative sentiments towards the education system (Feliciano 2012). However, having a higher socioeconomic status offsets the gender disadvantage in educational attainment (Santiago et al. 2014). In other words, second-generation males from higher socioeconomic backgrounds attain similar levels of schooling than their female counterparts.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of foreign-born parents' English proficiency on their expectations for their children's educational attainment and their children's actual educational outcomes. Using the CILS database, a longitudinal study conducted in Miami/Ft. Lauderdale, Florida and San Diego, California from 1992 to 2006, this sample is consisted of 1,668 second-generation immigrants and their parents. The findings indicate that higher English proficiency increases parents' expectations for their children's education. This relationship is only statistically significant at $p < .05$, but nonetheless, supports my first hypothesis. Their English abilities and education are also very strongly correlated, so the more schooling the parents complete, the better they are in English. The strongest predictor for their expectations is their educational attainment, meaning that parents' education is a more influential than English proficiency when forming their aspirations.

The second hypothesis is rejected because parents' English proficiency displays no statistically significant effect on their children's educational outcomes. Segmented assimilation theory (Portes and Zhou 1993) is consistent with the finding that capitals like parental education boost their aspirations and their children's attainment. However, the result also contradicts the theory because low parental English proficiency does not lead to children's downward educational mobility. Parental aspiration is a better predictor of children's attainment than parental attainment. This supports the third hypothesis and the status attainment theory (Blau and Duncan 1964), proposing that the higher the expectations parents have for their children's education, the higher the level of education the children will actually attain. In addition, parents' aspirations are influenced by their possession of capitals like English fluency and educational attainment, supporting the results of previous literature (Sewell et al. 1969; Alexander et al. 2014; Feliciano and Lanuza 2017). The result also presents a female advantage for children of immigrants, meaning that women experience higher parental expectations and educational attainment. This research expands beyond existing literature through analyzing the direct effects of immigrant parents' English proficiency on the educational outcomes of their children.

Limitations

Like many previous studies, this one is not without its limitations. First, the CILS dataset only surveyed children of immigrants and their parents who resided in Fort Lauderdale/ Miami, Florida and San Diego, California. Therefore, it is not a representative sample of the entire second-generation population in the United States. The top five ethnicities in this study sample — Cuban, Mexican, Filipino, Vietnamese, and Nicaraguan — are not representative of the entire ethnic makeup of the U.S. immigrant population, which mainly consists of individuals from Mexico, China, India, the Philippines, and El Salvador (Zong and Batalova 2017). In addition,

the English proficiency variable was determined based on parents' self-assessment of their English abilities. Therefore, there is a risk of respondents understating or overstating the level of their English fluency. Segmented assimilation theory suggests that when children learn English and assimilate at a faster pace than their parents, they are more likely to face downward mobility (Portes and Zhou 1993; A. Stepick and C. Stepick 2010). However, the difference between parents' English proficiency and those of their children were not considered in this study.

Analyzing the different adaptation experiences of immigrant parents and children may explain more of the variation in parental aspirations and children's education. Furthermore, Feliciano and Lanuza (2017) argue that using parents' educational attainment as a predictor overstates the level of intergenerational social mobility experienced by the second-generation. This is because their educational attainment is often examined under the standards of the U.S. educational system. Instead, contextual attainment — education levels measured in the historical and cultural context of parents' home countries — must be analyzed to more accurately assess the life chances of immigrant children. Lastly, more control variables could have been considered to better examine the predictors of second-generation's educational attainment. Future research should take into consideration these limitations to further improve the findings of this study.

Sociological Implications and Future Research

The findings in this research both confirm and reject segmented assimilation theory. The theory suggests that the type of acculturation, determined by English proficiency, is predictive of the children of immigrants' socioeconomic outcomes. Yet, dissonant acculturation does not decisively determine downward educational mobility in this sample of second-generation children. English ability displays no statistically significant relationship with children's educational attainment, but it does influence parents' expectations for their children's education.

Instead, the most decisive predictors of children's attainment are parents' expectations and educational attainment. This implies that parental capital and aspirations, and not types of acculturation, determine the socioeconomic mobility of immigrant children. The latter findings confirm segmented assimilation theory and status attainment theory. This conclusion illuminates the importance of parental educational capital and expectations as indications of children's academic success. Therefore, future assimilation analyses should further explore the effects of parental capital on the level of aspirations immigrants hold for their children.

A female advantage in parental aspirations and educational attainment is found in this study. Second-generation females receive higher expectations and attain higher levels of education than males. This implies that the immigrant population is witnessing similar patterns of gendered advantages that are present in U.S.-born families. However, the female advantage in educational attainment should be further explored to determine its implications on the gender pay gap later in the lives of second-generation children. In addition, the underperformance of boys, especially those from disadvantaged socioeconomic and racial backgrounds, should not be overlooked by educators. Schools should implement and improve diversity, inclusion, and equity training programs for its faculty and staff to discourage excessive disciplinary actions against students of color. The advancement of the educational attainment of second-generation girls should also be accompanied by the academic success of their male peers.

As mentioned in the limitations, parental educational attainment should be interpreted contextually based on their native countries' standards for education. In addition, a nationally representative sample of immigrants should be utilized to present a better depiction of second-generation socioeconomic mobility in the United States. Variances in socioeconomic background, racial identity, native origin, language use, and etc., could also affect the adaptation

experiences of different immigrant groups in unique ways (Hagelskamp et al. 2010; Han et al 2012; Luthra and Soehl 2015). Thus, studying the sample by national-origin could uncover any between-group variability caused by distinct pre- and post-migration circumstances. Although parents' English proficiency is not predictive of their children's outcomes, dissonant acculturation should still be further pursued by examining the effects of language brokering. Immigrant children's roles as language brokers help them develop self-efficacy and other skills that are advantages for their educational development. However, the burden of brokering could also negative affect their academic performance (Weisskirch 2013; Feliciano and Lanuza 2016). Hence, future research should study children's performance of language brokering and its effects on their educational attainment.

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Running Head = IMMIGRANT PARENTS' INFLUENCE ON CHILDREN'S EDUCATION

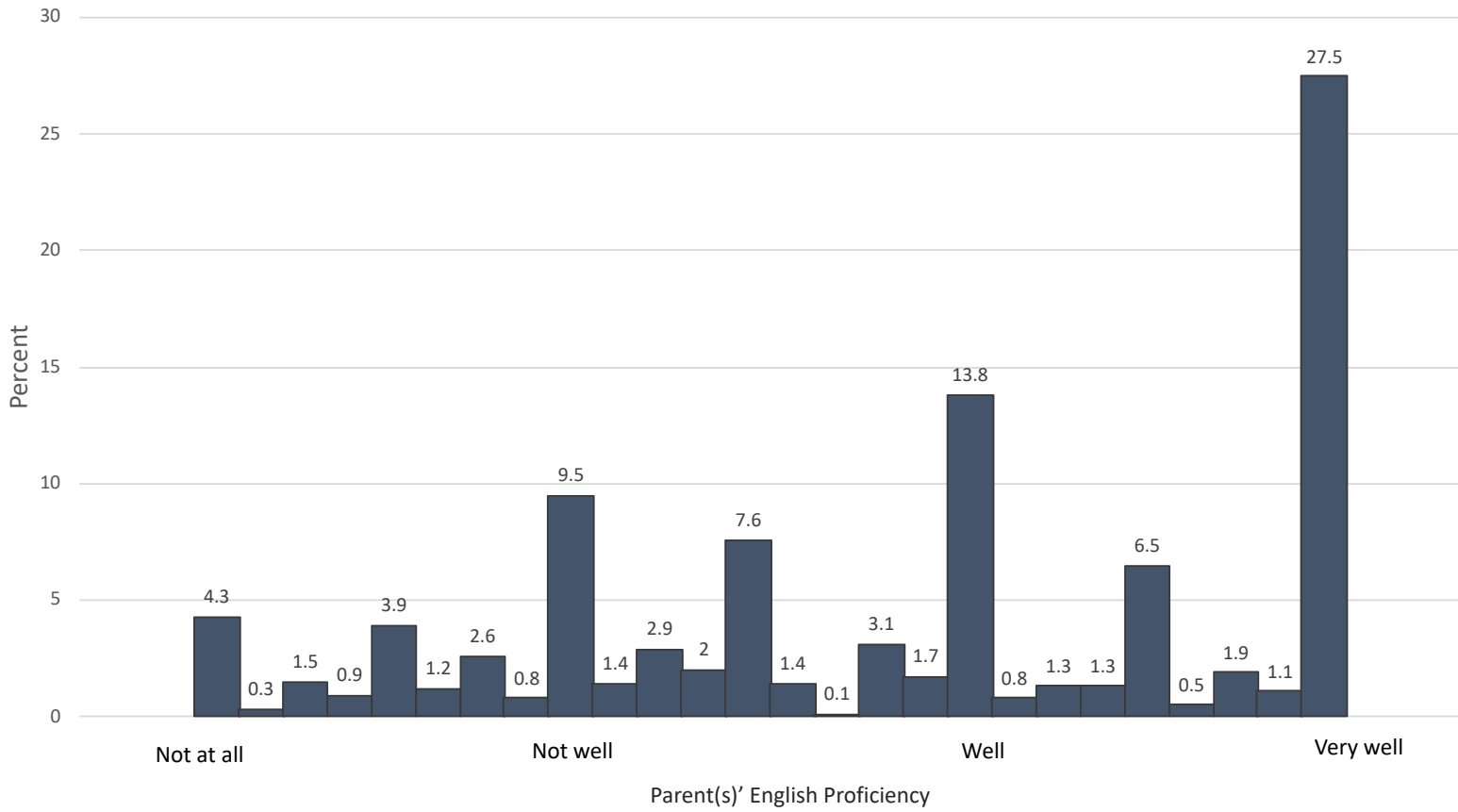


Figure 1. Histogram of immigrant parents' average level of English proficiency in speaking, reading, writing, and understanding

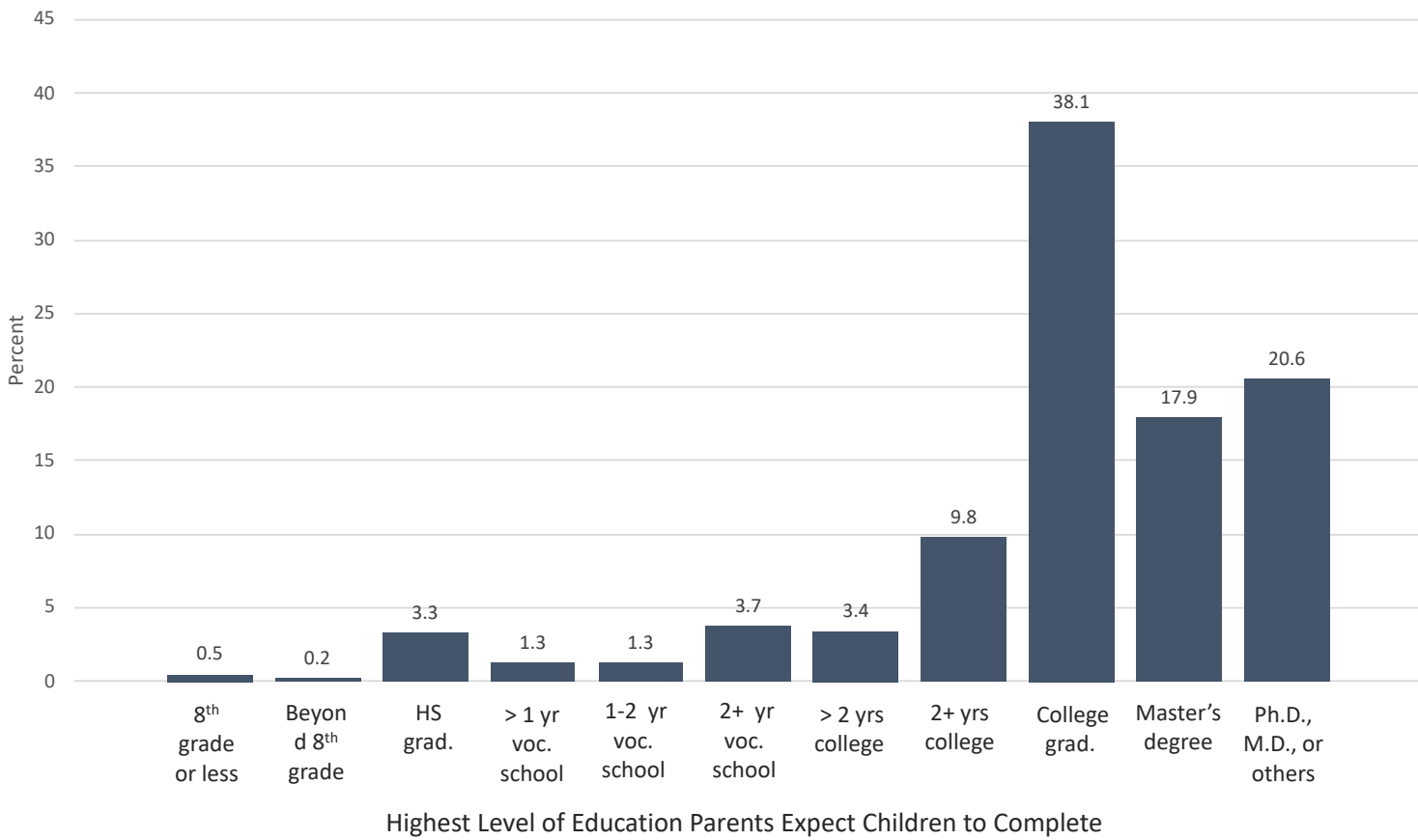


Figure 2. Bar graph of parental aspirations for their children's educational attainment

Running Head = IMMIGRANT PARENTS' INFLUENCE ON CHILDREN'S EDUCATION

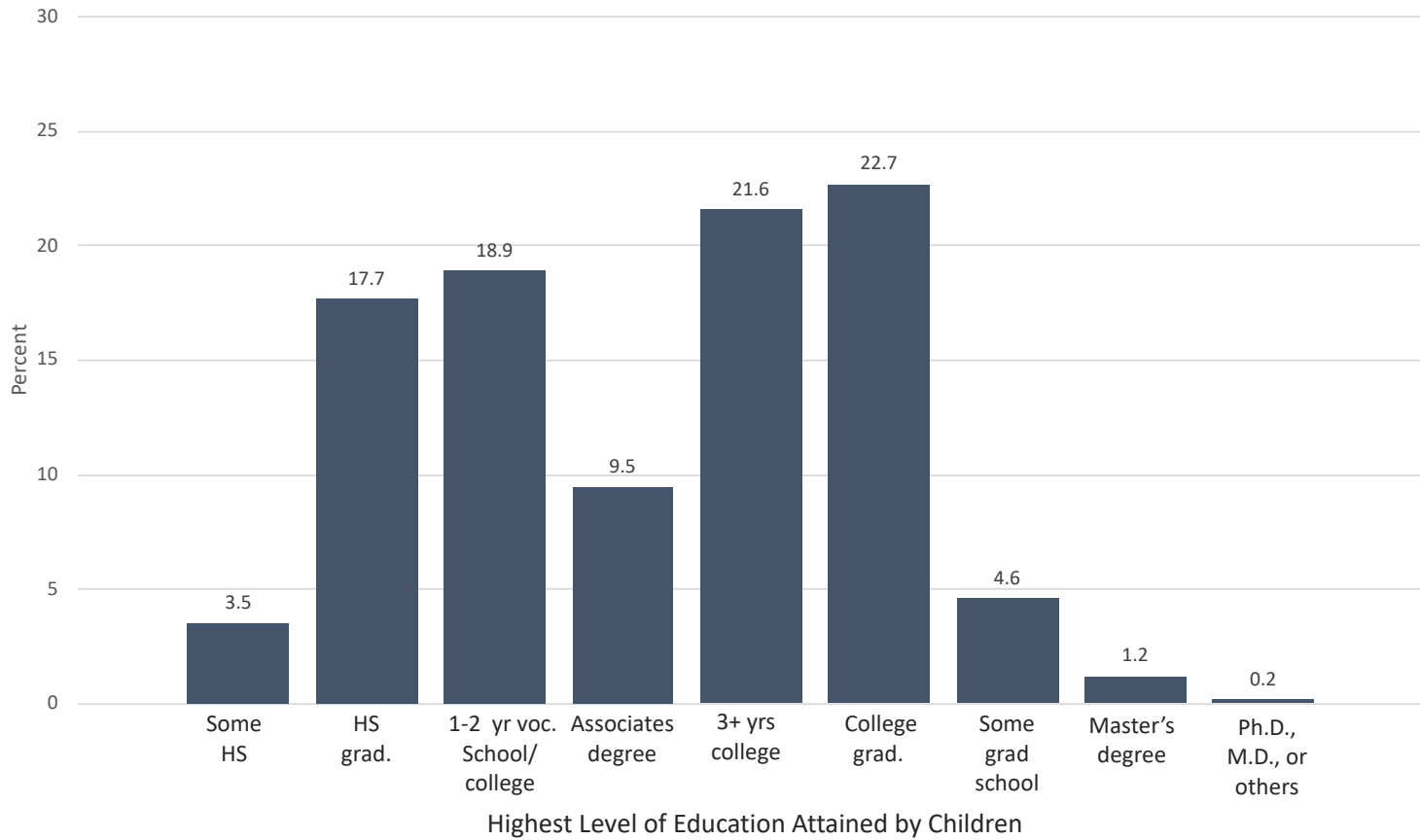


Figure 3. Bar graph of children's educational attainment

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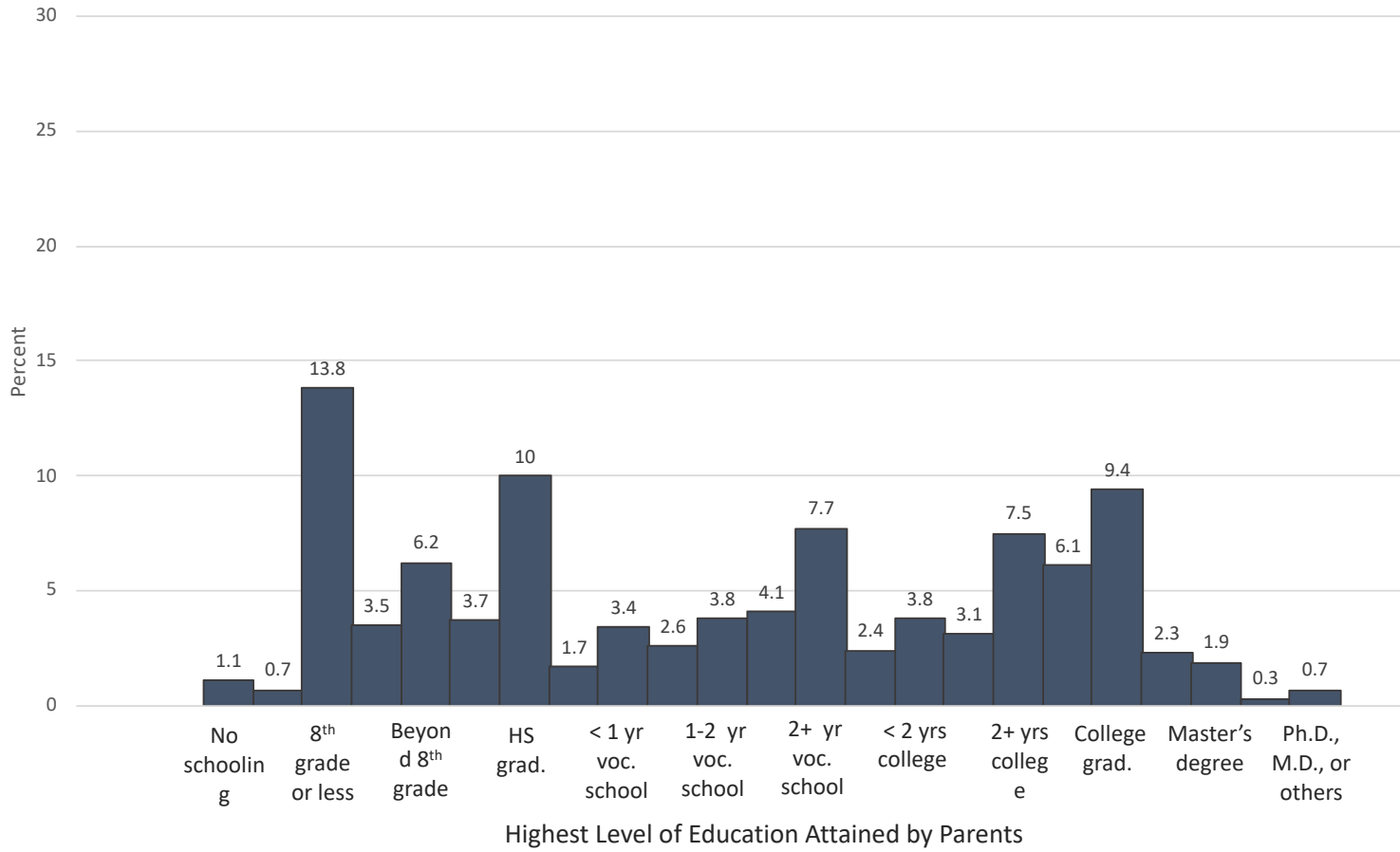


Figure 4. Histogram of parents' average level of educational attainment

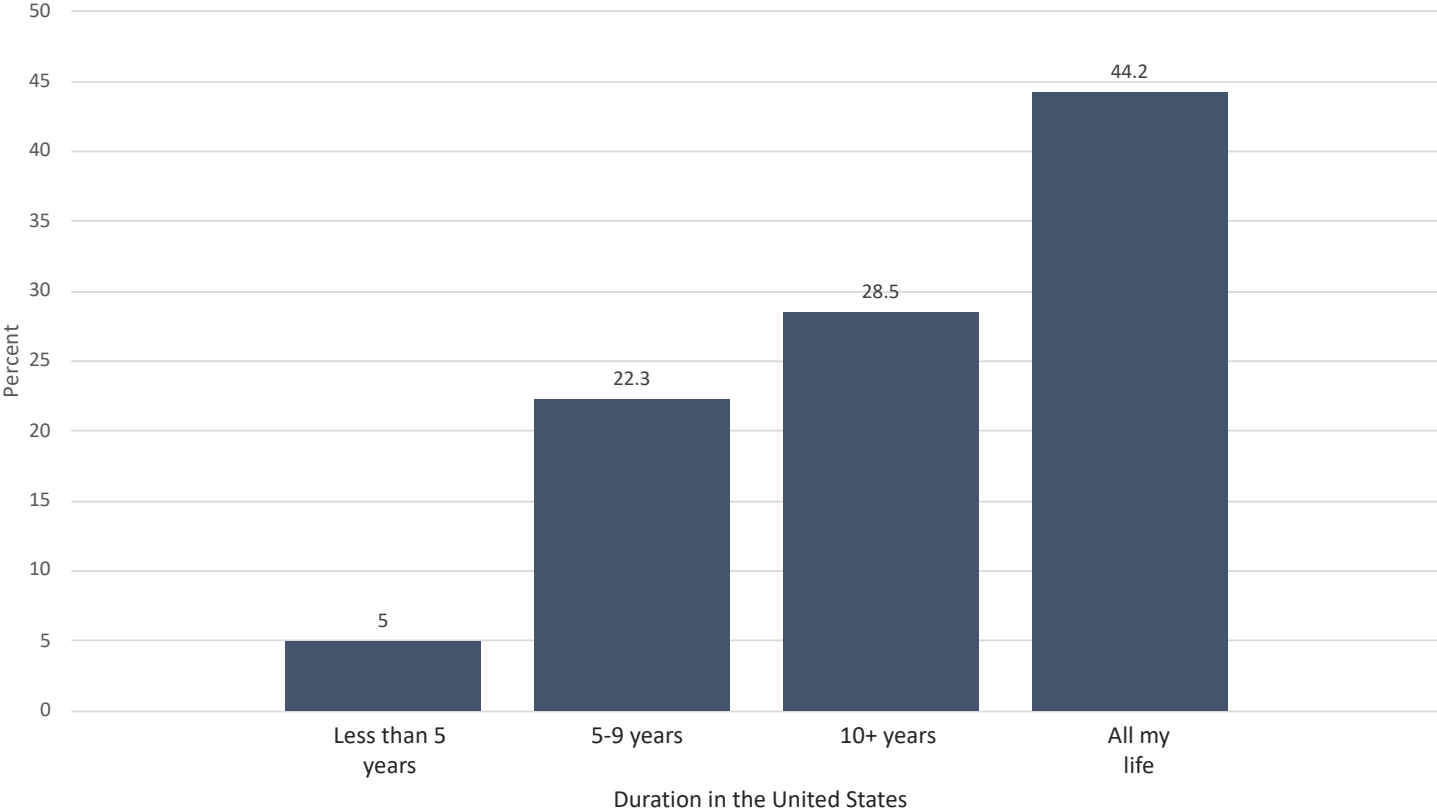


Figure 5. Bar graph of children's duration living in the United States

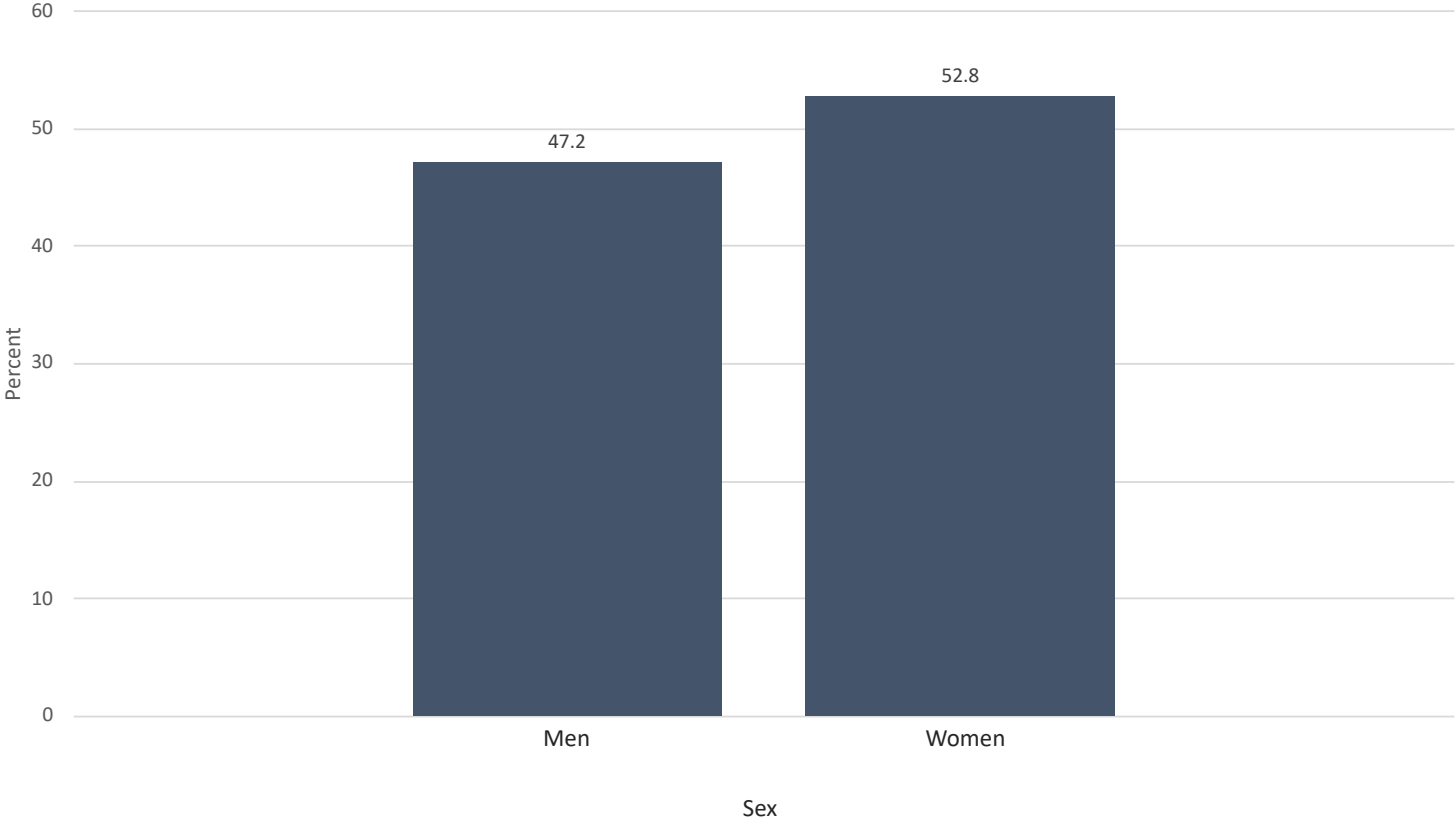


Figure 6. Bar graph of children's sex

Table 1. Means, Medians, and Standard Deviations for Variables ($N = 1668$)

Variable	Mean	Median	SD
Parents' English proficiency	2.90	3.00	0.93
Parental expectations	8.94	9.00	1.93
Children's education	4.22	5.00	1.72
Parents' education	5.05	5.00	3.01
Duration in U.S.	3.12	3.00	0.92
Women	0.53	1.00	0.50

Table 2. Correlations (r) between Children's Education and Six Variables (listwise deletion, two-tailed test, $N = 1668$)

Variable	Parental expectations	Parents' English proficiency	Parents' education	Duration in U.S.	Women
Children's education	.334**	.221**	.301**	.071**	.081**
Parental expectations		.252**	.315**	.074**	.048
Parents' English proficiency			.641**	.362**	-.002
Parents' education				.136**	-.022
Duration in U.S.					-.059*

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

Table 3. Regression of Parental Expectations and Children's Education on Parent's English Proficiency, Parents' Education, Duration in the U.S., and Women ($N = 1668$)

Variable	Parental expectations		Children's education	
	β		β	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	
Parents' English proficiency	.078*	.033	.013	
Parental expectations			.260**	
Parents' education	.264**	.278**	.209**	
Duration in U.S.	.013	.027	.023	
Women	.054*	.089**	.075**	
R^2	.107	.100	.160	
$F(4,1663)$	49.625**	46.169**	63.397**	

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$