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Investigating Academic Pressures on the Children of Immigrants

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Introduction

Immigration is a hot button issue in US society, and has been for a while now. Starting with the wave of Irish immigrants in 1815, immigrants were not necessarily greeted with open arms (History.com Editors. 2018). Throughout history, excluding immigrants and treating them poorly became a pattern. This includes the Chinese Exclusion Act, and the quota system placed into action in 1924 (History.com Editors. 2018). Immigrants have always been resisted by American society and treated accordingly.

This resistance against immigrants has only grown since the 2016 Presidential election. Immigrants and their families have been stereotyped as uneducated and who “steal American jobs”. In reality, the children of immigrants face unique challenges that other children may not face, and they do so while obtaining their education. Whether it is the pressure of assimilating, culture, family, learning a new language, or even discrimination, children of immigrants face these challenges head on while balancing their life in school.

While there are plenty of studies on immigration, there are very few that focus on the education of the children of immigrants. In order to investigate the pressures that are unique to these children, I examined the current literature which was available and then studied the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study directed by Alejandro Portes and Rubén G. Rumbaut. I examined the longitudinal panel study for indications of pressure from parents, culture, discrimination, and finances. In my examination and analysis, I found that there are a lot of parental and cultural pressures placed on the children of immigrants, and that discrimination, was not as big of a factor as suspected.

Literature Review

As of 2007, over 10 million school children in the United States are children of immigrants (Frisby and Jimerson 2016). While all students experience stress, this particular population faces a unique set of circumstances which may result in additional stress or pressure in their academic lives. Children of immigrants are one of the fastest growing populations in America, making it increasingly important to understand the academic stress and pressures that are being placed on them (Han 2008). My study is aimed at determining what sources of pressures the children of immigrants are put under academically. When conducting this study, I would also like to examine the source of this additional pressure, whether it originates within culture, parental expectations, or within the students themselves.

Before going into the depths of this paper, it is important to define a few key terms. A first-generation immigrant is an immigrant in the sense that is commonly used: an individual who moved from their home country, where they were born, and immigrated to a new one (Pew Research Center. 2012). Meanwhile, the children of the first-generation immigrants are known as second-generation immigrants (Pew Research Center. 2012). These are immigrants who were born in the country they immigrated to, but often have aspects of their parent's home culture, and are therefore simultaneously embedded in both the old and new cultures of their family (Pew Research Center. 2012). There are also 1.5-generation immigrants, which are less commonly known or spoken about. The 1.5-generation immigrants are the group of immigrants who were born in their parents' home country, and then immigrated at a very young age (Zhou 1997). Often "immigrant children" is used to describe both the first- and second-generation group combined (Gorgorió, Planas, and Vilella 2002). It is important to understand the differences between these populations in order to be able to discuss them in the context of this paper. In my study, I will be looking at both 1.5-generation and second-generation children.

English as a Second Language

The challenges that children of immigrants face may add additional stress or pressure when in school. One of these challenges include learning English (Frisby and Jimerson 2016). As of 2016, there are some attempts to help students who are children of immigrants learn English by providing translation services (Frisby and Jimerson 2016). Other strategies to speed up the process of learning English include teaching the curriculum entirely in English and refusing to teach in the student's native language (Gibson 1998). This, however, can cause negative effects, such as difficulty with retention, understanding and comprehension. This is demonstrated in the language from the Supreme Court Case *Lau v Nichols* (1974) which addressed the idea that those who do not understand English are often shut off from any meaningful education, as most subjects are taught in only English (Oyez 1974). This Supreme Court decision required that schools with students who have English as their second language also teach their students English (Oyez 1974). This means that students who are second generation immigrants and have English as a second language should be able to take English lessons in their school alongside their other classes (Oyez 1974).

Assimilation

Another issue they may have is resistance and tension caused by assimilation and acculturation. Assimilation is the way immigrants take in the new information about the culture they moved into, while acculturation is the way that immigrants learn culture and adapt their own to incorporate both their old and their new culture together in their lives. If a student feels pressured to assimilate against their will, they may resist, and harbor a distaste for the educational system they are in (Gibson 1998). As for acculturation, despite the pressure placed on immigrant children to assimilate, there is evidence of children of immigrants being successful

in additive acculturation, which is the process of learning the knowledge from the new culture, but not abandoning the old culture (Gibson 1998).

Instead of facing the consequences of total assimilation mentioned previously, when the students are able to use both cultures as tools, it can benefit them during their education process (Gibson 1998). This ability to utilize knowledge from both cultures varies depending on the age at which the child was acculturated. The 1.5-generation are often the ones who have the most objective view on their two cultures, since they are not fully a part of either (Zhou 1997). While the balancing between two cultures, and avoiding total assimilation can be difficult, it has become easier over the years with access to new technology, as it allows for many immigrants, and their children, to stay in touch with the family members and culture that they moved away from (Pew Research Center. 2012).

One example of how cultural differences can affect academic settings can be seen in a study on international college students living in America and their stressors within academic settings. In this study, similar stressors regarding assimilation were reported, such as adapting to different cultures or learning English as a second language (Misra and Castillo 2004). In this study, another factor that was discussed was how different cultures handle stress, which may lead the international students to react differently to stress than their American peers. Often, stress can be demonstrated through physical symptoms for these international students, causing more physical health issues than American students exhibit (Misra and Castillo 2004). This is because these international students “do not distinguish emotional distress from somatic complaints” which is common in American culture (Misra and Castillo 2004). Though this study did not focus on the children of immigrants, there are similar experiences between the two groups of students. This study surrounding cultural differences in stress management may also apply to

children of immigrants, and how their cultural differences may play into how they manage their academic stress.

Bullying, Deportation and Discrimination

Children of immigrants also may face personal pressures and anxiety that their other peers do not. Bullying and discrimination is unfortunately an extremely common experience among the children of immigrants (Portes and Rumbaut 2003). Students who are children of immigrants may face and have to overcome both verbal and physical abuse which occur inside and outside of the classroom (Gibson 1998). This puts them at a disadvantage, as students who are bullied or abused do academically worse than those who are not (Ladd, Ettekal, and Kochenderfer-Ladd 2017). Even if the discrimination is not overt, there are situations that can lead immigrant students to feel excluded and left outside of their peer group (Gorgorió et al. 2002). One example is group projects, where immigrant students may experience a language barrier. In this situation, immigrant students sometimes do not get selected by groups to be their partner as they “do not know” what they are talking about (Gorgorió et al. 2002). This can lead the student to feel left out, or feel excluded and discriminated against.

While the discrimination often originates from students, teacher’s own personal bias can also influence their relationships with students, and cause the teacher to discriminate as well (Han 2008). This affects student-teacher relationships, which is incredibly harmful since these relationships “matter greatly to children’s academic learning process and their resulting achievements” (Han 2008). It has also been said that immigrant children “cannot establish reference points with which to direct themselves” without having already established meaningful relationships among their peers and educators (Gorgorió et al. 2002). Discrimination can even occur in less overt ways, such as arranging the classroom so that students of certain ethnic

minorities sit in positions that make it difficult for them to learn to better satisfy the teacher (Gorgorió et al. 2002). Examples of this include students being placed facing each other behind the teacher's desk, so the teachers back are turned to them (Gorgorió et al. 2002). Another action that sometimes is perceived as discrimination is when teachers ask questions that their student believes is disrespectful (Gorgorió et al. 2002). For example, in one study, when a student was asked to demonstrate how he solved the problem for his class, the student stated that is the teacher's job (Gorgorió et al. 2002). The cultural expectations between the educator and the student were different, causing a miscommunication, and tension between the two of them (Gorgorió et al. 2002).

In addition, students who are having a difficult transition process may act out in the classroom, causing the teachers to form opinions on the student without necessarily having to account for their external factors that could be leading to the outbursts (Gorgorió et al. 2002). A difficult transition can manifest through “misbehavior, lack of interest, absenteeism” and other forms of frustration (Gorgorió et al. 2002). Because these transitions often have the invisible component of transition, the reason behind these behaviors may not be clear, and may lead the student to experience road blocks in their schooling (Gorgorió et al. 2002). This causes teachers to believe that their immigrant children students are “different” than other students, since they are dealing with different circumstances, and straying from the perceived normalcy their peers may display (Gorgorió et al. 2002). The teachers are able to help their students if the reason behind the behavior is recognized, but if not, it can lead to the student falling behind (Gorgorió et al. 2002).

Another obstacle that some children of immigrants must overcome is the fear of deportation, whether that is of themselves or their parents (Enriquez 2011). This fear and

anxiety may be only felt by those who are not in the United States legally, but it is one that students must prioritize, and often one that overrides the need to do well in school.

Undocumented Latino immigrants often perform worse in schools than their white non-immigrant peers, and only a small percentage actually graduates from high school (Enriquez 2011). These undocumented students tend to also have less social capital, and therefore a smaller support system in order to help them if they are struggling (Enriquez 2011). For this reason, undocumented immigrants face additional challenges and pressures than their documented counterparts, and therefore may have different results in my study.

Financial Pressure

Immigrant families also tend to be ones of lower income, though the median household income varies depending on the ethnic background of the immigrant (Zhou 1997). Immigrants from India report actually earning above the household median income of \$30,000, while many other immigrants of Latino or Hispanic descent report a median earning of \$22,000 (Zhou 1997). This is because blue-collar, low-wage jobs are often available to immigrants shortly after they arrive to America (Zhou 1997). Studies also show that the socioeconomic status of a first-generation immigrant is often passed down to the second-generation immigrant, meaning the children of immigrants will inherit their parent's socioeconomic status (Portes and Macleod 1996). This indicates that many of the children of immigrants will also have a lower economic status than many of their peers. This stresses a fact that is already well known: that post-secondary educational attainment is critical to climbing upward in America's socio-economic status.

This economic gap can impact the resources available to these students when attaining their education, or whether they can afford to pay for post-secondary education (Portes and

Macleod 1996). Resources such as books, tutors and technology can be exclusive and only available to those who can afford them. Those who can afford the materials can use these resources to get ahead while those who cannot afford it will struggle to keep up. It has been shown that differences in socio-economic status can often be linked directly to “objective measures of school attainment” such as high school GPA and national percentile in achievement (Rumbaut 2005).

Children of immigrants are also more likely to go to schools with “multiple risk factors that put them in a disadvantaged position for school success” (Han 2008). These risk factors include overcrowding and inadequate textbooks or resources (Han 2008). In addition, the learning environment may be more disruptive in these schools and have higher risks for violence and drugs (Zhou 1997). These same risk factors contribute to high suspension and dropout rates among this population. In one study of the children of immigrants, participants were asked whether or not they had been suspended during their last two years of high school (Rumbaut 2005). Nearly one fifth of those participants had been suspended at least once, but that was still below the suspension rate of their school district (Rumbaut 2005). This implies that the school district they are in suspends students often and at high rates, due to all of the risk factors which exist in districts with lower socioeconomic status. Immigrants also face higher dropout rates, despite also experiencing higher levels of academic success (Greenman 2008). This may imply that those immigrants who are dropping out of high school may not be served and reaching their full potential, and are dropping out due to the risk factors mentioned before.

Not only does economic status contribute to education resources, but it also contributes to the attitudes the students hold, and how easy their transition may be. Many students in lower income families had lower expectations for their future, both in the areas of education and

employment (Gibson 1998). This may have to do with the way climbing the socioeconomic ladder in the United States is nearly impossible. The lack of expectations and faith that they will do well majorly affects these students, as there has been evidence that having high educational expectations can have an “extraordinarily strong effect on actual educational achievement” (Rumbaut 2005). This can also affect how easily the transition is for a student (Gorgorió et al. 2002). Students of higher economic or social status are easier to transition, opposed to lower class immigrant students, who may be unschooled or have challenges developing an understanding of the organizational structure that occurs within schools (Gorgorió et al. 2002).

Despite all of these challenges, there is evidence based on a nationally representative sample that “both first- and second-generation high school students have higher educational aspirations, earn higher grades, and receive higher math scores than do the children of native-born parents” or third-generation students (Gibson 1998). Another study found that children of immigrants are more likely to take preparatory college classes while still in high school, and are also more likely to attend college, and earn a college degree (Gibson 1998). Because of all of the additional pressures and challenges placed on the children of immigrants, many may not expect this statistic. This begs the question: what causes these students to succeed to the lengths that they do, despite the adversities that they may face? Could cultural, familial or personal pressure be motivating them to outperform despite their disadvantages?

Familial and Cultural Pressures

One pressure that may be motivating these students to perform better is familial expectations. Many of those who immigrate to the United States do so in order to provide better educational and economic opportunities for their children (Gibson 1998). This may cause familial pressure for these children to do well in school, since the sacrifices were made for the

sake of their education, they are expected to make the most of that opportunity. In addition, having the child understand the sacrifices made by their parents in order to provide a better education for them may cause them to place additional pressure on themselves in order to avoid disappointing their parents.

Examples of these familial pressures can be seen in the gap of college degree attainment between children of immigrants and the national average. While the proportions of college graduates who are foreign-born or US-born are about the same, those who were foreign-born are nearly three times less likely to have a high school diploma, showing that immigrants were less likely to obtain a higher education than their children, who would be US-born (Rumbaut 2005). When looking at this gap of college degree attainment, children of immigrant parents who had less than a high school education had a much larger contrast to the national average, meaning that they were attaining higher education levels than both their parents, and what was expected nationally for their demographic (Rumbaut 2005). Another study shows that Latino children who believe their parents have high academic expectations also report having high self-efficacy (Cross et al. 2019), which supports the idea that parents often socialize their children in ways that affect their academic behaviors and performance (Cross et al. 2019).

This is closely tied to the cultural motivation found in a study centered around the public schools in St. Croix, which is a US Virgin Island. The cultural example that was brought up was that the immigrant's native homelands sometimes did not have a successful or free education system (Gibson 1998). This caused the young children of these immigrants to have a different attitude towards the education they were receiving, viewing it more as an opportunity than a burden, purely due to their culture (Gibson 1998). This mindset of education being an opportunity may be common among immigrants children. In a longitudinal study on children of

immigrants in Miami, Ft. Lauderdale, and San Diego, 90.3% of the children of immigrants responded saying that they believe they aspire to finish college, with 78.2% stating that they find that goal to be realistic (Portes and Rumbaut. 2003).

These ideas can be tied to the concept of immigrant optimism, which is the belief held by immigrants that their new home will create drastic positive change (Hao and Woo 2012). This is very common in immigrant parents, who often include their child's education in their own optimism (Hao and Woo 2012). It has been suggested that children internalize their parent's expectations regarding their academic success, and work harder in order to fulfill these expectations (Hao and Woo 2012). Second-generation immigrants believe in "getting ahead from hard work" at a significantly higher percentage, 78% for Hispanic immigrants, 72% for Asian, than the average American, which only believed the same statement at about 58% (Pew Research Center. 2012). And their hard work pays off. As of data collected in 2012, 29% of first-generation immigrants over the age of 25 have a college degree, while 36% of second-generation immigrants of the same age group had one (Pew Research Center. 2012). The United States average was only 31%, five percent less than those second-generation immigrants who had to overcome the struggles mentioned in this literature review (Pew Research Center. 2012).

Another cultural motivation may be found within tightly knit ethnic support groups. In one study, a community of Vietnamese immigrants held high standards for their children and worked together to help each other attain them (Portes and Macleod 1996). This tight knit support between the immigrant parents and community is caused by a cultural belief that the failure of a child brings shame to not just the child, but the entire family and community (Portes and Macleod 1996). Due to this belief, the students are pressured to be more successful in

school, in order to prevent their family and community from appearing as a failure. This causes a high amount of pressure to be placed on the children of immigrants.

Outside of the Vietnamese culture, immigrant families in general are more tightly knit, which helps the children have a sense of responsibility, which can help them succeed in their educational journey (Han 2008). While this can be useful in developing resilience, it can also produce pressure from the family and cultures of these children that they must do exceptionally well, despite their conditions. In the same study that provided the insight on Latino student's parental expectations and self-efficacy, there was also a correlation between the shame/pressure the students felt from their parents and their self-efficacy (Cross et al. 2019). This means that the students who believed their parents place large amounts of shame/pressure on their student are the same students with the lowest scores of self-efficacy (Cross et al. 2019). This speaks to how the pressure placed on these students may not only cause them to be stressed, but genuinely not believe they are self-efficient enough to accomplish what is expected of them.

When looking specifically at the education of the children of Indian immigrants, however, there is a difference in attitude. The daughters of Indian immigrants sometimes did not do as well in high school, and did not feel the motivation to do so, due to the cultural belief that they should not attend post-secondary education (Gibson 1998). This contradicts the idea that there are more academic pressures placed on the children of immigrants, since this is not expected of them. This discrepancy based on gender is very important, as it may effect various data sets and reports, distorting the reality of the pressures these children face. However, it is most important to note that many studies did not address gender differences in terms of success or expectations. In my study, I would be interested in examining whether gender plays a role in the academic pressures placed on the children of immigrants in other cultures than this one.

Overall, this literature provided a strong background of information that is relevant to my study, but very few examined the academic stress that students place on themselves due to their known cultural and familial expectations. My study would focus more on this portion of the research, hoping to uncover where the academic pressure that is placed on the children of immigrants originates. This can be done through more content analysis, or through a survey of both immigrant and non-immigrant students regarding their academic pressures, and where they originate from. The findings of this study would be expected to show that the children of immigrants face more academic pressure than their peers outside of this demographic.

Methods

The Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study is a longitudinal panel study directed by Alejandro Portes and Rubén G. Rumbaut. This study surveyed children of immigrants concerning various topics including their educational attainment and goals. The first study was conducted in 1992, and surveyed 8th and 9th graders who were children of immigrants. The panel was conducted again three years later, right before the participants exited high school. Lastly, the third panel was conducted when the participants would have entered early adulthood, when the average age was 24 years old. This study was used in order to write two books, including Alejandro Portes's "Legacies: The Story of the Immigrant Second Generation", and to conduct several other studies focused on the children of immigrant population.

The participants in the study were all either second-generation students, or students a part of the 1.5-generation, although the study itself classified them all as a second-generation group. The participants came from 77 different national origins and were surveyed in both Florida and California cities. In my study, I focused on only the participants who responded to all three of the panels (n = 3344) and removed those who did not respond to all three. I did not use the parental

survey that was conducted alongside the second panel in any portion of my study, as it focused on first-generation immigrant parents, and my study focuses on the children of immigrants.

Data Analysis

In order to analyze the data provided by the study, the dataset was uploaded into the SPSS version 27. From there, I slightly altered the dataset to fit only the variables I was looking to examine by dropping the variables that I did not need for my study. I am going to use crosstabulations and chi-square measures of significance in order to measure relationships between various possible pressures placed on the students, and their educational attainment.

Table of Variables

Variable Label	Mean	Standard Deviation	Median	Mode
Independent Variables				
Education parents want for r*	4.57	.722	5	5
“People will still discriminate against me regardless of education”*	2.90	1.005	3	4
Dependent Variables				
“Getting a good education is:”*	2.89	.365	3	3
“Good grades are important to me”~	1.3	0.643	1	1
Both Dependent and Independent Variables				
Discrimination by teacher recoded*	0.6209	.48529	1	1
Discrimination by students recoded*	0.4635	.49880	0	0

Discrimination by counselors recoded*	0.8766	.32897	1	1
Highest year of education recoded^	4.1287	1.74272	4	5
Years of education^	14.33	1.830	14	14
Education r wants to achieve~	4.58	0.744	5	5
Education r thinks is attainable~	4.18	0.923	4	5
Education r wants to achieve*	4.6	0.721	5	5
Education r thinks is attainable*	4.28	0.838	4	5
Why no college recoded*	2.817	1.20	2	2

~Question was asked in panel 1

*Question was asked in panel 2

^Question was asked in panel 3

Analysis

Parental Pressure

The first thing I examined was whether or not there was an association between the education the students wanted to achieve and the education level the parents wanted them to achieve in order to examine whether the parental pressures affected the students as expected based on my literature review. When running a crosstab between the education the respondent wants and the education the parents of the respondent wants for the respondent, there is an extremely high association, with a p-value of less than .001, making the association statistically significant. In this crosstab, 58.4% of all of the respondents claimed that both they and their parents want them to finish graduate school.

Not only does this imply that the goals that parents set for their children greatly impacts and influences the goals those children have for themselves, it also implies that education goals and expectations for the children of immigrants within this study are fairly high. In addition, for every level of education, the percentage of participants who want that level of education is highest if their parents also desire that level of education for them, meaning that the participants often only desired the level of education that their parents desired for them, no more or no less. This speaks to the parental pressure that can be placed on the children of immigrants when it comes to educational attainment. This could be because of parental pressures, but also cultural ones such as the ones discussed within the literature review. Many parents sacrificed a lot to immigrate to the United States and one of the positive outcomes could be for their students to get more of an education. This could contribute to the parental pressures that these students face. These results were pulled from Table 1, as shown below.

Table 1: Crosstab Education R wants recoded by education parents want for R recoded

education r wants recoded * education parents want for r recoded Crosstabulation

		education parents want for r recoded									
		some or finish high school		some college		finish college		graduate school		Total	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
education r wants recoded	some or finish high school	26	28.6%	16	17.4%	26	3.2%	17	0.8%	85	2.8%
	some college	10	11.0%	43	46.7%	53	6.6%	27	1.3%	133	4.4%
	finish college	22	24.2%	9	9.8%	407	50.6%	217	10.8%	655	21.8%
	graduate school	33	36.3%	24	26.1%	318	39.6%	1753	87.0%	2128	70.9%
Total		91	100.0%	92	100.0%	804	100.0%	2014	100.0%	3001	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1393.907 ^a	9	.000

a. 4 cells (25.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.58.

After examining parental expectations affected the goals of the respondent, I wondered if these results had any influence on what the respondent deemed realistically attainable. When

comparing the crosstabulations, there were differences, the first noticeable one being that a lot of the respondents believed their goals were not realistically attainable, which can be noted due to the lower percentages in the higher educational categories. As each of the categories go up, less of the students find the goal their parents have for them not realistically attainable. This shows that while the student's goals are impacted by the goals their parents have, they may not find it realistically attainable. This could create additional pressure from the parents, since their goals are ones that their children may not find realistically attainable. Therefore, they may feel pressured to meet these goals which they do not find actually attainable.

Table 2: Crosstab Education R thinks is realistically attainable recoded by education parents want for R recoded

education r thinks is realistically attainable recoded * education parents want for r recoded Crosstabulation

		education parents want for r recoded									
		some or finish high school		some college		finish college		graduate school		Total	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
education r thinks is realistically attainable recoded	some or finish high school	34	37.4%	25	27.2%	47	5.9%	37	1.8%	143	4.8%
	some college	12	13.2%	45	48.9%	113	14.1%	119	5.9%	289	9.6%
	finish college	29	31.9%	10	10.9%	456	56.8%	643	32.0%	1138	38.0%
	graduate school	16	17.6%	12	13.0%	187	23.3%	1213	60.3%	1428	47.6%
Total		91	100.0%	92	100.0%	803	100.0%	2012	100.0%	2998	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	852.096 ^a	9	.000

a. 2 cells (12.5%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.34.

Discrimination in Schools

I also wanted to examine whether there are other pressures from within the school system affecting the respondents desired level of education. Interestingly enough, the survey did ask whether the students felt discriminated against by their teachers, other students and counselors, and the results indicated that most of the students did not feel discriminated against by their

teachers or their counselors. This goes against what I studied in my literature review, which stated that one pressure the children of immigrants may face is the discrimination from people within these groups, and that their learning could be impacted by this discrimination.

I did run a crosstabulation to see if there was an association between students who felt discriminated against by their teacher and which education level they believed was attainable and to my surprise, there was no relationship. The percentages of the students in each category for education attainment were very similar regardless of the answer to whether they had felt discriminated against by their teacher. This finding goes against my research done in the literature review, and against my hypothesis that teacher discrimination is one of the pressures that may influence the goals of children of immigrants regarding their educational attainment. This can be seen in Table 2 below.

Table 3: Crosstab Education R thinks is attainable recoded by discrimination by teacher recoded

**education r thinks is realistically attainable recoded * discrimination by teachers recoded
Crosstabulation**

		discrimination by teachers recoded				Total	
		no		yes			
		n	%	n	%	n	%
education r thinks is realistically attainable recoded	some or finish high school	44	3.8%	35	5.0%	79	4.2%
	some college	105	9.1%	83	11.7%	188	10.1%
	finish college	457	39.5%	269	38.0%	726	39.0%
	graduate school	550	47.6%	320	45.3%	870	46.7%
Total		1156	100.0%	707	100.0%	1863	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.175 ^a	3	.159

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 29.98.

I did wonder if the social class of the family the student came from affected whether or not they felt discriminated by the teachers. In order to examine this, I elaborated the crosstabulation by the level education the respondent's parents had. For both the father and the mother's education levels, there were no significant differences implying discrimination on the basis of the parent's education level. This means that the teacher of the respondent was not more likely to discriminate based on the parent's education level. It is possible that discrimination from teachers was not an issue at these schools was due to the area having a large immigrant population, leading to different norms in teaching practices and trainings than other area which are primarily non-immigrant areas. This would make more sense and align more with my literature review if this was the case.

While a majority of students did not say they felt discriminated against by their teachers, they did say they felt discriminated against by their peers. This is not an uncommon experience, as the research in my literature review indicated. However, when running a crosstabulation

between the level of education that the respondent found attainable and whether or not they faced discrimination from their peers, and the results were still not significant. This may imply that while students who are children of immigrants do not allow the discrimination they face from their peers to affect their educational goals, they do feel additional pressures in an academic setting facing discrimination. These statistics can be demonstrated through Table 3.

Table 4: Crosstab Education R thinks is attainable recoded by discrimination by student recoded

**education r thinks is realistically attainable recoded * discrimination by students recoded
Crosstabulation**

		discrimination by students recoded				Total	
		no		yes		n	%
		n	%	n	%		
education r thinks is realistically attainable recoded	some or finish high school	35	4.1%	44	4.4%	79	4.2%
	some college	89	10.3%	99	9.9%	188	10.1%
	finish college	343	39.8%	383	38.3%	726	39.0%
	graduate school	395	45.8%	474	47.4%	869	46.7%
Total		862	100.0%	1000	100.0%	1862	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.719 ^a	3	.869

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 36.57.

After seeing that the students did not allow the discrimination they faced effect their educational attainment goals, I wondered if these students felt safe within their learning environment despite their discrimination. I examined this through another crosstabulation, between the “I don’t feel safe in this school” question and the discrimination by students recoded variable. When examining this crosstabulation it became apparent that those who did not feel

safe in their schools were the same respondents who were being discriminated against, while those who strongly disagreed with the statement “I don’t feel safe in this school” were mainly the respondents claiming they were not being discriminated against. In addition, the chi-square test proved that there was a statistical significance in this data as the p value was less than .001. This can be shown in Table 4 below.

Table 5: Crosstab “I don’t feel safe in this school” by discrimination by student recoded

"i don't feel safe in this school"* discrimination by students recoded Crosstabulation

		discrimination by students recoded				Total	
		no		yes		n	%
		n	%	n	%		
"i don't feel safe in this school"	agree a lot	40	4.7%	68	6.8%	108	5.8%
	agree a little	160	18.7%	249	25.0%	409	22.1%
	disagree a little	267	31.2%	344	34.5%	611	33.0%
	disagree a lot	389	45.4%	335	33.6%	724	39.1%
Total		856	100.0%	996	100.0%	1852	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	29.945 ^a	3	.000

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 49.92.

While researching the topic of discrimination, I examined the responses to the question regarding whether the respondent felt they would still be discriminated against regardless of their education level. When examining the crosstabulation between those who believe getting a good education is important and those who believe they will be discriminated against regardless of their education, there was an association between the two. The crosstabulation showed that those who believe that education is important are more likely to also say they do not believe they will

be discriminated against regardless of their education. While the difference in percentages does not look too stark, the chi square test shows that there is a significant association, since the p value is less than .01. This could explain the motivations the respondents may have to achieve certain educational goals, since valuing education could potentially end the discrimination they face. This is also important when considering the last crosstabulation I conducted, which states the discrimination was causing the students to feel unsafe in schools. It is possible that the reason the respondents are motivated in order to get a good education is because they believe that it will end the discrimination they are facing and it will make them feel safer.

Table 6: Crosstab getting a good education is by people will still discrimination against me regardless of education.

getting a good education is: * people will still discriminate against me regardless of education Crosstabulation

		people will still discriminate against me regardless of education								Total	
		very true		partly true		not very true		not true at all			
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
getting a good education is:	not important	11	3.5%	13	1.8%	13	1.5%	13	1.2%	50	1.7%
	somewhat important	25	7.9%	51	7.1%	94	10.5%	70	6.6%	240	8.0%
	very important	281	88.6%	652	91.1%	789	88.1%	984	92.2%	2706	90.3%
Total		317	100.0%	716	100.0%	896	100.0%	1067	100.0%	2996	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	19.277 ^a	6	.004

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 5.29.

Similarly, I examined a crosstabulation between whether the respondent said grades were important to them and whether they believed they would still be discriminated against regardless of their education. The crosstabulation showed that the respondents who did not believe that discrimination will occur regardless of gender were also respondents who believed that grades were very important to them. The results were also significant according to the chi-square test

with a p value of less than .01. This shows an association between the two, implying that those who believe they can end their own discrimination through their education levels also value having good grades in order to accomplish that.

Table 7: Crosstab grades are important to me by people will still discrimination against me regardless of education.

good grades are important to me * people will still discriminate against me regardless of education Crosstabulation

		people will still discriminate against me regardless of education								Total	
		very true		partly true		not very true		not true at all			
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
good grades are important to me	very true	223	70.3%	498	69.7%	601	67.1%	754	70.7%	2076	69.3%
	partly true	62	19.6%	174	24.3%	245	27.3%	262	24.6%	743	24.8%
	not very true	18	5.7%	30	4.2%	34	3.8%	40	3.7%	122	4.1%
	not true at all	14	4.4%	13	1.8%	16	1.8%	11	1.0%	54	1.8%
Total		317	100.0%	715	100.0%	896	100.0%	1067	100.0%	2995	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	24.940 ^a	9	.003

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 5.72.

Financial Burden

When examining the results for the parental pressure factor, I wondered what reason would cause students to not pursue higher education, or whether it was purely because the respondent did not want to attend a higher education institution. To examine this idea, I recoded variable v266, why does the respondent not to attend college. After recoding variable v266, 48.9% of the respondents claimed that if they did not go to college, the reason would be due to financial issues. This can explain one pressure that is placed on the students and participants of this study, though financial concerns may not be a pressure that is unique to the children of immigrants. Another nearly 10% of the respondents claimed that if they did not go to college, it

would be because of not having the time due to work. This can be another example of how finances could get in the way of the children of immigrants not being able to attend college. It is important to note that the “system missing” category here contains a majority of our respondents. This is because the respondents were undecided on whether they were to attend college at all, and therefore were unable to respond to why they expect to not attend college.

Table 8: Why does respondent not expect to attend college recoded frequency

why r does not expect to attend college recoded

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	3	.1	1.6	1.6
	2.00	91	2.7	48.9	50.5
	3.00	16	.5	8.6	59.1
	4.00	18	.5	9.7	68.8
	5.00	24	.7	12.9	81.7
	6.00	1	.0	.5	82.3
	7.00	33	1.0	17.7	100.0
	Total	186	5.6	100.0	
Missing	System	3158	94.4		
Total		3344	100.0		

Another financial consideration would be the fact that many children of immigrants cannot afford tutors that other students may have access to. This has them relying on their own social networks to seek help on homework assignments and when studying. In the literature review, I found that some immigrant families had tight knit ethnic support through their communities, but it was common among Korean immigrant families. However, the immigrant

families in this survey are from a variety of national origins, and they may not have the support system as popular with the Korean immigrant families.

When examining the frequency table of variable 295, who helps the respondent with their homework, it is important to note that tutors were not listed as an option on this survey, so any student who visits a tutor would be considered a “other” response, leading to a maximum (since not all responses of “other” means that they would see a tutor) of 3.6% of students receiving help from a paid tutor. All other options on this survey in which the respondent would be receiving help with their homework from would be provided for free.

According to the frequency table, the two most popular responses were no one, and friends. Together, these two categories alone make up a majority of the responses at 64.9%. This is interesting to examine as a majority of the students rely on themselves and their own social circle in order to do well in school. It is also important to note that only 8.2% rely on teachers and counselors for help with their homework. This may have to do with the previous discussion of feeling unsafe in school, and the discrimination that teachers and counselors may be demonstrating towards their students.

Table 9: Person who helps respondent with their homework frequency

person who helps r with homework

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	mother or father	345	10.3	11.5	11.5
	brother or sister	318	9.5	10.6	22.1
	friends	978	29.2	32.6	54.7
	teachers	240	7.2	8.0	62.7
	counselors	5	.1	.2	62.9
	significant other, boyfriend, girlfriend	33	1.0	1.1	64.0
	in-law or fiance's parents	3	.1	.1	64.1
	other	107	3.2	3.6	67.7
	no one	969	29.0	32.3	100.0
	Total	2998	89.7	100.0	
Missing	System	346	10.3		
Total		3344	100.0		

Cultural Pressures

When continuing to examine who helps the respondent with their homework, a cultural difference can be examined as well. I recoded the variable of the respondent's origin in order to examine the areas from which the respondent's origins were, and then ran a crosstabulation with the variable "person who helps respondent with homework". What I found was that of the respondents, those whose area of origin were South and Central America, Caribbean and Mexico were more likely to ask for no help on their homework and do it on their own than those whose area of origin were Asia, the Middle East, Europe or Canada.

While not all of these areas of origin mean that the respondent was Hispanic or Latinx, there is a stark difference here between the areas which are traditionally Hispanic or Latinx and the areas which are not. This could indicate a difference in cultural pressures, much like the

literature review implied with the example of the tight knit Korean community. In that example, the tight knit community helped each other out with homework, since there was a cultural belief that all of the Korean students in school were culturally representative of the Korean immigrant population. When examining who sought help for homework from their friends, there were higher percentages of those from the origin areas of Asia, the Middle East and Europe and Canada. This may also speak to the tight knit ethnic communities my literature review discussed. These cultural pressures and differences could be why there was such a stark difference between these populations, but more information would be needed to back up this sort of claim. The chi-squared value is not included in the table below, but contained a p value of less than .001, making these findings statistically significant.

Table 10: Crosstab person who helps r with homework by area of origin

person who helps r with homework * r area of origin Crosstabulation

		r area of origin													
		Caribbean		Mexico		South/Central America		Asia		Middle East		Europe / Canada		Total	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
person who helps r with homework	mother or father	146	15.2%	28	7.3%	72	13.7%	83	8.0%	7	21.2%	9	18.0%	345	11.5%
	brother or sister	84	8.7%	56	14.5%	59	11.3%	108	10.4%	4	12.1%	7	14.0%	318	10.6%
	friends	308	32.0%	85	22.1%	131	25.0%	425	40.7%	11	33.3%	18	36.0%	978	32.6%
	teachers	55	5.7%	52	13.5%	22	4.2%	106	10.2%	3	9.1%	2	4.0%	240	8.0%
	counselors	1	0.1%	2	0.5%	1	0.2%	1	0.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	5	0.2%
	significant other, boyfriend, girlfriend	14	1.5%	11	2.9%	6	1.1%	2	0.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	33	1.1%
	in-law or fiancé's parents	0	0.0%	1	0.3%	1	0.2%	1	0.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	0.1%
	other	34	3.5%	12	3.1%	23	4.4%	36	3.5%	1	3.0%	1	2.0%	107	3.6%
	no one	321	33.3%	138	35.8%	209	39.9%	281	26.9%	7	21.2%	13	26.0%	969	32.3%
Total	963	100.0%	385	100.0%	524	100.0%	1043	100.0%	33	100.0%	50	100.0%	2998	100.0%	

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	177.051 ^a	40	.000

a. 21 cells (38.9%) have expected n less than 5. The minimum expected count is .03.

In order to further examine these cultural pressures, I also conducted a crosstabulation between “good grades are important to me” and the area of origin that I recoded. When examining this, I found that all of the respondents from the Middle East area agreed with the statement that good grades were important to them. It is important to note that this is the only

group within which everyone agreed to the statement, however it is also the smallest group of origin.

When examining those who disagreed with the statement, two major numbers were surprising to me. The first I noticed is when I examined the respondents to those who said “good grades are important to me” was not true at all. When examining these responses, the respondents from Mexico were more likely to select this response than the respondents from other origin areas. The response rate of 5% is considerably high compared to the other areas of origin, with the next being Europe and Canada at 3.3%.

The second statistic that was surprising was the responses that claimed the statement “good grades are important to me” was “not very true”. Respondents whose origin areas were Europe and Canada were almost twice as likely to respond that this statement was “not very true” than the respondents from the other origin areas.

Table 11: Crosstab “good grades are important to me” by area of origin

good grades are important to me * r area of origin Crosstabulation															
		r area of origin													
		Caribbean		Mexico		South/Central America		Asia		Middle East		Europe / Canada		Total	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
good grades are important to me	very true	623	64.6%	263	68.3%	344	65.9%	789	75.6%	28	84.8%	31	62.0%	2078	69.3%
	partly true	268	27.8%	91	23.6%	146	28.0%	218	20.9%	3	9.1%	17	34.0%	743	24.8%
	not very true	51	5.3%	19	4.9%	23	4.4%	26	2.5%	1	3.0%	2	4.0%	122	4.1%
	not true at all	23	2.4%	12	3.1%	9	1.7%	10	1.0%	1	3.0%	0	0.0%	55	1.8%
Total		965	100.0%	385	100.0%	522	100.0%	1043	100.0%	33	100.0%	50	100.0%	2998	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	50.229 ^a	15	.000

a. 4 cells (16.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .61.

I wonder when looking at these statistics if there is a cultural reason why these responses vary so much between origin areas, especially since they were statistically significant due to the

p-value of .001. This could be due to pressure to work instead of going to school. In order to examine this claim, I ran another crosstabulation examining the area of origin the respondent came from, and whether they would rather take a “real world job” or stay in school. Like the other crosstabulation, the respondents whose origins were from the Middle East were all in agreement, and they valued staying in school more than taking a job.

When examining the respondents whose area of origin was Mexico, there were similar percentages to the other groups who would take the job vs stay in school. This implies there is not a cultural difference, but instead a different factor that may lead for the increased percentage seen in the last crosstabulation.

When examining the respondents whose area of origin was Europe or Canada, there is a higher percentage that would take neither the job or stay in school. In fact, the response for neither within the Europe and Canada origin is nearly double of any of the other categories. While this does not give the specific reason for why these students would select neither, or what neither means to the respondents, it does imply that these students may have another cultural pressure that causes them to value something more than their grades. This crosstabulation goes against the idea that either of these statistics were caused by the cultural pressure to get a job, but it does answer some questions regarding the Europe and Canada statistic.

Table 12: Crosstab real world job vs stay in school by area of origin

real world job vs. stay in school * r area of origin Crosstabulation

		r area of origin														Total	
		Caribbean		Mexico		South/Central America		Asia		Middle East		Europe / Canada					
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%				
real world job vs. stay in school	take job	18	1.6%	14	3.3%	15	2.5%	38	3.5%	0	0.0%	2	3.2%	87	2.6%		
	stay in school	1071	95.6%	392	93.8%	584	96.1%	997	92.4%	38	100.0%	55	88.7%	3137	94.3%		
	neither	31	2.8%	12	2.9%	9	1.5%	44	4.1%	0	0.0%	5	8.1%	101	3.0%		
Total		1120	100.0%	418	100.0%	608	100.0%	1079	100.0%	38	100.0%	62	100.0%	3325	100.0%		

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	26.216 ^a	10	.003

a. 4 cells (22.2%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .99.

I then examined a crosstabulation weighing the values of a woman finding the right man vs getting a good education by area of origin to see if the cultural pressures around marriage and dating were impacting those who valued getting a good education and good grades. It is important to discuss how this question was asked in order to fully understand how this question may reflect cultural pressures to remain in specific gender roles instead of attaining an education. This question was posed as a prompt which was asked by all of the respondents whether they agreed with a character who believed women should focus more on marrying the right man, or the character who believed that women should focus on their education more. This means that the respondents were not necessarily answering as a reflection of what they would do, but instead what they believe women should do as a whole. This could present some insight into cultural pressures placed on women while they are attaining an education.

When examining this crosstab, the respondents all had responses near 10% who valued women meeting the right man more than their education, with slightly lower response from those of the area of origin South and Central America. However, the response to meeting the right man was significantly lower for those whose area of origin were the Middle East and Europe and Canada. These two origin areas had respondents who valued education at higher rates than the

others, implying that these results could be because of a cultural pressure. This is consistent with what we have seen from the respondents whose origin areas were in the Middle East, as there seems to be a consistent value or pressure culturally coming from that area.

Table 13: Crosstab meeting right man vs getting education by area of origin

		meeting right man vs. getting education * r area of origin Crosstabulation													
		r area of origin													
		Caribbean		Mexico		South/Central America		Asia		Middle East		Europe / Canada		Total	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
meeting right man vs. getting education	meet the right man	105	9.5%	45	10.9%	45	7.4%	109	10.1%	2	5.4%	3	4.8%	309	9.3%
	education is more important	852	76.9%	331	80.0%	497	82.1%	796	73.7%	31	83.8%	51	82.3%	2558	77.4%
	neither	151	13.6%	38	9.2%	63	10.4%	175	16.2%	4	10.8%	8	12.9%	439	13.3%
Total		1108	100.0%	414	100.0%	605	100.0%	1080	100.0%	37	100.0%	62	100.0%	3306	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	26.669 ^a	10	.003

a. 2 cells (11.1%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.46.

Overall Educational Success

Despite all of these challenges and outside pressures that face the students who are children of immigrants, they still do well in the classroom. Table 8 is a frequency table of the highest level of education the respondents had completed at the time of the third survey in this longitudinal study.

As can be seen in the frequency table, a majority of the students not only graduated high school, but also went on to pursue higher education. 95.6% of the respondents went on past high school in order to do so. 20.4% of the students then graduated with a four-year degree. 5.5% of the respondents were either in graduate school or had graduated from graduate school at the time of the survey. This shows that these challenges and pressures that the students faced were those which they preserved through and succeeded despite of.

Table 14: Highest education achieved frequency table

highest degree or year of school completed

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	some high school (grades 9-12, no diploma)	145	4.3	4.4	4.4
	graduated from high school	590	17.6	17.9	22.3
	1 or 2 years of post-high school vocational training or coll	656	19.6	19.9	42.2
	graduated from 2-year-college or vocational school (for exam	319	9.5	9.7	51.9
	3 or more years of college (no degree yet)	681	20.4	20.7	72.5
	graduated from 4/5-year-college (for example, bachelor's deg	671	20.1	20.4	92.9
	some graduate school (no degree yet)	153	4.6	4.6	97.5
	master's degree	36	1.1	1.1	98.6
	professional or doctoral degree (for example, jd, md, dds, p	13	.4	.4	99.0
	other	32	1.0	1.0	100.0
	Total	3296	98.6	100.0	
Missing	System	48	1.4		
Total		3344	100.0		

Limitations

One limitation of my study is that this study was not entirely focused on the academic pressures placed on the children of immigrants. While there was great content that helped me

analyze the academic pressures placed on this population, there were no questions asking the participants which pressures they dealt with directly. Large portions of this dataset were focused on depression screening or other aspects of the student's life. In addition, the parental survey that went along with this study did not ask questions I could use with the students answers in order to analyze more data.

In a future study, I would be interested in seeing questions asking the students directly about the pressures they face as children of immigrants in academic settings. I would also love to see more open-ended questions as the questions that were presented through this data could only collect so much about the pressures since they were close ended. Open-ended questions would allow for the data to pick up more details on the academic pressures that these students face, and allow them to elaborate and include factors that may have not been considered in the question development phase of this survey.

Conclusion

Academic pressures affect every student, but after examining the different pressures that face the children of immigrants, we can see that they face unique circumstances that affect their academic career. Whether those pressures are coming from parents, discrimination, culture or finances, they are present obstacles that the children of immigrants need to overcome while balancing their education.

Moving forward, I see a need for more studies to be done surrounding this topic. There should be more specific studies done asking the respondents questions directly about the pressures they experience academically, and leaving them to be open ended in order for them to be able to respond fully. I also see a benefit to having these interviews with college students who

are the children of immigrants, to talk about the pressures they are facing in a higher educational system, and to see if there are any differences between those and the pressures facing those in lower levels of education.

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