

LATINX PARENTS' EDUCATIONAL EXPECTATIONS AND ASPIRATIONS FOR
THEIR CHILDREN

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by

William Medrano Rojas

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by

William Medrano Rojas

Approved by:

_____, Committee Chair
Dr. Aya Kimura Ida

_____, Second Reader
Dr. Heidy Sarabia

Date

Student: William Medrano Rojas

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_____, Graduate Coordinator
Dr. Jacqueline Carrigan

Date

Department of Sociology

Abstract
of
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William Medrano Rojas

The purpose of this thesis is to determine what shapes Latinx parents' educational expectations and aspirations. The Latinx population continues to grow and expand throughout the United States and finding better ways to serve this growing population is important. The challenge is to find a way to help Latinx families accomplish their higher educational goals. To address this need, this study has two main goals. First, I investigate how parents' nativity and highest degree attained shape aspirations and expectations for their children's educational achievement. Second, this study examines how these parental sociodemographic statuses shape the level of involvement in their kid's school. Using the data from Latino National Surveys 2006, this study investigates how nativity and English proficiency level influenced Latinx parents' educational aspirations and expectations for their children. I also examined the impacts of parents' nativity status and English proficiency level on their involvement in their children's school and experiences with the school officials. The findings from the data revealed that nativity was an important factor in determining parent's educational aspirations and expectations as well as their experience with school officials, however nativity did not determine their school

involvement. While English proficiency proved a key factor for parents' school involvement, but not for positive experience with school officials. Nevertheless, English proficiency did not influence parents' educational aspiration nor expectations. These findings add to the existing literature on parents' educational aspirations and expectations for their children.

_____, Committee Chair
Dr. Aya Kimura Ida

Date

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my mom Altagracia Rojas who could not be with by my side in this long journey. Thanks for walking us to school every morning and making sure we ate breakfast and did our homework.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Higher education is emphasized as a critical vehicle of success in the Latinx¹ Eighty-nine percent of Latinx young adults (ages 16-25) identified a college education as valuable for advancement in life (Lopez 2009). Similarly, eighty-six percent of Latinx parents with kids under the age of 18 stated that their children earning a college degree was extremely or very important (Stepler 2016). While Latinx parents want their children to pursue formal schooling surpassing high school (Goldenberg et al. 2001), only half of those children claim that they, themselves, currently have or intend to earn a college degree (Lopez 2009). Latinx children tend to surpass their parents in educational attainment, especially when those parents are illiterate (Smith 2003). But most Latinx students enroll in two-year institutions, and only about five percent actually attain four-year degrees (Gandara 2003). Latinx immigrant parents interpret their children finishing high school as a significant achievement when examining their own scholarly education (Lee and Zhou 2013). Using the data from Latino National Surveys 2006, this study investigates how nativity and English proficiency level influenced Latinx parents' educational aspirations and expectations for their children. I also examined the impacts of parents' nativity status and English proficiency level on their involvement in children's school and experiences with the school officials.

¹ The term Latinx(s) will be used instead of Latina/o, Latin@ or Hispanic because it is more gender inclusive and encompassing the population of Latin American countries born or heritage from Latin American except Brazil and Spain (Vidal-Ortiz and Martinez 2018).

Significance of the Study

This study adds to the literature on education among Latinx in the three ways. First, it is important to investigate the factors predicting educational aspirations separately from the factors predicting educational expectations among Latinx parents. While studies in the past have utilized various words to refer to educational aspirations and expectations (e.g., career, academic, and educational aspirations and expectations), the body of literature emphasized the importance of distinguishing educational aspirations from educational expectations (e.g., Metz, Nadya and Inhle- Helledy 2009). Academic aspirations are goals that students themselves set, with a certain level of motivation and ability (Duran and Weffer 1992; DiPierro et al. 2016). While, scholars point out academic expectations are definitive academic accomplishments students will obtain undoubtedly. Students will often express their dream about being a medical doctor or attorney but may be persuaded by for-profit colleges to swiftly complete a pricey associate degree (Holzer and Baum 2017). Two-year colleges are much easier to get into since most only require a high school diploma or GED. They have been modified to develop skill for workers whom need further training or a specific license. Achievement rates at for-profit colleges are lower than those at four-year educational institutions, as these gravitate high proportions of low-income minority students (Holzer and Baum 2017). Latinx parents have high educational aspirations for their children to continue their college education (Goldenberg et al. 2001). This study focuses on parents' educational aspirations for their children rather than the aspiration held by the student themselves. Educational aspirations, as discussed earlier, are expanded goals that students

set for themselves to achieve through desire, motivation and encouragement (DiPierro et al. 2016). Latinx parents can influence their children's postsecondary educational plans. However, educational expectations Latinx parents hold are refined by how their children excel academically (Goldenberg et al. 2001). As a result, educational expectations are a tangible achievement that students with certainty, will attain (Duran and Weffer 1992; DiPierro et al. 2016). Latinx youth have higher educational aspirations and expectation to acquire a four-year degree (Perreira and Spees 2015), and this study examines their parents' expectations and aspirations for their education.

Second, it is important to investigate the Latinx parents' involvement in their children's school, as one important contribution to children's educational experiences is parental involvement (Englund et al. 2004; Zarate 2007; Hill and Tyson 2009; McCoy 2010; Altschul 2011; Walker et al. 2011; Ceballo et al. 2014; Wang, Hill and Hofkens 2014; Benner, Boyle and Sadler 2016; Suizzo et al. 2012; Bhargava et al. 2017; Day and Dotterer 2018). Latinx youth continue to abandon education plans beyond high school with high school dropout estimates increasing (Gandara and Contreras 2009). In explaining the barriers Latinx students face in school, sixty-one percent of Latinx adults accept that parents neglect to play active roles in supporting their children's advancement (Lopez 2009). It is important, then, to measure the parental involvement among Latinx parents, but scholars argue that parental involvement is difficult to calculate (Gandara and Contreras 2009). Parental involvement in their children's education is a vital component in academic achievement (Altschul 2011; Benner et al. 2016). Contrary to the passive nature of parents in their children's school, as framed by Latinx adults, sixty-five

percent of Latinx youth strongly agreed that their parents either play/ or played active role in their learning (Lopez 2009). Likewise, sixty percent of current or former college Latinx students say their parents either play or played an active role in their schooling. These findings suggest that Latinx parents are actively involved in their children's education from their children's point of view, but possibly not from parent's standpoint. Latinx parents may be embarrassed or shy to attend school meetings (Gandara and Contreras 2009). Parent's truancy in school meetings can be misinterpreted by school officials as disinterest in their children's learning (Gandara and Contreras 2009). Public schools infamously struggle to relate to Latinx parents (Henderson and Berla 1994), which further decreases parent involvement. Many public schools that encourage accustomed parents to school groups disregard encouraging Latinx families (Vasquez, Pease-Alvarez and Shannon 1994) from participating. In sum, the evidence suggested that Latinx parents may find it difficult to get more actively involved in their children's school due to language limitations and their struggles in dealing with school staff.

Third, Latinx are the largest and fastest-growing ethnic minority group in the United States. Yet, the education system in place has neglected Latinx youth educational aspirations (Gandara and Contreras 2009). Lower education attainment of Latinx students is a result of conditions in the United States (Gandara and Contreras 2009). One in ten Latinx has a college degree, compared to one in four White Americans and one in three Asians. The amount of college degrees that Latinxs hold has not increased in the last two decades (Gandara and Contreras 2009). Relatively, other ethnic groups in the population have surpassed college attainment significantly (Gandara and Contreras 2009). Latinx

students' today function scholastically at standards that will consign them to live as members of the underclass in American society (Gandara and Contreras 2009:304).

Latinxs are younger than the White population and are destined to produce tax dollars for the elderly White population (Hayes-Bautista 2004). According to Kelly (2005) California, where Latinxs are the majority, needs to begin preparing more underrepresented students for higher education. Failure to do so by 2020 will result in an eleven percent drop in per capita income, triggering serious economic hardships for the state's population. Likewise, other states with large Latinx communities like Arizona and Texas will soon follow with same declines (Kelly 2005).

Scholars in the last four decades have focused on the impacts of the Latinx population in shaping the United States (Huerta-Macías 2002:2). Latinx population in the United States is booming so that by 2025, it will represent eighteen percent of the overall population (President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans 2000). Consequently, by 2025, Latinx students will make up 25% of the nation's school-aged population. Somehow, educational systems continue to fail Latinos (Huerta-Macías 2002:2). In the early turn of the 21st century, Latinx children were least likely to attend preschool (San Miguel and Donato 2010). By 2020, Latinxs are estimated to become the largest minority group in the electorate (Cillufo and Fry 2019). Given the growth of the Latinx population in the U.S., the future education policies that pertain to Latinxs students will be a social justice issue because Latinx students will be the future of the United States (Hurtado, Cervantez, and Eccleston 2010). The hurdles impeding

Latinx educational accomplishment likewise “present infinite possibilities for improving education for all students” (Hurtado et al. 2010: 297).

Research Questions

In summary, Latinx population continues to grow and expand throughout the United States and finding better ways to serve the growing population is important. The challenge is to find a way to help Latinx families accomplish their higher educational goals. To address the need, this study has two main goals. First, I investigate how parents’ nativity, language, income, and highest degree attained shape aspirations and expectations for their children’s educational achievement. Second, this study examines how these factors shape the level of involvement in their kid’s school.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, I first provide a general overview of the Latinx population in the United States and the importance of educational attainment. I also discuss parental educational aspirations and expectations. I then move to how parental involvement facilitates educational opportunities and differentiate between foreign-born and native-born parents. Lastly, the theoretical framework and hypotheses that guided this study are explained.

Latinxs in the United States

The Latinx population has increased dramatically in the past three decades (Krogstad 2014). The 1970s Census was the first notable effort to account for Hispanics in the United States (Cohn 2010). The exponential growth has been calculated at 592%, following the 1970s, while the total aggregate population of the United States has only increased fifty-six percent relatively within the same period (Krogstad 2014). Estimates by the Pew Research Center on existing data from the U.S. Census Bureau projects that roughly 58.7 million Hispanics resided in the United States in 2017. This meant that Latinx were the second-largest racial or ethnic group following Whites in the United States (Flores 2017) and were the second fastest growing ethnic group behind Asians. The high rate of Latinx immigration influenced past projections that estimated the Hispanic population would triple in size by the year 2050, which would account for 128 million or twenty-nine percent of the U.S. population (Passel and Cohn 2008). More

recent assessments clarify that Hispanic population will reach 106 million in 2050 (Krogstad 2014). The substantial decrease in Latinx population projections is due to the decline of Latinx immigration, with the growing population being due exclusively to U.S.-born Latinx. Latinx are the youngest racial or ethnic group in the United States with one-third (17.9 million) being younger than 18, half of which are U.S. born (Patten 2016). In terms of the specific country of origin, nearly sixty-five percent (33 million) identified as being of Mexican origin and Puerto Ricans accounted for nine percent (4 million) in 2010 (Motel and Patten 2012). Latinx from over 20 countries create and recreate “America” (MacDonald and Carrillo 2008). Ninety-two percent of Hispanics were from Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba, El Salvador, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Colombia, Honduras, Ecuador and Peru (Motel and Patten 2012).

The United States ranks fifth in the world as the most populated Spanish-speaking country behind Mexico, Spain, Colombia and Argentina (Bayley 2007). The major language frequently spoken among Latinx is Spanish (Bayley 2007), as more than 37 million speak the language at home (Krogstad and Lopez 2017). The language serves as a source of cultural identity (MacDonald and Carrillo 2008). The history dates back to Spain legacy which ultimately became a major language in many countries in South America (MacDonald and Carrillo 2008). Language is a critical instrument in learning in order to connect concepts and handle knowledge (García and Torres-Guevara 2009). Monolingual ideology has persisted in the 20th century and into the 21st century (García and Torres 2009). Latinx counter-domain cultures in the United States and protect elements of their culture like heritage and language (MacDonald and Carrillo 2008). The

Bilingual Education Act was repealed in 2002, making it harder for Spanish speaking students to advance in school curriculum. Bilingualism has been concealed away from schools and has consequences in academic failures for many Latinx students whom are forced to test in English. Scholars point out that Spanish usage among Latinx youth should be perceived as a benefit rather than a hurdle for academic accomplishment (Hurtado et al. 2010).

Factors Influencing Educational Attainment of Latinx Children

In this section, I will explain the factors that are shown to influence the educational attainment of Latinx Children. Although Latinx are the largest ethnic or racial group in the country, the United States Department of Education does not have information on Latinx ethnic origin; immigration status; generation status; language; socioeconomic status; sexual orientation; and gender but the Pew Hispanic Center is devoted to analyzing limited data from the Census Bureau and “triangulating it with some of the U.S. Department of Education’s data” (Villalpando 2010:238). Out of 100 Latinx youth who begin elementary school, only about half will finish high school, and roughly only 8 will graduate from college and less than one will complete a doctoral degree. Over the past decade, Latinx high school dropout rates have decreased significantly (Krogstad 2016). For example, Latinx youth (age group 18-24), recorded a reduction in rates from thirty-two percent in 2000 to twelve percent in 2014. However, Latinx dropout rate remains higher compared to Blacks (7%), Whites (5 %) and Asians (1%). Latinx youth college enrollment increased from age group 18-24 from twenty-two percent in 1993 to thirty-five percent in 2014. Nevertheless, they still trail behind other ethnic groups in

college degree attainment. The evidence indicates that while the Latinx students are doing better in the education system, they continue to face more difficulties than other ethnic and racial groups to attain a high school diploma and college degree. In the next section I will discuss Latinx parental involvement and different strategies Latinx parents utilize to help guide their youth advance in academia.

Latinx Parents' School Involvement

Parental involvement in their children's education leads to higher academic achievement (Altschul 2011; Benner et al. 2016). Defining behavior that constitutes parental involvement for Latinx families is a challenge (Huerta and Brittain 2010). Most Latinx families are involved in ways not recognized. Some include home-based involvement- encouraging their children to do well in school, resource-seeking- parents explore for resources outside the home that will help their children academically and expressing their aspirations- what they wish their children to uphold (Bhargava et al. 2017). Scholars point out that misinterpretations or even absence of parental involvement are reported due to their findings if surveys and studies do not consider parental involvement such as home-based involvement, resource-seeking or parental aspirations (Huerta-Macías and Brittain 2010). Types of parental involvement among Latinx youth can be misinterpreted based on what empirical studies look at (Bhargava et al. 2017). Most scholars tend to look at either at home-based involvement or school-based involvement or parental aspirations, omitting how Latinx parents may engage other strategies all-together (Bhargava et al. 2017). I will explain the different types of involvement Latinx parents employ.

The different types of parental involvement Latinx parents engage in is important to define. Home-based parental involvement is defined when parents communicate their interest in school and help their children with school-related homework assignments (Altschul 2011). Latinx parents decide to use home-based involvement when their children's homework assignments are not too difficult, mostly in grade school. Home-base involvement positively encourages student to attend college (Gómez et al. 2014). Next, school-based parental involvement occurs when parents attend school-related activities, such as meetings at school or talks with school officials. Resource-seeking is defined as parents looking for outside help for their children's homework assignments. Latinx student's college interest can decline when there is a lack of resources from their parents' side (Gómez et al. 2014). As Latinx children age, their parents often reduce home-based parental involvement and academic aspirations for their children, but will boost resource-seeking (Bhargava et al. 2017). Latinx students asking for help on homework from parents can motivate parents to practice home-based involvement (Walker et al. 2011). Similarly, teacher's invitations to Latinx parents will persuade school-based involvement (Walker et al. 2011).

While Latinx parents may recognize the importance of their role in their children's education, studies show they face barriers in the U.S. education system. Latinx parents will often feel embarrassed or shy by attending school meetings (Gandara and Contreras 2009). Minimal English fluency among Latinx parents restricts their presence in school environments, where they feel uneasy and helpless to support their children in schools (Zarate 2007). Public schools are infamously incompetent at relating

with Latinx parents (Henderson and Berla 1994). Nearly all public schools that encourage accustomed parents to school groups disregard encouraging Latinx families (Vasquez et al. 1994). In fact, Latinx parents have little understanding on how schools operate in the United States (Delgado-Gaitan 1992; Valdés 1996). School officials may anticipate Latinx parents will do their part to provide encouragement towards their children's learning. Nonetheless, Latinx parents will rely on the notion that it is the obligation of the school to instruct their children and assist their scholarly advancement (Carrasquillo and London 1993). Parent's truancy in school meetings can be misinterpreted by school officials, especially teachers, as disinterest in their children's learning. Since teachers and parents fail to interact with each other, teachers will develop perceived lower expectations for academic accomplishment (Alexsaht-Snider 1991). However, when Latinx parents have been specially instructed by educators on guiding their children at home with regards to school expectations, they have responded confident to their assisting role (Goldenberg 1987). Subsequently, I will explain Latinx parental expectations and aspirations which are important for the advancement of their children academically.

Latinx Parents' Expectations and Aspirations for their Children

There is a clear distinction between academic aspirations and academic expectations (Metz et al. 2009). Most academic aspirations and academic expectations develop in a learning environment. Academic aspirations are goals that students set, with a certain level of motivation ability (DiPierro et al. 2016). On the other hand, career expectations can be a more practical realism. Undoubtedly, Latinx parents have high

educational aspirations for their children (Carpenter 2008; Claster and Blair 2013; Bean et al. 2015; Dondero and Humphries 2016; Feliciano and Lanuza 2017; Kalogrides 2009; Perreira and Spees 2015; Plunkett et al. 2008; Portes and Rumbaut 2001; Potochnick 2014; Roche, Ghazarian and Fernandez-esquer 2012; Pong and Hao 2007; Goldenberg et al. 2001). Almost identical Latinx students also aspire to enroll in college (Gómez et al. 2014; Perreria and Spees 2015). They also have higher educational expectation to finish a 4-year degree (Perreira and Spees 2015). Studies have shown potential factors influencing Latinx parent's expectations and aspirations for their children. Within the Latinx communities, immigrant parents may have lower levels of education and income when compared to native-born White parents (Raleigh and Kao 2010; Kiyama 2010), and lower income and educational attainment of parents is associated with lower educational expectations for their children (Carolan and Wasserman 2015). However, immigrant parents are universally optimistic about their children's educational college attainment. (Raleigh and Kao 2010). Studies showed foreign-born parents had greater odds than native White parents of having constant college aspirations for their children. Additionally, parents who communicate with their children in a language other than English are twice more likely to maintain higher college aspirations for their children than parents who only converse in English in-home. Also important is Latinx educational expectations for their children, which I will explain next.

Parental educational expectations usually are influenced by how children excel academically over time (Goldenberg et al. 2001). Depending on how their children are performing academically, they may have a set educational expectation for their children.

Latinx youth whose parents expressed high learning expectations were more likely to reciprocate higher educational expectations for their own academic achievement (Suizzo et al. 2012). Latinx youth can lose interest in college when there is an absence of resources for their parents to assist in the process (Gómez et al. 2014). “Parental college knowledge is beneficial and critically important to the future of postsecondary success of low-income students and students of color who will likely be first generation college students” (McCoy 2010:121).

Theoretical Framework

This thesis was guided by the theoretical framework of Symbolic Interactionism (Blumer 1969). Symbolic Interactionism “...sees meanings as social products, as creations that are formed in and through the defining activities of people they interact” (Blumer 1969:5). The University of Chicago has been attributed by scholars as the birthplace of Symbolic Interactionism (Brunt 1993:453; Rohall, Milkie and Lucas 2014:36). Two historical cycles distinguish the Chicago school. The first cycle dates before World War II, with works of George Herbert Mead and W.I. Thomas. The second cycle dates post World War II, which is linked to works of Herbert Blumer- a student of George Herbert Mead. Blumer was the first scholar to use “symbolic interactionism” in his works (Rohall et al. 2014). People are actively committed in making, connecting and accommodating to their surroundings (Domine 2007). Meanings are created through engagement with transmission of language and symbols (Blumer, 1969 as cited by Domine 2007:111). Symbolic interaction “is a process whereby individuals create meaning based on mutually understood symbols”. (Blumer 1969; Stryker 2002 as cited

by Workman, Webb and Freeburg 2011). The Iowa and Indiana schools of Symbolic Interactionism were established later by scholars like Manford Kuhn and Sheldon Stryker. The new schools were seen as “structural symbolic interactionism,” as it believes that “once an interpretation or definition of situation has been made it tends to remain for a period of time” (Rohall et al. 2014:37). They argued that change in meaning may come, but not abruptly. Symbolic interactionism, according to the Iowa and Indiana schools, dictates “social reality can be quantified and studied using the scientific method” (Rohall et al. 2014:37).

According to Blumer (1969) symbolic interaction occurs in human life as a dual process of multiple occurrences or interactions within human beings acting individually or collectively to produce social interaction (p.10). In brief, symbolic interaction “is a process whereby individuals create meaning based on mutually understood symbols”. (Blumer 1969; Stryker 2002 as cited by Workman et al. 2011). Symbols can be created and recreated using communication to reaffirm meanings. Language, whether spoken or unspoken, is a group of symbols to convey meanings.

Symbolic Interactionism explains social processes by using three root principles (Blumer 1969). The first principle is “Human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them” (Blumer 1969:2). That is, individuals’ behaviors are consequences of the meanings they associate with the things to which they act. Symbols are formed when human beings actively engage in affirming meanings to objects. Based on this principle, parents’ experiences in the educational system would be determined by the meaning society, or a group of individuals, share with each other

(Yogan 2000; Blumer 1969). Particularly, in this thesis, this principle then might suggest that nativity would matter in shaping parents' experiences in their children's schools because whether a parent is U.S. born or foreign born (i.e., nativity status) can symbolize or may carry different symbolic meanings in the United States. Depending on their nativity, parents may be treated differently by the surrounding community, such as other parents, other children, teachers, and other school officials. Particularly, U.S.-born Latinx parents who have had more interactions in the U.S. education system, specifically with the native culture, will understand the importance of involvement in their children's education.

The second principle stated that the "meaning of such things is derived from or arises out of the social interaction that one has with one's fellows" (Blumer 1969:2). Individuals are actors and constantly interact with other people to negotiate meanings. The second principle shows that it is through such an interaction that individuals develop, learn, negotiate, and shape meanings of symbols. A consensus of meaning is derived from social interaction and social acts. Based on the second principle of Symbolic Interactionism, it is possible that Latinx parents may have different meanings associated with an object, setting, person, interactions, and/or norm associated with their children's schools depending on their nativity. U.S.-born Latinx parents, for example, may be more familiar with the U.S. education system as they would have attended the schools in this country and have had interactions in and out of the schools. Such experiences might serve as the basis for the meanings they associate with an object, setting, person, interactions, and/or norms in school. In contrast, foreign-born parents may be less familiar to

education system in the United States as they may not have navigated the K-12 curriculum in this country and may have limited social interactions regarding the U.S. education system. These differences in meanings based on nativity could matter because “[t]he meanings that people assign to things ultimately organize their behavior” (Stryker and Statham 1985: 320). Thus, there may be differences in parental behavior such as school involvement depending on their nativity.

The third principle states that these meanings are handled in, and modified through, an “interpretative process used by the person in dealing with the things he encounters” (Blumer 1969: 2). Once parents begin interacting with others in their children’s education system, they define, redefine, and/or reaffirm the meanings they held for objects, persons, settings, situations, and norms at school. Parents may internalize the meaning shared by society and succumb to their own interpretation that then they will use to communicate with the schools and teachers. As stated before, individuals will organize their behavior based on meanings they exchange with others. Likewise, parents will reproduce social behavior after swapping meaning with others. Humans must confront the world to interpret meanings of symbols to consequently act on them. Through the interpretation process, people define other’s actions and react to the definition rather than reacting to the actions themselves.

Symbolic interactionism core principles clarify the processes through which Latinx parents’ expectations and aspirations for their children are shaped. Latinx parents are in constant interaction with their children, family members, relatives, teachers, other parents, school officials, and organizations- such as schools. These social interactions are

important in context, in which objects, situations, and people are being defined, and the resulting definitions have behavioral, cognitive, and emotional consequences (Blumer 1969). In general, parents see schools as a gateway to help their children learn and guide them to achieve their career goals because they interact with others in a society that emphasizes educational achievement as a ticket to success in life. This definition of the school as a source of their children's success would motivate parents to invest and engage in activities at school. Despite the meanings constructed about school, some parents may not be able to be as involved in their children's school as they wish due to some structural constraints. For example, if Latinx parents have limited English proficiency, it may prevent their involvement in their children's school. Parents with little to no fluency in English nor knowledge about cultural standards in learning institutions will encounter hardships in an active role with their children's schooling (Aparacio-Clark and Dickerson 2006 as cited in Huerta and Brittain 2010). However, Latinx parents have found other ways to be involved in their children's education, like resource-seeking (Bhargava et al. 2017). U.S.-born parents might already have a narrative with learning institutions not being a place for academic advancement, having experienced it themselves. When schools do not acknowledge parents as active in their children's education, those parents will sense alienation in the school setting (Valenzuela 1999 as cited in Huerta and Brittain 2010). For this reason, they may hold lower aspirations and expectations for their children to finish college compared to foreign-born parents. Foreign-born parents have a different perception of schools in the United States as a place of opportunity for their children to succeed, resulting in higher aspirations and expectations for their children.

First generation immigrant Latinx parents stated that their country of origin offered almost no opportunity to continue their education which was one of the reasons they immigrated (Langenkamp 2019). They also expressed feelings consistent to “immigrant optimism” and “the American Dream” acknowledging there are no excuses for failure if they children give one-hundred percent they can fulfill their dreams.

Language is the most precise form of symbolic exchange (Rohall et al. 2014). Latinx parents who have difficulty with the English language may feel embarrassed to interact with school staff (Muñiz 2007). Communicating in the parent’s preferred language is important because they can feel more comfortable and welcomed in schools. Language is crucial to symbolic interactionism because it “refers to a series of symbols that can be combined in various ways to provide new meanings” (Mead 1934 as cited in Rohall et al. 2014). Their social interaction over time at schools is important because they are expected by society to take on the social role of being a parent (Stryker and Stantham 1985). One important responsibility in public education schools is attending parent conferences, where parents meet with their children’s teacher to see academic progress. In circumstances where foreign-born parents speak Spanish, some teachers may provide translators or ask students to translate for their parents. Children of immigrants act as brokers or social mediators for their families (Dreby 2015; Claster and Blair 2013). Children of immigrants fill out documents for their parents and attend appointments, helping navigate what can be confusing for those with limited English-language skills and limited experience with U.S. social institutions (Dreby 2015). For this reason, teachers will try to simplify and limit their explanations of the complex progress reports

so the students are able to translate without a problem. In many instances, translators provided by the school are not concerned about the children's learning progress (Montelongo 2015). Interpreters may not be well trained in learning progress and be simply bilingual assistants. Parents with limited English acquisition will receive a basic understanding of the progress report file and interpret everything is going fine with their learning. Foreign-born parents with limited English proficiency will offer no criticism toward their children's school and interpret school associations as positive (Langenkamp 2019). On the other hand, U.S.-born parents with English as their first language will have an in-depth understanding of how their children's learning is shaping in parent conferences. As a result, English proficient parents will uphold high educational expectations for their children that teachers may resonate in meetings.

Parents regardless of socio-economic status want their children to excel in life. Through social interaction, Latinx parents create meanings of the education culture of schools in the United States. However, if there is no motivation from teachers to engage parents in their school, parents will simply stay out of the picture. Latinx immigrant parents understand cultural differences with school educators but are unfamiliar on overcoming this obstacle (Muñiz 2007). Educators should guide parents through the education system of their children by "...interacting with them and involving them in the process..." (Montelongo 2015). For example, educators misinterpret student underperformance with low parental aspirations and expectations (Goldenberg et al. 2001). They also make assumptions about their level of involvement with regards to culture and language differences (Montelongo 2015). Latinx parents will attend parent

conferences to voice their concerns, but foreign-born parents with limited English proficiency are at a disadvantage. More importantly, the more connected and conscious Latinx families are about their children's education, the more encouraging they typically are (Hurtado 2003 as cited in Hurtado et al. 2010). When teens have friendly connections with their parents, "they are likely to internalize parents' values and ideas about appropriate behaviors" (Blumer 1969; Cristopher 2001 as cited in Killoren and Deutsch 2014:1983). Their children then interpret and internalize how they must act to satisfy their parent's educational expectations. Since symbolic interaction includes interpretations between individuals, once definitions are established, they understand how they must act (Blumer 1969). English proficient parents receive educational goals from teachers, which shapes an understanding of the culture in U.S. schools, leading to high educational aspirations and expectations for their children.

According to symbolic interactionism, people interpret situations and then utilize the interpreted meanings to justify their behavior (Blumer 1969). Latinx parents may see schools differently depending on how they interact with school officials. People establish future behavior on their subjective interpretations of a present situation (Rohall et al. 2014). Simon (2004) provides a good example regarding outreach to parents. School administrators will justify themselves as outreaching to parents using newsletters for volunteers. Borrowing from this example, even if parents receive a school material in a translated version it may not be accurate (Montelongo 2015). Parents whom read the newsletter may feel they need to be involved but may be limited because of their time and culture. Others may not realize the importance of their involvement. Immigrant parents

feel they are undesired but also believe they need to be involved regardless of this treatment and language barrier (Langenkamp 2019). Foreign-born parents whom might try to stay off school grounds might interpret the teachers not calling their home as everything being well and having no need for their involvement. However, the positive views may be only attributed to parents whom were actively involved and in comparison to their country of origin education system (Langenkamp 2019). In other words, foreign-born parents will have a positive experience with school officials even if there is an absent interaction. Educators seems to pay close attention to parents whom are English proficient (Montelongo 2015). In this case, English proficient parents might also characterize school staff interactions as positive because they are able to figure align with the schools goals and mission. Higher English proficiency might also signify more attentiveness from educators and reinforce assumptions school staff makes about Latinx parents.

Hypotheses

Based on the prior literature of Latinx parental involvement, expectations, aspirations and theoretical framework, I hypothesized as following.

Hypotheses regarding nativity status

Given that U.S.-born parents have been exposed to the U.S. educational system, they know the challenges of attending higher education and we hypothesize that-

H1a: U.S.-born Latinx parents would have lower aspirations for their kids to finish college than foreign-born Latinx parents.

H1b: U.S.-born Latinx parents would have lower expectations for their kids to finish college than foreign-born Latinx parents.

However, we also think that because U.S.-born parents are more familiar with the U.S.-education system, we hypothesize that-

H1c: U.S.-born Latinx parents are more likely to get involved in their kid's school than foreign-born parents.

Finally, given that U.S.-born parents grew up and are racialized in the U.S., we hypothesize that-

H1d: U.S.-born Latinx parents are more likely to have negative experience with school officials in their kid's school than foreign-born parents.

Hypotheses regarding English Proficiency

English proficient parents will be able to navigate the education system more easily and have a clearer understanding of parental roles in their children's education; we hypothesize that-

H2a: The higher the English proficiency, the higher aspirations parents would have for their kids to finish college.

H2b: The higher the English proficiency, the higher expectations parents would have for their kids to finish college.

H2c: The higher the English proficiency, the more involved Latinx parents are in their kid's school.

H2d: The higher the English proficiency, the more positive experience Latinx parents have with school officials.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

This chapter will provide an overview of the research methods used for this study. First, I will explain the background of the secondary data used in this study. Specifically, I discuss the sample characteristics, sampling, and data collection methods. Then, measures used for the variables in this study are described. Finally, I conclude this chapter by explaining the analytical strategy used in this study.

Secondary Data

The data came from the Latino National Survey (LNS), 2006, the broadest and most summarized recent survey about Hispanics residing in the United States (Fraga et al. 2012). The goal of the survey was to investigate all aspects and phases of Latinx life in America, specifically to the creation of lives and communities (Fraga et al. 2010). The questionnaire used in the study was formulated using focus groups as reference. The LNS sampled 8,634 adults 18 and over whom self-identified as Latino/Hispanic residing in the United States. To choose their subjects, the sampling method used was geographic stratified sampling. Each state was analyzed based on their Latinx population. The survey questionnaires were administered through bilingual interviews done in Spanish and English. The questionnaire included 165 different items about respondents. The universe of analysis contains approximately 87.5 percent of the United States Hispanic population, meaning states were chosen based on their Latinx population ranking. The sample was evenly distributed between genders: 4,738 females (54.9 %) and 3,896 males (45.1%). At

the time of the survey 5,711 individuals identified with “Other” race (71.3 %), 2074 White respondents (25.9 %), and 131 American Indian or Alaskan Native respondents (1.6 %), but all respondents self-identified as Latino/Hispanic.

Measures

Dependent Variables

Parental aspirations are academic demands as goals from parent to child to succeed academically (Pearlin, Yarrow and Scarr 1967) *Parental educational aspirations* was measured using four different levels of educational aspirations. Parents were asked “How far would you like to see this child go in school?” The original responses ranged from 4=receive a graduate or advanced professional degree, 3=graduate from college, 2=receive some vocational training after graduating from high school, and 1=graduate from high school or earn a GED. The responses were recoded as 1=college or higher and 0=less than college.

Parental expectations are defined as a realistic confidence or understanding that parents have about their children’s educational achievement more importantly towards college attendance (Goldenberg et al. 2001; Yamamoto and Holloway 2010). *Parental educational expectations* were measured on six different educational levels. The original responses were coded as 6=receive a graduate or advanced professional degree, 5=graduate from college, 4=receive some vocational or job training after graduating from high school, 3=graduate from high school, 2=earn a GED, and 1=some high school.

Similarly, to the parental educational aspiration variable, the responses were recoded as 1=college or higher and 0=less than college.

Parental involvement can be defined as multidimensional such as school engagement and implied communication of school and family with consideration of academic possibilities (McWayne et al. 2004; Hayes 2012). *Parents involvement* was measured using three different questions regarding their children's school. Parents were asked “Here is a list of things that some parents have done, and others have not, regarding their children’s school. Which of these things have you done?” Then, respondents were asked whether they have acted as a school volunteer for your child’s school (1=yes, 0=no), have met with my child’s teacher (1=yes, 0=no), and have attended a PTA meeting (1=yes, 0=no). Responses to these three items were summed to create the variable capturing the level of parental involvement in their children’s school. The resulting score ranged from 0 (no involvement) to 3 (higher involvement).

Parents positive outlook about school, especially school staff, is important for parental involvement in their children’s life (Weisz 1990). *Experience with school officials* was measured with the question “When you had contact with school officials, would you say your experience has been very good, somewhat good, not too good, or not good at all?” Respondents reported 1=have had no contact with school officials, 2=not good at all, 3=not too good, 4=somewhat good, and 5=very good. The responses were recoded into 1=not good at all, 2=not too good, 3=somewhat good, 4=very good, thereby the higher score indicating more positive experience with school officials.

Independent Variables

The independent variables were nativity status and English proficiency. *Nativity status* was measured with the question “Were you born in the mainland United States, Puerto Rico or some other country?” Respondents reported (1) Mainland U.S., (2) Puerto Rico, (3) Some other country. Responses were coded 1=Mainland U.S.: Native-born and 0=some other country: Foreign-born. English proficiency was measured with the question “How good is your spoken English? Would you say you carry on a conversation in English (both understanding and speaking) very well, pretty well, just a little, or not at all?” Respondents reported (1) Not at all, (2) Just a little, (3) Pretty well, (4) Very well, (5) Other. Responses were re-coded 1=not at all, 2=just a little, 3=pretty well, 4=very well.

Control Variables

The control variables for this study were *age, sex, education, income, race and school type*. Age of respondent ranged from 18 years - 97 years.

Education was measured with the question “What is your highest level of formal education completed?”. Respondents reported on an 8-point scale (0) none, (1) Eighth grade or below, (2) Some high school, (3) GED, (4) High school graduate, (5) Some college, (6) 4 year college degree, (7) Graduate or professional degree.

Sex was dummy coded and measured 1=male and 0=female. *Race* was measured with the question “What is your race? Are you White, Black, American Indian, Asian,

Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, some other race or more than one?”. Respondents reported (1) White, (2) Black, African American or Negro, (3) American Indian or Alaskan Native, (4) Asian Indian, (5) Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, (6) Some other Race. Responses were re-coded 1=White and 0=other.

Income was measured with the question, “Which of the following best describes the total income earned by all members of your household during 2004?”. Respondent reported on a 7-point scale (1) below 15,000, (2) 15,000-24,999, (3) 25,000-34,999, (4) 35,000-44,999, (5) 45,000-54,999, (6) 55,000-64,000, (7) above 65,000.

School type was measured with the question “Is this child enrolled in public or private school?”. Responses were re-coded 1=public and 0=private.

Analytic Strategy

In order to analyze the data, I ran descriptive statistics to describe the sample and then ran correlations to examine the bivariate relationship among the main variables. An Ordinal Least Squares (OLS) Regression analyses was utilized in this study to understand parental educational aspirations, parental educational expectations, parental school involvement and school rate.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This chapter explains univariate, bivariate and multivariate findings of this study. I conducted correlation analyses to examine the bivariate relationships among the variables and a series of logistic and Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression analyses to test the hypotheses in this study.

Univariate Analyses

Table 1 demonstrates univariate results for each variable based on the total sample of 1167 Latinx parents. A majority (94%) of Latinx parents aspired for their children to pursue a college or higher degree. Slightly lower percentage than their educational aspiration, and a majority (82%) of Latinx parents expected their children to obtain a college or higher degree. This might demonstrate a gap between an ideal and reality in their perceptions. The mean level of Latinx parents' involvement in their children's school was at 2.21 on the scale of 0 (no involvement) to 3 (higher involvement). Respondents on average had somewhat good to very good experiences with school officials. Around 30% of the sample were born in the United States, while the majority (70%) were foreign-born. On average, Latinx parents reported their proficiency level to be "just a little." The majority (95%) of Latinx parents had their children enrolled in public schools. On a 7-point scale where values were defined by- (1) being below 15,000, (2) 15,000-24,999, (3) 25,000-34,999, (4) 35,000-44,999, (5) 45,000-54,999, (6) 55,000-64,000, (7) above 65,000, the average income was roughly 3.47, which means Latinx

parents' income fell between \$25,000 and 44,999,. The average age was about 41 years old. About half of the respondents were female (55%) and the other half male (45 %). On average, a quarter (24%) percent of Latinx parents self-identified as white. Latinx parent's highest degree of education attained was between a GED and high school diploma, averaging 3.56, which was defined on an 8-point scale (0) being no education (1) Eighth grade or below, (2) Some high school, (3) GED, (4) High school graduate, (5) Some college, (6) 4 year college degree, (7) Graduate or professional degree on average.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics (Proportion/Mean and Standard Deviation)

	Whole Sample	
	Means/ Proportions	SD
Parental Aspirations for College+ (1=yes)	.94	.24
Parental Expectations for College+ (1=yes)	.82	.39
Parental Involvement	2.21	.84
Positive Experiences with School Officials	3.51	.65
US-born (1=yes)	.30	.46
English Proficiency	2.23	.91
Public School (1=yes)	.95	.22
Household Income	3.47	2.03
Age	40.52	15.47
Male (1=yes)	.45	.50
White (1=yes)	.26	.44
Highest Degree Attained	3.56	1.95
N	1167	

Bivariate Analyses

In Table 2, I present correlation results. Latinx Parental expectations were positively correlated with parental aspirations ($r=.361$, $p<.01$), which means that parents with higher aspirations for their children' education would also have higher expectations

for their children's educational attainment. The correlation was relatively strong. The higher the parental involvement in school, the higher the parental aspirations ($r=.101$, $p<.01$) and expectation ($r=.100$, $p<.01$). Parents who held higher aspirations and expectations for their children were involved in their children's education. Positive experiences with school officials from Latinx parents was also associated with higher parental aspirations ($r=.063$, $p<.01$) and expectation ($r=.094$, $p<.01$). Parents who held higher aspirations and expectations had positive experiences with school officials. Higher English proficiency was correlated with higher parental aspirations ($r=.069$, $p<.01$) and expectations ($r=.084$, $p<.01$). Parents who believed in higher aspirations and expectations for their children had higher English proficiency. High socioeconomic status was associated with higher parental aspirations and expectations. For example, household income was positively correlated to parental aspirations ($r=.087$, $p<.01$) and expectations ($r=.137$, $p<.01$). Latinx parents who believed in higher aspirations and expectations for their children had higher incomes. Higher degree obtained was positively correlated to parental aspirations ($r=.137$, $p<.01$) and expectations ($r=.169$, $p<.01$).

Latinx Parental involvement was strongly associated with positive experiences with school officials ($r=.100$, $p<.01$). Parents' positive experience with school officials meant they were more involved in their children's education. Latinx Parental involvement was correlated to being born in the United States ($r=.049$, $p<.05$). U.S. born parents are involved in their children's education more than foreign born parents. Socioeconomic factors were also positive associated with parental involvement. Parents involved in their children education were English proficient ($r=.166$, $p<.01$).

Latinx parents who comprehended English well participated in their children's education. Latinx parental involvement was positive correlated to household income ($r=.110$, $p<.01$). Parents who held higher incomes were more involved in their children's schooling. Latinx parental involvement was associated with higher degree attainment ($r=.150$, $p<.01$). Parents who had higher of education levels were involved in their children's education. Latinx parental involvement was strongly associated with parental aspirations ($r=.101$, $p<.01$) and parental expectations ($r=.100$, $p<.01$). Parents who aspired and expected their children to excel in their education were involved in their education.

Positive school experiences with school officials was associated to parental aspirations ($r=.063$, $p<.01$), and parental expectations ($r=.094$, $p<.01$). Latinx parental who held higher aspirations and expectations had more positive interactions with school officials. Positive school experiences is associated with parental involvement ($r=.100$, $p<.01$). Latinx parents who were involved in their children's education held positive contact with school officials. Positive school experiences with school officials had no correlation with socioeconomic factors.

Table 2. Pearson's Correlation Analyses on all Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Parental Aspirations for College+ (1=yes)	.361 **										
2. Parental Expectations for College+ (1=yes)	.101 **	.100 **									
3. Parental Involvement	.063 **	.094 **	.100 **								
4. Positive Experiences with School Officials	-.019	-.015	.049 *	-.084 **							
5. U.S.-born (1=yes)	.069 **	.084 **	.166 **	-.009	.330 **						
6. English Proficiency	-.018	-.058 **	-.067 **	-.022	-.098 **	-.079 **					
7. Public School (1=yes)	.087 **	.137 **	.110 **	.012	.329 **	.402 **	-.187 **				
8. Household Income	-.027	-.048 *	-.053 **	-.047 *	.038 **	-.021	-.030	.042 **			
9. Age	-.008	.018	-.122 **	-.029	.002	.065 **	-.051 **	.121 **	-.036 **		
10 Male (1=yes)	.033	-.018	.003	.003	-.026	.037 **	-.008	.011	.145 **	-.040 **	
11 White (1=yes)	.137 **	.169 **	.150 **	-.014	.325 **	.417 **	-.140 **	.462 **	-.038 **	.038 **	.046 **
12. Highest Degree Attained											

* Significant at $p < .05$ ** Significant at $p < .01$ *** Significant at $p < .001$

Multivariate Analyses

Testing for nativity and English proficiency effects on parental aspirations. First, I analyzed the data to investigate how nativity and English proficiency affected parental aspirations. Hypothesis 1a predicted that *U.S.-born Latinx parents have lower aspirations for their children to finish college than foreign-born Latinx parents.* A logistic regression analysis revealed that U.S.-born parents were less likely to aspire for their children to finish college than foreign-born parents, controlling for sociodemographic variables. This finding supported the hypothesis 1a ($p < .001$, see Table 3).

Hypothesis 2a predicted that *the higher English proficiency in parents, the higher aspirations they would have for their children to finish college.* A logistic regression analysis showed that English proficiency did not influence Latinx parents' educational aspiration for their children, controlling for various sociodemographic variables. Therefore, the hypothesis 2a was not supported (See Table 3). Beyond the main findings, the results demonstrated that being a mother and holding a higher degree were associated with higher likelihood of aspiring their children to obtain college degree than being a father and having lower education.

Testing for nativity and English proficiency of effects of parental expectations. Two hypotheses were also tested to analyze how nativity and English proficiency impacted parental expectations. Hypothesis 1b predicted that *U.S.-born Latinx parents have lower expectations for their children to finish college than their foreign-born counterpart.* A Logistic regression test determined hypothesis 1b to be supported since

the U.S-born were less likely to expect their children to obtain college or higher degree than foreign-born parents ($p < .05$, see Table 3).

Hypothesis 2b predicted that *the higher English proficiency, the higher expectations parents would have for their children to finish college*. A Logistic regression showed that Hypothesis 2b was not supported (see Table 3). Beyond the main findings, parents who held a higher degree were more likely to expect their children to attend college than parents with lower education.

Table 3 Logistic Regression Models Testing the Effects of Nativity and English Proficiency Level on Parental Aspiration and Expectations				
	Aspiration		Expectation	
	b (SE)	Odds Ratio	b (SE)	Odds Ratio
U.S.-born (1=yes)	-1.653 *** (.488)	.192	-.786 * (.325)	.455
English Proficiency	.33 (.188)	1.391	.116 (.109)	1.123
Public School (1=yes)	.568 (.650)	1.764	.328 (.447)	1.388
Household Income	.171 (.096)	1.187	.076 (.055)	1.079
Age	.007 (.014)	1.007	-.006 (.009)	.995
Male (1=yes)	-.527 * (.252)	.59	-.091 (.159)	.913
White (1=yes)	.381 (.310)	1.464	-.137 (.171)	.872
Highest Degree Attained	.293 *** (.084)	1.34	.230 *** (.048)	1.258
* Significant at p<.05 ** Significant at p<.01 *** Significant at p<.001				

Testing for nativity and English proficiency of effects of parental involvement. Two hypotheses were tested to analyze how nativity and English proficiency affected parental involvement. Hypothesis 1c predicted that *U.S.-born Latinx parents are more likely to get involved in their children's school than foreign born parents.* Results from OLS regression analysis showed Hypothesis 1c was not supported (see Table 4), which means

nativity status did not matter for the parental school involvement level. Hypothesis 2c predicted that *the higher English proficiency, the more involved Latinx parents are in their children's school*. An OLS regression test revealed that the higher English proficiency among Latinx parents was indeed a predictor of higher parental involvement in their children's school ($p < .001$, see Table 4). This, in turn, meant that parents with lower English proficiency struggled to be involved in their children's school. Beyond the main findings, the results showed that mothers are more involved than fathers in their children's education ($p < .001$, see Table 4).

Testing for nativity and English proficiency effects of school experiences. Two hypotheses were tested to analyze how nativity and English proficiency affected parent's experiences with school officials. Hypothesis 1d predicted that *U.S.-born Latinx parents are more likely to have negative experiences with school officials in their children's school than foreign-born parents*. An OLS regression analysis determined that U.S.-born parents had more negative experiences with the school officials than foreign-born parents, supporting hypothesis 1d ($p < .05$, see Table 4). Hypothesis 2d predicted that *the higher English proficiency, the more positive experience Latinx parents have with school officials*. An OLS regression results showed no support for hypothesis 2d (see Table 4).

Table 4 OLS Regression Models Testing the Effects of Nativity and English Proficiency Level on Involvement and Postive Experiences with School Officials				
	Involvement		Positive Experience	
	b (SE)	Beta	b (SE)	Beta
US-born (1=yes)	-.032 (.100)	-.009	-.196 * (.078)	-.079
English Proficiency	.159 (.032)	*** .167	.013 (.025)	.018
Public School (1=yes)	-.090 (.145)	-.017	.021 (.111)	.005
Household Income	.020 (.016)	.039	.002 (.013)	.005
Age	-.003 (.003)	-.028	-.003 (.002)	-.043
Male (1=yes)	-.373 (.048)	*** -.219	-.054 (.039)	-.042
White (1=yes)	.018 (.053)	.009	-.014 (.043)	-.010
Highest Degree Attained	.013 (.014)	.031	.001 (.011)	.002
Adjusted R-Square	.074		.002	
* Significant at p<.05				
** Significant at p<.01				
*** Significant at p<.001				

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study was originally guided by the following research questions. How do nativity and English proficiency impact Latinx parents' aspirations and expectations for their children's educational achievement? How do nativity and English proficiency impact parental involvement and experience in their children's schooling? Findings in this study showed that nativity was an important predictor for parental educational aspirations and expectations and their experience with school officials, but nativity did not predict their involvement in children's schooling. On the other hand, English proficiency was an important factor for parental school involvement, but not for positive experience with school officials. Likewise, English proficiency did not influence parental educational aspirations nor expectations. In the following section, I will contextualize these findings in the body of literature on nativity, English proficiency, educational aspirations, educational expectations, parental involvement and positive experience with school officials.

Paradox of Nativity and Language Proficiency

It is important to note that nativity and language proficiency are not equivalent. That is, parents who are born in the United States are not necessarily English proficient. Proficiency in Standard English is an important human capital, as those who communicate in English in the school might have a positive impact on their children's educational attainment (Glick and White 2003). Human capital as part of parents'

socioeconomic status has been an essential forecaster in student academic accomplishments (Glick and White 2003). Human capital is then proven to have an impact on children's education, but parents who have low levels of human capital still utilize social capital to encourage their children to do well in school. Hence, immigrant parents, who lack English proficiency, might stay away from schools; nevertheless, they might still harbor a lifelong goal for their children to graduate from college (Raleigh and Kao 2010). In fact, length of time in the United States is negatively associated with educational attainments for Latinx due to their racialization and discrimination; negative impacts that can affect the third and fourth generation immigrants in the U.S. (Telles and Ortiz 2008). For this reason, Nativity and English proficiency should not be combined but looked at separately as independent factors.

Effects of Nativity and English Proficiency on Parental Aspirations and Expectations

The findings in this study demonstrated that nativity had an impact on parental educational aspirations and expectations; U.S.-born Latinx parents had lower aspirations and expectations for their kids to finish college than foreign-born Latinx parents (support for hypotheses 1a and 1b). It is plausible that foreign-born Latinx parents have different meanings attached to education in the United States compared to the U.S.-born counterpart. Based on Blumer's (1969) symbolic interactionism, I argue that parents who are foreign-born had higher aspirations and expectations because they define the U.S. education system as a setting for opportunities and that the different meanings attached to the U.S. education system might have resulted in differences in aspirations and expectations for their children. In addition, for foreign parents, their social interactions

within the education system might be shaped by the “American Dream” perception (Langenkamp 2019) or the perception of U.S. schools being superior to those of their country of origin and others around the world may be solidified by interacting with other parents. More importantly, foreign-born parents’ aspirations and expectations can also be formed by “immigrant optimism” (Kao and Tienda 1998) and “immigrant drive” (Portes and Rumbaut 2001). Immigrant optimism is the belief of higher educational expectations for their children despite obstacles such as single-parent households, limited resources or large number of children. Immigrant drive is described as having high ambition and belief their children will achieve higher educational potential. However, scholars have found parents’ immigrant drive declines over time by acculturation and time in the United States. Thus, being born in another country might have equipped Latinx parents with optimism when it comes to their children’s success in the U.S. education system, compared to those where born in this country and have gone through the education system in the U.S. Hence, U.S.-born parents may be more aware of the structural inequality that shapes the U.S. education system, which often makes it difficult for some to achieve higher education on the basis of race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. Knowing, and perhaps having the first-hand experience of being affected by or witnessing the consequences of the structural inequalities, U.S.-born parents might have had lower educational aspirations and expectations for their children than the foreign-born parents who may lack such first-hand experience in this country.

Contrary to my earlier expectation, based on literature, that English proficiency among Latinx parents did not significantly impact parental aspirations and expectations

on their children's educational achievement, I was proved wrong. I had expected that higher English proficiency would lead to higher aspirations and expectations for their children because English proficient parents might be able to understand the requirements for succeeding in U.S. education system and to actively assist their children's learning at home. However, the results indicated that parents' English proficiency did not matter for the level of aspirations and expectations that parents had of their children. It might be because English proficient parents might sense the structural barriers because of their language proficiency, which might be invisible to lower English proficient parents, thereby cancelling out the benefits that come with English proficiency. Scholars point out, Latinx students across the U.S. are seen as foreigners, and English deficient (Muñoz and García 2009). This "pobrecito syndrome," or deficit learning mode, will incline school officials to lower expectations and standards, and create division among students (Muñoz and García 2009). English proficient parents might catch on or "see" the unfair treatment embedded in subtle ways in the U.S. education system more clearly compared to parents with language barriers. Hence, parents who experience racialization over the years may be more inclined to having lower aspirations and expectations (Telles and Ortiz 2008). Based on these results and previous literature, it is plausible that there are interaction effects, in that foreign-born, non-English proficient parents may hold the highest level of educational expectations and aspirations for their children. As well as, foreign-born, English proficient parents, native-born non-English proficient parents, and native-born English proficient parents. Future studies should investigate the further interaction effects of nativity status and English proficiency.

Effects of Nativity and English Proficiency on Parental Involvement and Experiences

With regards to parental involvement, there was no difference between U.S.-born and foreign-born parents in the degree of their involvement in school controlling for English proficiency and other sociodemographic variables. Interestingly, further investigation showed that U.S.-born parents were indeed more involved in their children's school than foreign-born parents in a bivariate analysis. However, when English proficiency and other sociodemographic variables were included in the model, the nativity status no longer had a significant impact on school involvement. It was contrary to my earlier expectation that nativity would be a powerful predictor of involvement in their kid's school.

The findings indicated that English proficiency was more important predictor of parents' involvement in their children's school than the nativity itself (support for hypotheses 2c). More specifically, the results showed that higher English proficiency was associated with greater involvement in kids' school, and thus, the lower English proficiency was a barrier for parental involvement in children's school. This trend is in line with findings of other researchers that showed language as a barrier for parental involvement (Zarate 2007; Gandara and Contreras 2009; Muñiz 2007). Parents who comprehend English might be treated better by teachers, other parents, and school officials than parents with a language barrier, which may further encourage their school involvement. In sum, the findings indicated that language and not nativity status was the barrier to the parental involvement in school.

Further, nativity status might not have mattered for the parents' school involvement because U.S.-born parents are equally marginalized in education system in America. In other words, while U.S.-born parents may understand the importance of parental involvement for children's educational success based on their own experience of going through the education system in this country, they may also face discrimination and marginalization in the U.S. education system, which may cancel out their motivations for school involvement. For example, Telles and Ortiz (2008) showed that U.S.-born parents can become stigmatized and racialized over time. For this reason, they may be pushed out on becoming involved in their children's education. This may be the reason parents refuse to interact with educators even after having familiarity with schools in the United States. Another possibility is that school involvement might not have been validly measured for the Latinx parents. Even if parents are involved in their children's education, this may not be recognized by scholars because Latinx parents are involved in nontraditional ways like resource seeking and encouraging their children to do well in school (Bhargava et al. 2017).

Regarding parents' experience with school officials, findings showed that foreign-born parents had more positive experiences than the U.S.-born parents as anticipated (support for hypotheses 1d), while English proficiency did not predict the experiences with school officials. Again, this may be due to foreign-born parents' "immigrant optimism" (Kao and Tienda 1998) and "immigrant drive" (Portes and Rumbaut 2001) that may be lessened over generations living in the United States. English proficiency not having an impact on experiences with school officials may indicate that parents are not

treated differently due to their language barrier. However, foreign-born parents might have had higher optimism and hopes of their children in the U.S. education system, which may have protected them in interacting with the school officials. Future studies should look into who is more likely to hold this immigrant optimism and immigrant drive and how they serve as protective factors of parents navigating through the U.S. education system.

Limitations, Future Research, and Conclusion

This study has several limitations that should be regarded. This study was limited by its quantitative approach. Parental involvement findings should not be used concretely to make because parents involvement was not accurately measured (Muñiz 2007). Future studies should acknowledge this limitation and construct studies that will have valid measures on parental involvement. Additionally, Latinx parents are involved in other ways not traditional with U.S. culture (Bhargava et al. 2017). Likewise, English proficiency was self-reported and may not have been an accurate measurement; therefore, future studies should consider implementing language assessments to have a more precise measurement of English proficiency. Studies should always include language proficiency assessments as well as length of time in the United States.

The Latino National Survey (2006) is more than ten years old, and more updated data are needed to understand the Latinx parents' experiences and perspectives that are more current. In addition, the outcomes of this study regarding the Latinx population in the U.S. should not be used as generalizations because the sample was very small and not

representative of the whole Latinx community. In addition, generalizations can bring irreprovable negative harm on the Latinxs in the United States. More importantly, the negative political climate toward immigrants today, in particular towards the Latinx population under the Trump administration, may sway people away from participating in future studies.

Future studies should also consider using qualitative approach to investigate the topics presented in this study. Such studies could help illuminate the reasons why nativity mattered more than English proficiency in predicting parental aspirations and expectations, and why English proficiency was more important for parental school involvement than did nativity status. Qualitative studies could help us see the Latinx parents' experiences from their own perspectives.

Finally, this study is limited to the findings regarding Latinx parents, and future studies should consider how these findings can be replicated among other emerging immigrant groups. For example, Asian American immigrants are one of the fastest growing segment of U.S. population. Future studies should investigate whether these findings are specific to Latinx parents or also applicable to Asian parents, for example.

In conclusion, this study showed that parent's nativity was an important predictor for parental aspirations and expectations and their experience with school officials. Foreign-born parents had higher aspirations and expectations for their children's educational attainment and had more positive experience with school officials than did native-born parents. Based on previous literature, I argued it might have been because of

the immigrant optimism, which led to more positive definition of the U.S. education system among foreign-born parents than native-born parents. While English proficiency did not impact parental aspirations and expectations, it was positively associated with parental school involvement. Language barriers, thus, was also a barrier to parental involvement in their children's schooling, though it did not impact their wishes and hopes for the children's educational achievement. Further, this study showed language barrier did not impact experience with school officials. In sum, findings from this study would benefit teachers and school officials in the United States which is increasingly becoming more diverse in terms of parental language and nativity.

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