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# Acculturation: Friend or Foe of the Career Aspirations and Educational Aspirations and Expectations of Hispanic Youth?

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ACCULTURATION: FRIEND OR FOE OF THE CAREER ASPIRATIONS AND  
EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS AND EXPECTATIONS OF HISPANIC YOUTH?

by

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B.S. August 2017, Old Dominion University

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## ABSTRACT

### ACCULTURATION: FRIEND OR FOE OF THE CAREER ASPIRATIONS AND EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS AND EXPECTATIONS OF HISPANIC YOUTH?

Kyhara Nathalia Aguilera  
Old Dominion University, 2019  
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The modern American Dream says that anyone can be successful if they obtain higher education. Unfortunately, this system does not always meet the needs of our increasingly diverse society. Hispanic immigrant students face a hardship in pursuit of their education and career aspirations because many of them experience acculturation related stresses. This study seeks to investigate the role that acculturation plays in the career aspirations and educational aspirations and expectations of Hispanic students. I go beyond the current literature by exploring how acculturation is a significant factor in determining educational and career aspirations. Specifically, I examine whether different levels of acculturation influence Hispanic students' achievement towards their educational and occupational dreams. The studies exploring acculturation and aspirations often lack a theoretical perspective by way of reporting the effects without investigating the root of these issues. To fill in this gap, Schumann's Acculturation theory is utilized in this study. Results from multivariate regression analyses suggests that language proficiency is the most important component in acculturation and that attitudinal familism is a protective factor, meaning that family support is valuable in achieving their goals. Based on these findings, politicians and policymakers should take an increased interest into the immigrant populations and provide them with the tools to improve their communication skills as well as provide them with a more welcoming environment, especially in places such as schools, when the immigrant populations are the most vulnerable.

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A special thank you to my parents for teaching me through their personal hardships and accomplishments that with perseverance, commitment, and heart, anything can be accomplished. Thank you for inscribing in me the American Dream and providing me with the most amazing

opportunity of studying in the United States. The sacrifices we made are finally paying off; I hope this makes you proud.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES .....	vi
Chapter	
I. INTRODUCTION .....	1
SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY .....	3
PURPOSE OF THE STUDY .....	3
II. LITERATURE REVIEW .....	5
LINGUISTIC ADAPTATION AND BELONGING .....	5
SOCIALIZATION .....	7
THE EXPECTATIONS AND ASPIRATIONS GAP .....	11
CRITIQUE OF THE LITERATURE .....	13
THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE .....	14
SUMMARY .....	16
HYPOTHESES .....	17
III. METHODOLOGY .....	19
VARIABLES IN THE STUDY .....	19
DATA ANALYSIS .....	25
IV. RESULTS .....	27
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS .....	27
BIVARIATE ANALYSIS: CAREER ASPIRATIONS .....	30
MULTI-VARIATE ANALYSIS: CAREER ASPIRATIONS .....	33
BIVARIATE ANALYSIS: EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS/EXPECTATIONS.....	36
MULTI-VARIATE ANALYSIS: EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS/EXPECTATION.	38
V. DISCUSSION .....	41
POLICY IMPLICATIONS .....	48
LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY .....	48
FUTURE RESEARCH .....	49
REFERENCES .....	51
VITA .....	54

## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Dependent Variables in the Study .....	20
2. Independent Variables in the Study.....	23
3. Control Variables in the Study .....	25
4. Descriptive Statistics for the Study Variables Used in the Analysis.....	29
5. Descriptive Statistics for the Study Variables Used in the Analysis.....	30
6. Pearson's r Coefficient. Career Aspirations .....	32
7. Multiple Linear Regression Predicting Career Aspirations .....	35
8. Pearson's r Coefficient. Educational Aspirations/Expectations.....	37
9. Multiple Linear Regression Predicting Educational Aspirations/Expectations .....	40

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Addressing the needs of the children of Hispanic immigrants is an invaluable investment in America's future. The Hispanic population, which was 58.9 million in 2017, is expected to reach 99.8 million by 2050 (U.S. Census Bureau 2018). As the Hispanic population continues to grow in the United States, more care is needed to provide these citizens with a fair shot at the American dream. Unfortunately, the public has become increasingly preoccupied with oversimplified consequences of immigration and tend to overlook its benefits on society and the economy. The differences in culture and overall struggles with acculturating faced by Hispanic youth are largely ignored, especially in educational and occupational settings. In dismissing the needs of this important population, America is denied of countless avenues for increased growth.

Education and career aspirations are interconnected. In today's age, in order for an individual to have a chance in American society, they should attain higher education. The Hispanic educational achievement gap has been largely studied because they continue to hold the highest high school dropout rate. According to the Pew Research Center, the Hispanic high school dropout rate fell from 32% in 2000 to 12% in 2014, however, they are still lagging behind compared to blacks at 7%, whites at 5%, and Asians at 1% (Krogstad 2016). The main factor affecting education and career aspirations is English language deficiency. Lack of linguistic adaptation and positive relationships with teachers proved to be the most influential factors when identifying students at risk of dropping out (Kim, Chang, Singh, and Allen 2015). At lower levels of English proficiency, Hispanic students lack overall confidence in their abilities, leading many to withdraw from the classroom. Not knowing the English language comes at a real cost

for Hispanic workers as it impairs economic assimilation. Hispanics' median household income is \$47,675 compared to whites \$65,041 (U.S. Census Bureau 2018). They have to work in enclave markets where employers will not screen against them for not knowing English well. It reduces earnings and limits the occupational opportunities for Hispanic immigrants (Kossoudji 1988).

Aspirations positively affect adolescents' attainment as they can start to create a path towards achieving their dreams (Beal and Crockett 2013). However, the research literature examining how aspirations affect educational and career attainment showed this may not be true with Hispanics (Chavira, Cooper, and Vasquez-Salgado 2016). Hispanic students have big dreams, but they are not actively pursuing the right paths to reach them. Their problems initially stem from their parents' immigrant status because their parents have not experienced education in the United States. Although they value education, they lack knowledge and access to the necessary tools to guide their children towards their dreams (Delgado-Gaitan 1992; Aldous 2006).

Students are often driven by sentiments of familial obligation to postpone or cancel academic endeavors and take on jobs in order to better accommodate the immediate strains of their family. This leads many of them to drop out of high school or not pursue a college education (Perreira, Harris, and Lee 2006). According to the Pew Research Center, 66% of Hispanics compared with 39% of whites, got a job or entered the military directly after high school because felt they needed to help support their family (Krogstad 2016). In turn, this affects their career aspirations as high school drop outs do not have many options in what career to pursue and most end up in manual labor fields (Kossoudji 1988).

## SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Acculturation, which can be broken down into three components, is essential to the career aspirations and educational aspirations and expectations of Hispanic students. The assimilation strategy, or fully adopting the host culture, enhances the career opportunities and educational attainment of Hispanic students. Cohesiveness, or interconnection within their native group, decreases the opportunities they will take outside of their comfort zone. Positive attitudes towards the host group and vice versa promotes exposure, which improves career networking and increases classroom engagement. Through high acculturation, career aspiration increases and the likelihood of dropping out of school diminishes. This research will add to current literature by explaining how acculturation is a significant factor in determining educational and career aspirations, specifically, how different levels of acculturation influence Hispanic students' achievement towards their educational and occupational dreams.

## PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to investigate the role that acculturation plays on the career aspirations and educational aspirations and expectations of Hispanic students and four central research questions guide the current study:

### A. Integration Pattern

- a. Do acculturation strategies influence Hispanic students' career aspirations and educational aspirations and expectations?

### B. Cohesiveness

- a. Do high levels of familism influence Hispanic students' career aspirations and

educational aspirations and expectations?

- a. Does foreign comradery influence Hispanic students' career aspirations and educational aspirations and expectations?

C. Attitude

- a. How do Hispanic attitudes toward the American culture influence Hispanic students' career aspirations and educational aspirations and expectations?

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter discusses empirical studies that have analyzed the effects of acculturation on career aspirations and educational aspirations and expectations focusing on three related areas of acculturation. The first section examines research related to linguistic adaptation and belonging. The second section focuses on two different kinds of Hispanics' socialization. The third section discusses research related to the expectations and aspirations gap. Following this, there is a critique of the literature and an examination of Schumann's Acculturation Theory which is the theoretical perspective that guides the current research. Finally, the chapter concludes with a summary.

#### LINGUISTIC ADAPTATION AND BELONGING

Miranda and Umhoefer (1998) investigated whether there was an association between acculturation, language use, and career self-efficacy among Latinos. The study took place in a southeastern metropolitan area of Georgia, with a sample of 95 Latinos over the age of 18. The educational attainment levels of the participants varied from second grade to master's degrees. Acculturation, language use, years in the U.S., and education completed were the explanatory variables used to examine the relationships. Career self-efficacy was measured using a scale ranging from completely unsure to completely sure which rated the participants' degree of confidence in their ability to complete the duties for the job they were pursuing. They found that compared to the other variables, acculturation and language use were the most significant predictors of Latino's career self-efficacy. A reason for this finding is that higher acculturation

levels are related to more knowledge about the host country. The more you know about the host country, the easier it is to navigate its systems. Language use predicting career self-efficacy implies the more the target language is practiced by Latinos, the more the English proficiency is improved, which in turn increases confidence in career decisions (Miranda and Umhoefer 1998).

Mora and Dávila (1998) analyzed occupational sorting and the male-female earnings gap for Hispanic workers. The 1% 1980 and 1990 Public Use Microdata Samples (PUMS) were used in this study. This sample included individuals ranging from 16-64 years old. They found that workers with poor English skills earned significantly less money than their English fluent peers. Additionally, English fluency was more important in competing for prestigious jobs. There was also a gender difference since men profited more from English fluency than women (Mora and Dávila 1998). The authors suggested that occupational sorting might be a possible explanation for this because those with poor English fluency are not looking for professional job positions. This sorting has a greater impact on women because even their less prestigious jobs require a basic understanding of English.

Additionally, López (2010) examined the influence of scholastic competence, perception of educational opportunities, motivation, and acculturative stress on academic achievement. She surveyed 730 English Language Learners (ELLs) of Mexican-descent and 37 of their teachers in Arizona and Texas high schools and found that Texan ELLs had higher levels of scholastic self-competence, participation, and school belonging. Alternatively, Arizonian ELLs had higher levels of disengagement and acculturative stress. The differences in the English as a Second Language (ESL) class styles in Arizona and Texas may have been a reason for these findings. Texas' ESL classes were mostly conducted in English, however, the teachers also found it important to support their students in their native languages when necessary. On the other hand,

Arizona's ESL classes used an English-only policy that was heavily enforced by the school. Overall, students were found to be more comfortable and engaged when they had teachers who supported them occasionally in their native language to help them transition into English-speaking classes (López 2010).

In another study, Schwieter (2011) investigated how linguistic and cultural issues influenced dropout rates in Hispanic students. This qualitative study took place in high schools located in the Midwest town of Plainville. Four Hispanic students participated in open-ended interviews. In order to remain anonymous, they were labeled P1, P2, P3, and P4. Acculturation was defined as one leaving behind their native culture and fully immersing themselves into the host culture. P1 believed that the ESL classes did not prepare him enough for English-speaking classes. Furthermore, he believed that there was a difference between the English learned in these classes and academic English. P1 claimed often seeing his classmates struggle with reading comprehension. P2 did not have access to the classes that interested her because if there were not enough ELLs interested in the course, the school would not hire a bilingual tutor to help with the course. P3 felt that his English skills were not good enough to communicate with Anglo students or teachers. He isolated himself from his Anglo peers because since he could not understand what they were saying, and he thought they were making fun of him. He also mentioned a former ELL that acculturated entirely into the American culture and became accepted by his Anglo peers, however, he had also completely excommunicated his ELL peers. Schwieter concluded that there was a general consensus that the more "Anglo acting" the student was, the more educational opportunities they would receive and the better they would fit in the school.

## SOCIALIZATION

### *Hispanic Familism*

A well-known core value in Hispanic culture is familism, which implies that Hispanics have strong bonds with their family members whether they are close or extended relatives. Through these close bonds, they develop interdependence within their families which serves as a protective factor as they settle in the new country (Sabogal et al. 1987). Familism has mostly been studied as a protective factor, however, there are also barriers associated with it.

Keefe, Padilla, and Carlos (1979) compared the differences between Mexican-American and Anglo-American family structures and their overall reliance on kin for emotional support in three southern California cities. The sample consisted of 381 Mexican-Americans and 163 Anglo Americans. They found that the majority of Mexican-Americans lived in interconnected kinships made up of extended family of three or more generations. When asked about who they seek counsel from regarding emotional problems, they reported that they mostly confided in their kin whether or not they live nearby, whereas Anglos only showed preference for their kin when their friends did not live nearby. The results imply that Mexican-Americans consider their kin to be their primary source for emotional support. These findings highlight the Hispanic sentiment of familial obligation to help one another and remain together (Keefe et al. 1979).

In another study, Sabogal et al. (1987) examined how different acculturation levels and sociodemographics affect attitudinal and behavioral familism. Attitudinal familism is the belief that the family's well-being comes before the individual and the beliefs and attitudes shared are feelings of loyalty, solidarity, and reciprocity. Behavioral familism describes the behaviors that are associated with these feelings and attitudes such as calling or wanting to live in close proximity to family members. The participants consisted of 452 Hispanics and 227 non-Hispanic

whites surveyed from several schools, colleges, and places of employment. Within the Hispanic sample, 36% were Mexican-Americans, 22% were Cuban Americans, 32% were Central Americans, and 10% were Puerto Ricans or South Americans. A 16-page questionnaire included items on familism, acculturation, and general demographics. Bardis' attitudinal familism scale was used along with a behavioral acculturation scale that was developed to include language proficiency, language preference, and other demographics. The common familism factors identified were familial obligations, support from the family, and family as referents. The relationship between familism and acculturation was examined using a one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA). They found that levels of acculturation does not affect Hispanics' level of perceived familial support. Alternatively, familial obligations coincided with the acculturation levels. The lower their acculturation levels, the higher their familial obligations were. Finally, even Hispanics with high levels of acculturation showed higher levels of familism than their non-Hispanic white counterparts. The sentiment is that as Hispanics become more acculturated to the American culture, they become more independent and individualistic and less concentrated on providing their family with material and emotional support. However, no matter the level of acculturation, they will still rely on their family for help and support when facing problems (Sabogal et al. 1987).

Conversely, Desmond and Turley (2009) focused on whether Hispanic students' high levels of familism would make them prefer to live at home during college and how that would affect their college selections. The data for study was acquired from the Texas Higher Education Opportunity Project which included 96 Texas public high schools. The participants included 13,803 seniors from which 36% were Hispanic, 42% were White, and 22% were of other races. Students completed self-administered surveys during class. They found 74% of Hispanic

students claimed that living at home was important in comparison to 58% of African Americans and 46% of Whites. There was also a negative correlation between wanting to stay at home and not applying to college at all. Out of the students who found it important to stay at home during college, only 53% were likely to apply to college compared to the 76% who did not find it important to stay at home. In this case, familism could be seen as a barrier to educational attainment or aspirations as Hispanics seem to be limiting themselves to their surrounding universities, if they even choose to go to college.

### *Peer Influence*

Espinoza et al. (2013) explored how positive and negative friendship networks influence Mexican-American students' school adjustment. The purpose of this study was to test whether students' friend associations (negative and positive) would affect school adjustment and focused on 412 Mexican adolescents in two Los Angeles public high schools (ages 14 to 16) and one of their caregivers. Students were given questionnaires and asked to keep daily diaries for 14 days. Intercorrelations and analyses of variance (ANOVA) tests were used to examine friend support, friend affiliations, and school adjustment. They found that friend support was negatively correlated with deviant friends and positive correlated with achievement-oriented friends. Having achievement-oriented friends and high levels of friend support indicated high levels of educational attainment and aspirations. On the other hand, students who reported having deviant friends and high levels of friend support were found to have higher academic problems. These findings highlight the importance of friendship in educational attainment and aspirations (Espinoza et al. 2013).

Similarly, Vaquera (2009) paid close attention to the role of peer social ties as it relates to school belonging. The purpose of this study was to find out whether the friendship status and the

location of the best friend had an impact on the educational well-being of the adolescents. The data for study was acquired from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health. The sample consisted of 90,000 adolescents in 134 U.S. schools who self-identified as Hispanic or white between 7th and 12th grade. School engagement was calculated by measuring the student's concentration and effort to learn. The number of years (1-6) the student attended school was used since the longer they are in the school system the more likely they are to make friends. Vaquera (2009) found that 88% of white students reported having a best friend and 66% said their best friend attended their school. Also, 76% of Mexicans reported having a best friend and 55% of them reported their best friend attended their school. Overall, students whose best friend did not attend the same school had lower levels of school belonging. However, while white students reported higher engagement when their best friend attended the same school, Hispanics were found to have higher engagement problems. Vaquera (2009) suggests that Hispanics having their friends attend the same school is problematic because they share a negative sentiment towards the American culture and act out against authority out of the belief that they are trying to take away their Hispanic identity.

#### THE EXPECTATIONS AND ASPIRATIONS GAP

Chavira, Cooper, and Vasquez-Salgado (2016) studied how career and educational aspirations/expectations affect career and educational attainment. Aspiration was defined as the hopes and dreams students had for their future. Expectations was defined as the realistic view of their future achievements. Twenty-four middle schoolers with Mexican-descent and their parents were interviewed in Central California. Students were asked questions about their career aspirations and expectations and their parents were asked about their own aspirations and

expectations for their children. They found that 78% of students reported that they wanted to become professionals. Additionally, 12 of those students reported aspirations of becoming executives. The other 22% wanted to become technicians, semi-professionals, or athletes. Furthermore, 75% of their parents reported that it was their child's choice to choose what career they would want to pursue. Despite this first answer, when asked if they could choose their children's career, their answer changed. It was reported that 70% of the parents reported careers that required college degrees, 20% that required vocational training, and 10% that required high school education. Although students aspired to get a 4-year college education, their aspirations were found to be much higher than their educational expectations. The authors linked this gap to the students dreaming of obtaining the social mobility that their parents were not able to accomplish themselves through hard work in manual labor.

In another study, St-Hilaire (2002) analyzed 728 Hispanic-descent students' values and differences as far as educational aspirations and attainment. The participants were 8th and 9th grade students of Mexican-descent who were randomly selected from a 1992 survey in San Diego. The researchers found that 90% of the students believed that education was the most important factor in obtaining success in the United States. In fact, while 99% wanted to finish high school, 88% wanted to finish at least some college, and 50% wanted to finish graduate school. However, as far as realistic attainment, 99% still believed they would finish high school, 80% believed they would pursue college, 60% believed they would finish college, and 30% believed they would get to graduate school. The findings reveal that Hispanic students do value education but also, when it comes to realizing their dreams, they tend to lower their aspirations. As Hispanic students acculturate to the American culture, it is important to take into account their environment. Hispanic students whose parents had low SES had lower attainment and

aspirations over time. These findings could be attributed to them living in poor neighborhoods and not attending good public schools which would be barriers to their educational attainment and future dreams.

Finally, Ojeda et al. (2011) examined whether acculturation and enculturation would predict self-efficacy in terms of career decision. Acculturation was defined as the process that takes place as an individual or group adapts to a host culture. Enculturation is essentially when an individual or group keep their origin culture's beliefs and values while living in the host culture. The study examined 338 Latino seventh graders in an urban city in central Texas made up of 46% boys and 54% girls. In order to measure acculturation and enculturation, 12 out of the 30 items in the Acculturation Rating Scale for Mexican Americans-II (ARSMA-II) was used. A one-way multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVA) revealed the differences in enculturation and acculturation between genders. A hierarchical regression revealed that as far as career decision self-efficacy, the only significant predictor for boys was ethnic identity. On the other hand, both ethnic identity and acculturation were significant predictors for girls. The findings suggest that Latina girls are more bicultural than boys and because they are more secure in their identity, it would be easier for them to make career decisions (Ojeda et al. 2011).

## CRITIQUE OF THE LITERATURE

The research on acculturation and familism as it relates to educational or career aspirations is limited. This is the direct result of its inability to standardize common themes within these two dimensions. The outcome can be observed in this study as each literature examined presented these themes with different measurements. These inconsistencies in

definition and measurement are important because they make it challenging for future researchers to compare results or notice patterns.

For example, Ojeda et al. (2011) defined acculturation as the process that takes place as an individual or group adapts to a host culture. He used 12 out of the 30 items on the Acculturation Rating Scale for Mexican Americans-II (ARSMA-II). This suggests that he missed essential components that contribute to the viability of the scale. Meanwhile, St-Hilaire (2002) used length of residency in the United States as the sole measure of acculturation. Unfortunately, length of residency only tells one part of the story in an immigrants' process of acculturation.

The same problem emerged with familism. Sabogal et al. (1987), for example, used items to measure both behavioral and attitudinal familism. However, he admitted that he did not include some aspects of behavioral familism that would have affected attitudinal familism differently. Desmond and Turley (2009) oversimplified familism by exclusively looking at it as one's desire to stay home for college which may in part relate to behavioral familism. Finally, Keefe et al. (1979) used a single factor of Attitudinal Familism known as familial support to describe the concept of familism. Moreover, he also did not talk about whether the kinship changed or remained the same overtime as the individuals became more acculturated. In summary, the empirical examinations of these relationships are limited in terms of measurement.

## THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

The studies exploring acculturation and aspirations often lack a theoretical perspective and only make a record of the effects without trying to explain them. Acculturation has been defined as the dynamic process of adopting a new culture. This process is bidirectional meaning that when two different cultures come in contact, they are both affected (Teske and Nelson

1974). In addition, Schumann (1986) has stated that acquiring a new language is one of the most important parts of the general process of acculturation. While Schumann's Acculturation Theory examines the process of acquiring a second language as the primary means of acculturation, the components in his theory can be applied to other aspects of acculturation (Ellis 2015).

Acculturation is significantly related to career aspirations and educational aspirations and expectations. An individual of a foreign background can become frustrated when their values conflict with the culture of the host country. As a result, finding a sense of belonging is hard to achieve in educational settings (López 2010). Merely the lack of knowing the English language in America is enough to limit one's career aspirations. The jobs readily available for foreign speakers are largely low-skilled jobs (Kossoudji 1988).

This theory is one of the few that investigates acculturation at the individual level. It focuses on sociocultural factors and how they influence language learners. The main concept of the theory is that the greater the social distance, the harder it will be for the English Language Learner (ELL). Furthermore, Schumann's Acculturation Theory incorporates three essential components of social distance that begin to explain the complexities of acculturation: Integration Pattern, Cohesiveness, and Attitude (Schumann 1986).

Integration Pattern consists of three acculturation strategies: assimilation, preservation, and adaptation. The assimilation strategy requires the ELL to give up their native group's lifestyle and values in order to adopt those that belong to the host group. The preservation strategy involves the ELL keeping their native group's lifestyle and values and completely rejecting those that belong to the host group. Finally, the adaptation strategy includes the ELL maintaining the lifestyle and values of the native group while also adapting to the lifestyle and values of the host group (Schumann 1986).

Cohesiveness is another social factor that states if the ELL's native group is highly cohesive, the ELL will not try to interact with the host group and they will instead isolate themselves. Therefore, the more interconnected the ELL is with the native group, the less likely they will learn the language of the host group, much less assimilate to its lifestyle or culture (Schumann 1986).

Attitude claims that if the ELL has positive attitudes towards the host group and vice versa, it would promote more exposure to each other's lifestyles and cultures as well as the learning of the target language to improve communication (Schumann 1986).

## SUMMARY

A review of the literature concerning the effects of acculturation on career aspirations and educational aspirations and expectations has brought to light several important concepts. First, linguistic adaptation and belonging was discussed. In this section, the results from the studies suggest that higher acculturation levels lead to better outcomes in career self-efficacy and school belonging. High acculturation and language use were found to predict career self-efficacy as with increased acculturation comes efficiency in overcoming obstacles and with a better understanding of the host country's language, they can be more confident in their career decisions. Students also reported feeling more comfortable and engaged when their teachers incorporated aspects of their native language in their learning. In the section about socialization, familism and peer influence was discussed. Studies showed that while familism is commonly studied as a protective factor, it can also be perceived as a barrier. Familism was associated with material and emotional support, but its attributes of interdependence and familial obligation were also found to become barriers when deciding if and where to go to college. Also, while it is

important to have friends, the quality of the friendship and the friends' attitudes towards school is more crucial. School belonging rose for Hispanics and non-Hispanic whites when their friends attended the same school. Hispanics were found to have more school problems when their friends were around. Furthermore, the expectations and aspirations gap is discussed. Hispanic students' aspirations were much higher than their educational expectations. This gap was linked to the students dreaming of obtaining the social mobility. There were also different results amongst genders as Latina girls were more bicultural than boys. Additionally, through their confidence in their identity, Latina girls they were able to make career decisions easier. Next, the critique of the literature includes many shortcomings and limitations of the research, such as different definitions and measurements of acculturation and familism. Finally, the theoretical framework of this study, Schumann's Acculturation Theory, was discussed. This theory explores acculturation at the individual level and emphasizes three of its essential components.

## HYPOTHESES

Based on the previous literature and Schumann's Acculturation Theory, several hypotheses are put forward:

### A. Integration Pattern

H1a: Higher levels of acculturation will be positively associated with Hispanic students' career aspirations.

H1b: Higher levels of acculturation will be positively associated with Hispanic students' educational aspirations and expectations.

## B. Cohesiveness

H2a: Higher levels of familism will be negatively associated with Hispanic students' career aspirations.

H2b: Higher levels of familism will be negatively associated with Hispanic students' educational aspirations and expectations.

H3a: Higher levels of foreign comradery will be negatively associated with Hispanic students' career aspirations.

H3b: Higher levels of foreign comradery will be negatively associated with Hispanic students' educational aspirations and expectations.

## C. Attitude

H4a: Positive Hispanic attitudes toward the American culture will be positively associated with Hispanic students' career aspirations.

H4b: Positive Hispanic attitudes toward the American culture will be positively associated with Hispanic students' educational aspirations and expectations.

### CHAPTER III

#### METHODOLOGY

This research follows an exploratory, longitudinal, research design examining the influence of acculturation on the career aspirations and educational aspirations and expectations of Hispanic students. The sample used in this study came from the 1991-2006 Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (CILS) that was designed to examine adaptation patterns and aspirations of second-generation immigrants and their parents over time. They used second generation participants, those who were born in the United States and had at least one foreign-born parent, and broadened the definition to include children who were born abroad and brought to the United States at a young age. The sample consists of 5,262 immigrant children from 77 representing nationalities attending public and private schools in the metropolitan areas of Miami/Ft. Lauderdale, Florida and San Diego, California. The first wave of data collection was conducted in 1992, when the adolescents were around 14 years of age. The second wave was conducted in 1995, just before their graduation at around 17 years of age. Finally, the third wave was conducted from 2001-2003, into their early adulthood at around 24 years of age. In the second wave, 4,288 of the respondents were surveyed along with 2,442 of their parents. In the third wave, 3,613 of the respondents were surveyed (Portes and Rumbaut 2012). All three waves of the CILS are used in the present study.

#### VARIABLES IN THE STUDY

##### *Dependent Variables*

The first dependent variable for this study is expected occupational prestige at age 30.

Occupational prestige score was developed to be a universal measure of prestige hierarchy and was intended to be used to measure the status of a worker's position within the stratification system of a given society (Haller, Bills, and Treiman 1979). In this study, it is a continuous measure that ranges from 18 to 78, where 18 indicates occupation with lowest prestige score 78 indicates occupation with the highest prestige score. It is operationalized using the responses to the question "What type of occupation do you realistically expect to have when you reach age 30?"

The second dependent variable is educational aspirations/expectations and was measured from responses to the questions "What is the highest level of education that you would like to achieve?" and "Realistically speaking, what is the highest level of education that you think you will get?" The responses were coded as (0=Less than high school; 1=Finish high school; 2=Finish some college; 3=Finish college; 4=Finish a graduate degree). The index was created by averaging the scores from the two items, which were found to have good reliability (Cronbach's alpha= .811).

**Table. 1 Dependent variables in the study**

DEPENDENT VARIABLES	OPERATIONALIZATION	CODING
<i>Career Aspirations</i>	What type of occupation do you realistically expect to have when you reach age 30?	Scale ranging from 18-78
<i>Educational Aspirations/Expectations</i>	What is the highest level of education that you would like to achieve and what is the highest level of education that you think you will get? (0=Less than high school; 1=Finish high school; 2=Finish some college; 3=Finish college; 4=Finish a graduate degree)	Educational Aspirations/Expectations Index (Cronbach's alpha=.811)

### *Independent Variables*

The key independent variable is acculturation and it incorporates three theoretical concepts underlying Schumann's Acculturation Theory: integration pattern, cohesiveness, and attitude. Integration pattern levels are measured by length of stay and language proficiency are the two essential components of this construct. Length of stay was measured from responses to the question "How long have you lived in the U.S.?" and coded as (0=Less than five years; 1=Five to nine years; 2=Ten years or more; 3=All my life). Responses have been reverse-coded, so that the higher number indicates longer presence in the U.S. Language Proficiency is an index created by Portes and Rubén Rumbaut (2012) that included the responses to questions "How well do you speak English?", "How well do you understand English?", "How well do you read English?", and "How well do you write English?" (0=Not at all; 1=Not well; 2=Well; 3=Very well). The index was created by adding the scores from the four items, which have been found to have a good reliability (Cronbach's alpha= .917).

Cohesiveness is the level of interdependence within their native group. Attitudinal Familism index, Behavioral Familism Index, and number of close friends whose parents came from foreign countries were used to measure cohesiveness. The Attitudinal Familism Index was created by taking the average of three measures of familial cohesiveness and loyalty. The corresponding questions were "How often do your family members like to spend free time with each other?", "How often do your family members feel very close to each other?", "How often is family togetherness is very important?" The responses were coded as (0=Never, 1=Once in a while, 2=Sometimes, 3=Often, 4=Always). All items were found to have a good reliability (Cronbach's alpha= .846). The Behavioral Familism Index was created by taking the average of three measures of familial obligation and support. The corresponding questions were "If

someone has the chance to help a person get a job, it is always better to choose a relative over a friend?”, “When someone has a serious problem, only relatives can help?”, and “When looking for a job a person should find a job near his/her parents even if it means losing a better job somewhere else?” The responses were coded as (0=Disagrees a lot, 1=Disagrees a little, 2=Agrees a little, 3=Agrees a lot). Responses have been reverse-coded from its original scale, so that now the higher number indicates choosing relative over a friend. Although the Cronbach’s alpha is relatively low (Cronbach’s alpha= 0.591), all three items appear to hold face validity. For example, choosing to help a relative over a friend and choosing to find a job near his/her parents even if it means losing a better job somewhere else seems to clearly reflect familial obligation while only relatives can help with serious problems seems to reflect familial support of behavioral familism. Foreign Comradery or number of close friends from abroad was measured from responses to the question “How many of these close friends have parents who came from foreign countries, that is who were not born in the U.S.?” and coded as (0=None; 1=Some; 2=Many or most).

The theoretical concept, attitude, reflects sentiment to American culture. Americans feeling superior to foreigners was used to determine attitude. Americans superior to foreigners was measured from responses to the question “Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements: Americans generally feel superior to foreigners” and coded as (0=Agrees a lot; 1=Agrees a little; 2=Disagrees a little; 3=Disagrees a lot).

**Table. 2 Independent variables in the study**

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INTEGRATION PATTERN		
<i>Length of Stay</i>	How long have you lived in the United States?	0=Less than five years; 1=Five to nine years; 2=Ten years or more; 3=All my life
<i>Language Proficiency</i>	How well do you speak, understand, read, and write English? (0=Not at all; 1=Not well; 2=Well; 3=Very well)	English Proficiency Index (Cronbach's alpha= .917)
COHESIVENESS		
<i>Attitudinal Familism</i>	How often do your family members like to spend free time with each other? How often do your family members feel very close to each other? How often is family togetherness very important? (0=Never, 1=Once in a while, 2=Sometimes, 3=Often, 4=Always)	Attitudinal Familism Index (Cronbach's alpha= .846)
<i>Behavioral Familism</i>	If someone has the chance to help a person get a job, it is always better to choose a relative over a friend? When someone has a serious problem, only relatives can help? When looking for a job a person should find a job near his/her parents even if it means losing a better job somewhere else? (0=Disagrees a lot, 1=Disagrees a little, 2=Agrees a little, 3=Agrees a lot)	Behavioral Familism Index (Cronbach's alpha= .591)
<i>Foreign Comradery</i>	How many of these close friends have parents who came from foreign countries, that is who were not born in the U.S.?	0=None; 1=Some; 2=Many or most
ATTITUDE		
<i>Americans Superior to Foreigners</i>	Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statement: Americans generally feel superior to foreigners.	0=Agrees a lot; 1=Agrees a little; 2=Disagrees a little; 3=Disagrees a lot

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### *Control Variables*

The control variables in this study include: demographics, parental occupational prestige, and peer influence.

Age is a continuous variable and was measured from responses to the question “How old are you?” Gender was measured from responses to the question “What is your sex?” coded as (0=Male; 1=Female). Since the focus of the study was on Hispanic youth, the race was used as a selection variable.

Parental occupation measures the ranking of parental occupational prestige. Respondents were asked about the type of occupations their parents have. The higher of the two values was calculated and were used to indicate parental occupational prestige.

Peer influence measures peers’ aspirations towards college enrollment. Peer influence includes friends with no college plans and friends with job plans after high school. Friends with no college plans/job plans after high school was measured from responses to the questions “How many of your friends have: No plans to go to college?” and “How many of your friends have: Plans to get a full-time job after high school?” The responses were coded as (0=None; 1=Some; 2=Many or most). Although the Cronbach’s alpha is relatively low, the two items appear to hold face validity. For example, having friends with no college plans and planning to get a full-time job after high school are bound to influence the respondent’s motivation to pursue higher education. The index was created by averaging the scores from the two items (Cronbach’s alpha= .574).

**Table. 3 Control variables in the study**


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DEMOGRAPHICS		
<i>Age</i>	How old are you?	Scale
<i>Gender</i>	What is your sex?	0=Male; 1=Female
EDUCATIONAL STANDING		
<i>Grade point average</i>	Extracted from school records	Scale
PARENTAL OCCUPATION		
<i>Parental occupational prestige</i>	What type of occupation do your parents have?	Scale
PEER INFLUENCE		
<i>Friends with No College Plans/Job Plans After High School</i>	How many of your friends have: No plans to go to college? How many of your friends have: Plans to get a full-time job after high school?  (0=None; 1=Some; 2=Many or most)	Friends with No College Plans/Job Plans After High School Index (Cronbach's alpha= .574)

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## DATA ANALYSIS

### *Descriptive Statistics*

The descriptive statistics describe the basic features of the variables included in the study (Trochim, Donnelly, and Arora 2016). The mean will be used as the primary measure of central tendency and the standard deviation will be used as the measure of dispersion to describe scales as they reflect a continuous distribution.

### *Bivariate Analysis*

Bivariate analysis is key when analyzing a relationship between two variables. It examines the existence and strength of the association between selected variables (Trochim et al. 2016). Pearson's correlation will be used in this study as it is one of the most common correlations used when dealing with scale dependent variables.

### *Multivariate Analysis*

Multivariate analysis is used to analyze data that examines more than one independent variable simultaneously (Trochim et al. 2016). Linear regressions will be utilized as they are used to understand the linear relationships between continuous dependent variable and multiple independent variables as well as the control variables (Trochim et al. 2016). It provides a better understanding of differences to the independent variables can result in different levels of the independent variables with all other conditions remaining the same.

Two models will be used in this analysis. Model 1 will examine the relationship between integration pattern, cohesion, and attitude and expected occupational prestige and educational aspirations/expectations. Model 2 will reassess the previous relationships controlling for demographics, parental occupation, and peer influences.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

#### DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Table 4 and 5 provide the descriptive statistics for the variables included in this study. The total number of respondents for the study was 584. The number of cases was reduced from the original sample due to listwise deletion, and due to fact Hispanics were the only race category selected in this study.

Career aspirations was measured on a scale of 18 to 78 with 18 indicating occupation with the lowest prestige score and 78 indicating occupation with the highest prestige score, results reveal a mean score of 54.70 with a standard deviation of 9.78. The mean of the second variable, educational aspirations/expectations, meanwhile, is 3.47 with a standard deviation of 0.69, which signifies that, on average, the respondents thought that the highest level of education they would achieve or get was college.

Turning to independent variables that capture the integration pattern, for length of stay, 48% of the respondents lived in the United States for less than five years. Comparatively, 25% of respondents lived in the United States for five to nine years, 25% for ten or more years, and 2% for all their lives. For language proficiency, the mean of 2.80 with a standard deviation of 0.35 signifies, on average, the respondents found themselves capable of speaking, understanding, reading, and writing English very well.

For independent variables that measure cohesiveness, attitudinal familism has a mean score of 0.13 with a standard deviation of 0.88, while behavioral familism has a mean score of 0.10 with a standard deviation of 0.67. For foreign comradery, 72% of the respondents reported

that many or most of their friends whose parents came from a foreign country many. Additionally, 25% of the respondents had some friends whose parents came from a foreign country and 2% had none. With respect to the independent variable that capture attitude, Americans superior to foreigners, 41% agreed a lot that Americans generally feel superior to foreigners. Moreover, 39% agreed a little, 13% disagreed a little, and 8% disagreed a lot.

For the control variables, on average, the respondents were 14 years old and more than half (56%) were female. The respondents, on average, had a 2.49 grade point average. For parental occupational prestige, the mean score is 47.44 with a standard deviation of 13. Finally, for friends with no college plans or job plans after high school, the mean of 1.03 signifies the average of the respondents have some friends that have no college plans or plan to get a full-time job after high school.

**Table 4. Descriptive Statistics for the Study Variables Used in the Analysis (n=584)**

<b>DEPENDENT VARIABLES</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
<i>Career Aspirations</i>			54.70	9.78
<i>Educational Aspirations/Expectations</i>			3.47	0.69
<b>INDEPENDENT VARIABLES</b>				
Length of Stay			0.80	0.87
<i>Less than five years</i>	282	48.3		
<i>Five to nine years</i>	146	25.0		
<i>Ten or more years</i>	146	25.0		
<i>All my life</i>	10	1.7		
Language Proficiency			2.80	0.35
Attitudinal Familism			0.13	0.88
Behavioral Familism			0.10	0.67
Foreign Comradery			1.71	0.50
<i>None</i>	13	2.2		
<i>Some</i>	145	24.8		
<i>Many or most</i>	426	72.9		
Americans Superior to Foreigners			0.87	0.90
<i>Agrees a lot</i>	237	40.6		
<i>Agrees a little</i>	230	39.4		
<i>Disagrees a little</i>	73	12.5		
<i>Disagrees a lot</i>	44	7.5		

**Table 5. Descriptive Statistics for the Study Variables Used in the Analysis (n=584)**

<b>CONTROL VARIABLES</b>			
Age			14.07      0.83
Gender (female=1)			0.56      0.50
<i>Male</i>	257	44.0	
<i>Female</i>	327	56.0	
Grade Point Average			2.49      0.85
<b>PARENTAL OCCUPATION</b>			
Parental Occupational Prestige			47.44      13.48
<b>PEER INFLUENCE</b>			
Friends with No College Plans/Job Plans After High School			0.83      0.53

**BIVARIATE ANALYSIS: CAREER ASPIRATIONS**

Table 6 displays the results of the bivariate analysis examining the correlation between variables used in the analysis. Findings show a positive and significant correlations between language proficiency and career aspirations ( $r=0.128$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). In addition, there is a positive and significant correlation between attitudinal familism and career aspirations ( $r=0.088$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). Furthermore, the data show a positive and significant correlation between foreign comradery and career aspirations ( $r=0.118$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). Additional findings show that the length of stay ( $r=-0.008$ ,  $p=0.672$ ), which measures the how long the respondent has lived in the United States, behavioral familism ( $r=-0.021$ ,  $p=0.609$ ), which measures familial support, and Americans superior to foreigners ( $r=0.006$ ,  $p=0.891$ ), which measures if the respondent think that Americans generally feel superior to foreigners, are not statistically significant.

For the control variables, the findings show a positive and significant correlation between gender, operationalized as the respondent's sex, and career aspirations ( $r=0.099$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). Also, findings reveal a positive and significant relationship between grade point average and career aspirations ( $r=0.301$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). There was a positive and significant relationship between parental occupational prestige, operationalized the type of occupation the respondent's parents have, and career aspirations ( $r=0.111$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). Additionally, there was a negative and significant correlation between friends with no college plans and job plans after high school, operationalized as the number of friends the respondents that have plan to go to college and get a full-time job after high school, and career aspirations ( $r=-0.096$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). Finally, the data suggests that age, operationalized as how old the respondent is, is not statistically significant ( $r=-0.067$ ,  $p=0.103$ ).

**Table 6. Pearson's r Coefficient. Career Aspirations**

	X1	X2	X3	X4	X5	X6	X7	X8	X9	X10	X11
<i>Carrier Aspirations</i>	1										
<i>Length of Stay</i>	0.240	1									
<i>Language Proficiency</i>	0.128**	-0.308**	1								
<i>Attitudinal Familism</i>	0.088*	0.083*	-0.024	1							
<i>Behavioral Familism</i>	-0.021	0.730	-0.104*	0.092*	1						
<i>Foreign Comradery</i>	0.118**	0.160	0.720	0.250	-0.103*	1					
<i>Americans Superior to Foreigners</i>	0.006	-0.310	-0.068	0.460	0.009	-0.039	1				
<i>Age</i>	-0.067	0.130**	-0.068	0.006	0.033	-0.056	-0.047	1			
<i>Gender (1=female)</i>	0.099*	0.043	0.079	0.011	-0.071	0.122**	0.006	-0.060	1		
<i>Grade Point Average</i>	0.301**	0.038	0.151**	0.129**	-0.107**	0.048	-0.026	-0.157**	0.128**	1	
<i>Parental Occupational Prestige</i>	0.111**	-0.101*	0.150**	0.019	-0.043	0.053	-0.005	-0.093*	-0.088*	0.139**	1
<i>Friends with No College Plans/Job Plans After High School</i>	-0.096*	-0.051	-0.030	-0.090*	0.087*	-0.006	0.010	0.039	-0.074	0.231	-0.155**

Note: \*p<0.05; \*\*p<0.01

## MULTI-VARIATE ANALYSIS: CAREER ASPIRATIONS

Table 7 provides the results from a multiple linear regression analyses of the two models included in the study. Model 1 presents the results from the expected occupational prestige regressed on integration pattern, cohesion, and attitude only. The model is statistically significant making this a good model fit ( $F=3.971$ ,  $p=0.001$ ). The R-Square of Model 1 is 0.040 which indicates that approximately 4 percent of the variance in career aspirations is explained by the combination of the independent variables in Model 1. For the theoretical constructs, results in Model 1 reveal a positive and significant relationship between the focal independent variables: language proficiency ( $b=3.996$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), attitudinal familism ( $b=0.936$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), foreign comradery ( $b=2.033$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), and career aspirations. The variables length of stay, behavioral familism, and Americans superior to foreigners were not found to be statistically significant. Akin to the bivariate analysis, length of stay, behavioral familism and Americans superior to foreigners continues not to be significant.

Model 2 examines the previous relationships controlling for demographics, parental occupation, and peer influences. The model is statistically significant showing this to be a good model fit ( $F=6.977$ ,  $p=0.000$ ). The R-Square of Model 2 is 0.118 which indicates that approximately 11.8 percent of the variance in career aspirations by the independent and control variables in the study. With the inclusion of the control variables, this model explains approximately 7 percent more of the variance in career aspirations. For the independent variables, controlling for the control variables, results reveal a positive and statistically significant effect for language proficiency and foreign comradery on career aspirations. For the control variables, the results reveal a positive and significant relationship between grade point average and career aspirations. While controlling for all other variables, results indicate that

length of stay, attitudinal familism, behavioral familism, and Americans superior to foreigners are not significantly significant. Similarly to Model 1, language proficiency and foreign comradery continues to be significant; however, attitudinal familism is no longer significant. Moreover, length of stay, behavioral familism, and Americans superior to foreigners are still not statistically significant. The results also reveal that, while controlling for the independent variables, grade point average is statistically significant, while age, gender, parental occupational prestige, and friends with no college plans/job plans after high school are not statistically significant in the second model.

**Table 7. Multiple Linear Regression Predicting Career Aspirations**

	Model 1				Model 2			
INTEGRATION PATTERN	B	Beta	S.E. B	Sig.	B	Beta	S.E. B	Sig.
<i>Length of Stay</i>	0.675	0.060	0.483	0.163	0.435	0.039	0.473	0.357
<i>Language Proficiency</i>	3.996**	0.220**	0.142	0.001	2.401*	0.085*	1.199	0.046
COHESIVENESS								
<i>Attitudinal Familism</i>	0.936*	0.084*	0.459	0.042	0.502	0.045	0.447	0.262
<i>Behavioral Familism</i>	-0.118	-0.008	0.606	0.846	0.374	0.026	0.588	0.525
<i>Foreign Comradery</i>	2.033*	0.104*	0.802	0.011	1.766*	0.091*	0.779	0.024
ATTITUDE								
<i>Americans Superior to Foreigners</i>	0.188	0.017	0.444	0.671	0.218	0.020	0.428	0.611
DEMOGRAPHICS								
<i>Age</i>					-0.138	-0.012	0.473	0.771
<i>Gender (female=1)</i>					1.009	0.051	0.796	0.205
EDUCATIONAL STANDING								
<i>Grade Point Average</i>					2.980***	0.259***	0.486	0.000
PARENTAL OCCUPATION								
<i>Parental Occupational Prestige</i>					0.045	0.062	0.030	0.128
PEER INFLUENCE								
<i>Friends with No College Plans/Job Plans After High School</i>					-0.302	-0.016	0.763	0.692

Note: \*p<0.05; \*\*p<0.01; \*\*\*p<0.001

## BIVARIATE ANALYSIS: EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS/EXPECTATIONS

Table 8 provides the bivariate analysis examining the relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variables and control variables. Findings provide an initial support for Hypothesis 1 as they show a positive and significant relationship between language proficiency and career aspirations ( $r=0.155, p<0.001$ ). Contrary to the hypothesis, the findings reveal a positive and significant relationship between attitudinal familism, or familial cohesiveness, and career aspirations ( $r=0.134, p<0.01$ ). Also contrary to hypothesis, findings reveal a positive and significant correlation between foreign comradery and career aspirations ( $r=0.186, p<0.001$ ). Findings also show that the length of stay, which measures the how long the respondent has lived in the United States, behavioral familism, which measures familial support, and Americans superior to foreigners, which measures if the respondent think that Americans generally feel superior to foreigners, are not statistically significant.

For the control variables, the findings show a positive and significant relationship between gender, operationalized as the respondent's sex, and career aspirations ( $r=0.117, p<0.05$ ). Also, findings reveal a positive and significant relationship between grade point average and career aspirations ( $r=0.344, p<0.001$ ). There was a positive and significant relationship between parental occupational prestige, operationalized the type of occupation the respondent's parents have, and career aspirations ( $r=0.205, p<0.001$ ). Additionally, there was a negative and significant correlation between friends with no college plans and job plans after high school, operationalized as the number of friends the respondents that have plan to go to college and get a full-time job after high school, and career aspirations ( $r=-0.232, p<0.001$ ). Finally, results reveal that age, operationalized as how old the respondent is, is not statistically significant.

**Table 8. Pearson's r Coefficient. Educational Aspirations/Expectations**

	X1	X2	X3	X4	X5	X6	X7	X8	X9	X10	X11
<i>Educational Aspirations/Expectations</i>	1										
<i>Length of Stay</i>	0.042	1									
<i>Language Proficiency</i>	0.155**	-0.308**	1								
<i>Attitudinal Familism</i>	0.134**	0.083*	-0.024	1							
<i>Behavioral Familism</i>	-0.028	0.73	-0.104*	0.092*	1						
<i>Foreign Comradery</i>	0.186**	0.16	0.72	0.25	-0.103*	1					
<i>Americans Superior to Foreigners</i>	-0.042	-0.31	-0.068	0.46	0.009	-0.039	1				
<i>Age</i>	-0.055	0.130**	-0.068	0.006	0.033	-0.056	-0.047	1			
<i>Gender (1=female)</i>	0.117**	0.043	0.079	0.011	-0.071	0.122**	0.006	-0.060	1		
<i>Grade Point Average</i>	0.344**	0.038	0.151**	0.129**	-0.107**	0.048	-0.026	-0.157**	0.128**	1	
<i>Parental Occupational Prestige</i>	0.205**	-0.101*	0.150**	0.019	-0.043	0.053	-0.005	-.093*	-0.088*	0.139**	1
<i>Friends with No College Plans/Job Plans After High School</i>	-0.232**	-0.051	-0.030	-0.090*	0.087*	-0.006	0.010	0.039	-0.074	0.231	-0.155**

Note: \*p<0.05; \*\*p<0.01

## MULTI-VARIATE ANALYSIS: EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS/EXPECTATIONS

Table 9 provides the results of a multiple linear regression analyses of the two models included in the study. Model 1 presents the regression of integration pattern, cohesion, and attitude and educational aspirations/expectations. This model is statistically significant making this a good model fit ( $F=8.260$ ,  $p=0.000$ ). The R-Square of Model 1 is 0.079, indicating that approximately 7.9 percent of the variance in educational aspirations/expectations is explained by each of the independent variables within Model 1. Results in Model 1 reveal that language proficiency ( $b=0.328$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), attitudinal familism ( $b=0.100$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), and foreign comradery ( $b=0.225$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) had significant and positive effect on educational aspirations/expectations. Meanwhile, length of stay, behavioral familism, and Americans superior to foreigners were not found to be statistically significant. As in the previous tables, language proficiency, attitudinal familism, and foreign comradery remained statistically significant from the bivariate analysis. Similarly again to the bivariate analysis, length of stay, behavioral familism and Americans superior to foreigners continues not to be significant.

Model 2 reassesses the previous relationships controlling for demographics, parental occupation, and peer influences. The model is statistically significant making this a good model fit ( $F=13.850$ ,  $p=0.000$ ). The R-Square of Model 2 is 0.210, which indicates that approximately 21 percent of the variance in educational aspirations/expectations by the independent and control variables in the study. When including the control variables, this model explains approximately 14 percent more of the variance in educational aspirations/expectations. Results reveal a positive and statistically significant effect of language proficiency and foreign comradery on educational aspirations/expectations, while controlling for the control variables. For the control variables, while controlling for the independent variables, results reveal a positive and significant effects

for grade point average, parental occupational prestige, and friends with no college plans/job plans after high school on educational aspirations/expectations. While controlling for all other variables, results indicate that length of stay, behavioral familism, and Americans superior to foreigners are not statistically significant. Similarly to Model 1, language proficiency, foreign comradery and attitudinal familism continues to be significant. Furthermore, length of stay, behavioral familism, and Americans superior to foreigners were still not found to be statistically significant. Finally, while controlling for the independent variables, grade point average, parental occupational prestige and friends with no college plans/job plans after high school, the results were statistically significant while age and gender were not statistically significant.

**TABLE 9. Multiple Linear Regression Predicting Educational Aspirations/Expectations**

	Model 1				Model 2			
INTEGRATION PATTERN	B	Beta	S.E. B	Sig.	B	Beta	S.E. B	Sig.
<i>Length of Stay</i>	0.063	0.081	0.033	0.057	0.041	0.053	0.031	0.186
<i>Language Proficiency</i>	0.328***	0.168***	0.083	0.000	0.190*	0.097*	0.079	0.016
<b>COHESIVENESS</b>								
<i>Attitudinal Familism</i>	0.100**	0.129**	0.031	0.001	0.059*	0.076*	0.029	0.044
<i>Behavioral Familism</i>	-0.011	-0.011	0.041	0.796	0.037	0.037	0.039	0.336
<i>Foreign Comradery</i>	0.225***	0.054***	0.054	0.000	0.205***	0.152***	0.051	0.000
<b>ATTITUDE</b>								
<i>Americans Superior to Foreigners</i>	-0.021	-0.030	-0.028	0.491	-0.017	-0.023	0.028	0.539
<b>DEMOGRAPHICS</b>								
<i>Age</i>					0.010	0.013	0.028	0.743
<i>Gender (1=female)</i>					0.082	0.060	0.052	0.117
<b>EDUCATIONAL STANDING</b>								
<i>Grade Point Average</i>					0.205***	0.257***	0.032	0.000
<b>PARENTAL OCCUPATION</b>								
<i>Parental Occupational Prestige</i>					0.007***	0.137***	0.002	0.000
<b>PEER INFLUENCE</b>								
<i>Friends with No College Plans/ Job Plans After High School</i>					-0.178***	-0.138***	0.050	0.000

Note: \*p<0.05; \*\*p<0.01; \*\*\*p<0.001

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses the findings from this study designed to examine the relationship between acculturation and the career aspirations and educational aspirations and expectations of Hispanic students. It begins by discussing the multivariate findings, followed by the limitations of the study, and concludes with future research recommendations.

Two models were estimated for each dependent variable, career aspirations and educational aspirations/expectations. Model 1 regressed the independent variables: length of stay, language proficiency, attitudinal familism, behavioral familism, foreign comradery, and Americans superior to foreigners against each dependent variable. Model 2 added control variables into the regression equation. In each Model 1, language proficiency was found to be statistically significant in the theoretically predicted direction (positive). Notably, the effect of language proficiency on both dependent variables remained significant once the control variables were incorporated into the models (Model 2 in Table 6 and Table 8). This is consistent with Hypotheses #1a and 1b that higher levels of acculturation are positively associated with Hispanic students' career aspirations and with Hispanic students' educational aspirations and expectations. This finding suggests that as one becomes more fluent in the host country's language, and thus more integrated in the host country, their understanding, and consequently their confidence, will enable them to be more successful. This result also reinforces Miranda and Umhoefer (1998) study, which revealed that the higher acculturation levels and understanding of the host country's language led to career self-efficacy by overcoming language barriers. More integrated and proficient respondents could then be more confident in their career decisions as well as their

educational choices.

In addition, the results in each Model 1 revealed that length of stay was not significantly associated with either career aspirations nor educational aspirations and expectations. This stands in contrast to Hypotheses #1a and #1b, which have predicted that higher levels of acculturation would be positively associated with Hispanic students' career and educational aspirations and expectations. In Models 2 of Table 6 and 8, length of stay remained nonsignificant. This null finding could reflect little variation in the sample given that the variable length of stay is measured on the scale from 0 to 3 only (0=Less than five years; 1=Five to nine years; 2=Ten years or more; 3=All my life). Future studies may address this issue by incorporating a more detailed measure with the actual numbers of years that the respondent lived in the United States. Another potential reason could be that the sample only includes second generation, meaning that the respondents were either born in the United States or brought at a young age, therefore, their length of stay would not be significant as they were not old enough to perceive any change.

The results in each Model 1 also reveal that attitudinal familism is positively related to Hispanic students' career aspirations and with Hispanic students' educational aspirations and expectations. The positive effect of this variable on career aspirations disappears, however, once the control variables enter the regression equation. This finding is somewhat unexpected as it suggests that despite the respondents having loyal and cohesive families, attitudinal familism does not prevent them from achieving their educational aspirations, but it is unrelated to occupational aspirations. What is more, the findings of the present study indicate that the attitudinal familism increase educational aspirations, which is contrary to the Hypotheses #2a and 2b. Recall that these hypotheses predicted that familism would be negatively associated with each of the dependent variables. This finding also contradicts the Desmond and Turley's (2009)

study, which found that familism diminishes the student's options following high school such as attending universities that were not in close proximity to their family. Hispanic students preferred to attend community colleges or surrounding colleges, so that they could continue living at home. The discrepancy in these findings and the ones from the present study may be a result of using different measures of familism. Desmond and Turley (2009) used a scale that combined variables that measured attitudinal and behavioral familism, while the current study separated these two measures given their relatively low correlation (see Tables 5 and 7). Additionally, Desmond and Turley's study was based only on students who expected to continue their education. The current study, meanwhile, used the questions "What is the highest level of education that you would like to achieve?" and "Realistically speaking, what is the highest level of education that you think you will get?" to measure the educational aspirations and expectations.

In this study, Hispanics' strong family ties were found to be beneficial in their educational aspirations and expectations, which is valuable since having a tight knit family can be encouraging. Yet, I do not find such an effect for career aspirations. A plausible explanation for the significant effect on educational aspirations and expectations but not on career aspirations could be that distance is less of a factor for career aspirations. For instance, respondents can be an economist with a relatively lower degree in nearly any region, but to study economics at a higher level, the choices are limited to portions of the east and west coasts. As such, respondents do not need to be away from home to pursue the career of their dreams while helping out their families, but the same is not true for pursuing the education of their dreams at the higher level.

In both sets of models, behavioral familism was not significant to either career aspirations nor educational aspirations and expectations. This could be a result of the way the questions were

asked. These questions may not measure the variable accurately as they are worded vaguely. For example, the questions “If someone has the chance to help a person get a job, it is always better to choose a relative over a friend?”, “When someone has a serious problem, only relatives can help?”, and “When looking for a job a person should find a job near his/her parents even if it means losing a better job somewhere else?” are all asked indirectly. These questions can instead be asked in a manner that directly addresses the respondent. In other studies, familism was either used solely as familial obligation to help one another and remain together (Keefe et al. 1979) or constructed of attitudinal and behavioral familism components (Sabogal et al. 1987; Desmond and Turley 2009).

Looking at the parameter estimates of the foreign comradery, the results show that foreign comradery is positively associated with career aspirations and educational aspirations and expectations with and without control variables included in the models.<sup>1</sup> This finding suggests that the more foreign friends the respondents had, the higher their career aspirations and educational aspirations and expectations were. This is inconsistent with Hypotheses #3a and 3b, which have predicted that higher levels of foreign comradery would be negatively associated with Hispanic students’ career aspirations and with Hispanic students’ educational aspirations and expectations. Having a lot of friends in general make students feel more comfortable at school, and this may result in their higher aspirations. This result aligns in part with Vaquera’s (2009) study, which illustrated the increase in school belonging when students had a best friend attending the same school. However, it also deviates from Vaquera’s study as he found that while white students had higher engagement when their white best friend attended the same

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<sup>1</sup> In an additional analysis, I also controlled for the respondent’s number of friends. The substantive results were highly similar to those presented in the study. In addition, the results revealed a positive effect of number of friends on educational aspirations and expectations, but not on career aspirations.

school, the opposite was found for Hispanics with Hispanic friends. In contrast, the findings of the present study indicate that having foreign friends does not prevent the respondent from having occupational and educational aspirations; instead having foreign friends increases such aspirations. The results of Vaquera's study may differ because the author measured foreign comradery as the respondents' Hispanic best friends, whereas the current study measured how many foreign friends the respondent had in general.

Americans superior to foreigners was not significantly related to either career aspirations nor educational aspirations and expectations. This is inconsistent with Hypotheses #4a and 4b which predicted that positive Hispanic attitudes toward the American culture would be positively associated with Hispanic students' career aspirations and educational aspirations and expectations. This finding could be a result of the statement being poorly worded leading it to measure the variable inaccurately. The statement could have been perceived as having an aggressive tone "Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statement: Americans generally feel superior to foreigners." In future research, this statement can be better phrased as to not villainize Americans.

Schumann's Acculturation theory was only partially supported by my findings. In line with the theory's Integration Pattern, language proficiency, which stated that acquiring a second language, is the primary means of acculturation. Having the ability to communicate impacts all aspects of someone's everyday life. Lack of this ability to communicate properly leads to embarrassment, withdrawal, and frustration. In turn, these individuals are at greater risk of taking on the preservation strategy which leads them to rejecting the host country's culture and lifestyle. On the other hand, length of stay which was in theory another indicator of integration, did not seem to impact acculturation. The theory's Cohesiveness was not supported through attitudinal

familism since how close or bonded the family was did not limit the aspirations and expectations of the respondents, but rather they increased together. This is intriguing as it could indicate that instead of it being a limitation, it is in fact a protective factor. It could also be indicating that instead of tightness which leads to isolation, the relatively large size of the group could expose them to biculturalism. Behavioral familism did not seem to explain the theory either. Similarly to attitudinal familism, for foreign comradery, the more friends they had, even if they were foreigners, the more motivated they were to continue their education. This could be related to the benefits of having people who are available for support. Finally, the concept of Attitude as captured by asking if Americans are superior to foreigners was not important.

Turning to the control variables, the results indicate that the grade point average is positively associated with career aspirations and educational aspirations and expectations. The findings suggest that commitment in education translates to high career aspirations and educational aspirations and expectations. This finding was consistent with Chavira Cooper, and Vasquez-Salgado's (2016) study, which found that students who had congruent career and educational aspirations had higher grades than those who did not.

Parental occupational prestige was found to be positively associated with educational aspirations and expectations in Model 2 in Table 8. For the parental occupational prestige, findings suggest that the higher the respondent's parental occupational prestige score, the more confident the respondent would be in realizing their educational aspirations and expectations. While such an effect exists for educational aspirations and expectations, the results show no significant effect for career aspirations. This may be because the respondents, while still highly oriented towards educational and occupational achievement, could have different career goals than their parents. This in turn may be reflected in different levels of occupational prestige. For

example, if the respondent aspired to become a teacher, and their parent was a doctor, even if they both got PhDs, they would still be in different levels of occupational prestige.

Looking further at the parameter estimates of the control variables, I found that the variable friends with no college plans/job plans after high school is negatively associated with educational aspirations and expectations. The finding suggests that having more friends with no plans to go to college or that have job plans after high school lowers the respondent's educational aspirations and expectations. This is not surprising as having friends who want to go to college is often found a motivator for the respondent to achieve higher education. Espinoza et al. (2013), for instance, found that having achievement-oriented friends and high levels of friend support resulted in high levels of educational attainment and aspirations. As before, I find, however, that while the result are significant for educational aspirations and expectations, they are not for career aspirations. This may be because friends often attend the same school, but it is far less common for them to be employed by the same company.

Finally, in the results for each Model 1 and 2, for either dependent variables, gender was found to not be significant. The findings suggest that there is not a difference between genders when it comes to career and educational aspirations and expectations. Contrary to the current study, Ojeda et al. (2011) found that Latina girls were more bicultural than boys and this led to them having an easier time making career decisions. This finding could be the result of a difference in the objective of the studies as Ojeda et al. (2011) focused on self-efficacy in career decisions and the current study investigates career aspirations as well as educational aspirations and expectations. Different genders may have different decision-making processes, but this is not the case when looking at their occupational dreams. Because women rely heavily on education to obtain their ideal job, they value and pursue higher education more often than men.

## POLICY IMPLICATIONS

It is a crucial first step for policy makers to take an increased interest into second generation Hispanic immigrants. In dismissing the needs of this important population, America is denying itself of countless avenues for increased growth. After all, it is Americans' belief that children are the future, and this now increasingly includes the children of immigrants. The findings of this study suggest that one of the most essential needs of this population is adequate communication. Providing Hispanic students with the tools and motivation to communicate properly with their peers and their educators can enable them to remain on track and aim higher. As a group, this could increase their levels of confidence in their abilities. As a culture, Americans can be more accepting of these differences. Schumann's Acculturation theory states that the more two groups are exposed to one another, the more they will benefit. Through friendship and overall exposure, they are bound to improve their perceptions of each other as they become more aware of the other culture.

## LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

I acknowledge some limitations of this study. The current study utilizes secondary data, which were designed to analyze the adaptation process of the immigrant second generation in the metropolitan areas of Miami/Ft. Lauderdale, Florida and San Diego, California only. This has an impact on external validity of the present study because it focuses on specific areas only. Also, in using secondary data, the indicators that were used to operationalize the independent variables, each of the dependent variables, and the control variables, may not have accurately measured these variables, as discussed earlier. To that end, the small number of indicators

comprising the scale variables, behavioral familism and friends no college plans/job plans after high school might not accurately reflect the desired constructs, therefore decreasing their significance. Another potential limitation is the limited implications with respect to the role technology plays as this data was gathered from 1992-2003.

## FUTURE RESEARCH

Recommendations for future research are provided based on the findings from this study. As mentioned in the limitations, the current study ended in 2003 when the participants were 25 years old. Providing a fourth wave could provide better picture of adaptation as researchers could see what became of their aspirations and expectations. Utilizing primary data instead of secondary data would also be beneficial as one could use a larger sample size from a wider geographical area, which in turn would assist in alleviating bias. Primary data would also allow for researchers to ask more targeted questions that specifically ask, for example, “Do you go to your relatives or friends for advice on serious problems?” instead of “When someone has a serious problem, only relatives can help?”, “Would you accept a job offer if it meant not living near your family?” instead of “When looking for a job a person should find a job near his/her parents even if it means losing a better job somewhere else?”, and “Do you feel that Americans accept your culture?” instead of “Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statement: Americans generally feel superior to foreigners.” Moreover, the current study only focuses on Hispanic immigrants, which decreased the sample size. Therefore, it would also be beneficial for future studies to incorporate other immigrant groups and incorporate more measures of integration to see if there are any different effects.

In future research, incorporating more objective measures where sensical would be beneficial. The independent variable for language proficiency, for example, is measured as a subjective question about the respondent's perception of their own English language proficiency. The answers to these questions are bound to be inaccurate and biased as they do not have a consistent means of evaluating their English skills. This could be much more accurately measured by use of a standardized and objective score such as TOEFL score. This would pronounce the impact language has on acculturation and the resulting impact on the dependent variables. Finally, the internet lets people gather information at unprecedented rates and people are exposed to a more diverse global culture. In areas where there is no standardized objective replacement, social media data could be implemented as semi-objective measures. Measures such as the number of social networks one uses, the number of friends they have, and the breakout of those friends by national origin, though not always accurate, could provide insight as to how integrated or acculturated an individual is. If not only through their friends, but also for who they would like their friends to be.

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