EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATION AND EXPECTATIONS AMONG LATINO HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Jordan Pedraza ■ Krista M. Perreira ■ Carolina Population Center ■ The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Southern Immigrant Academic Adaptation Study

Introduction

• North Carolina is an emerging immigrant community that has been experiencing a large influx of Latino/a migrants since the late 1990s.
• This study examines the academic aspirations and expectations of Latino/a 9th graders enrolled in high schools throughout North Carolina.

Methods

• Data and Sample: We use baseline data from in-school and take-home surveys completed by 192 9th Grade Latino/a students. In addition, we use qualitative interview data from 16 adolescents who were randomly drawn from those who completed the survey.
• Measures: We measured academic aspirations (how far a student wants to go in school) and expectations (how far they think they’ll go) on a 5-point Likert scale. Independent variables included school climate (α = .84), likelihood of racial discrimination (α = .73), parent encouragement, foreign-born status, ethnic identity, gender, language preference, and family structure.
• Analysis: We describe aspirations and expectations for our sample. We then use one-way ANOVAs to estimate bivariate relations between these outcome and key independent variables. We conclude with the estimation of ordered logit models on aspirations and expectations.

Contact information

Jordan Pedraza and Krista M. Perreira
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Carolina Population Center
CB# 8120, University Square
123 West Franklin Street
Chapel Hill, NC 27516-2524
Krista_perreira@unc.edu
Jordan.Pedraza@pomona.edu

Conclusion

• Over 80% of Latino 9th graders aspire to continue their education after high school, but only 66% expect to be able to do so.
• According to our ANOVA analyses, Latino students have higher aspirations & expectations when they have frequent parental encouragement, perceive an excellent school climate, and perceive a low likelihood of discrimination.
• After controlling for demographic factors, perceived discrimination significantly influences Latino 9th graders’ aspirations.
• Parents’ encouragement, school climate, and discrimination play a vital role in the educational adjustment of Latino 9th graders. However, high aspirations and encouragement alone are not enough to promote the educational success of North Carolina’s Latino youth. Policies to reduce the likelihood of discrimination and improve the school climate can promote their academic adjustment and long-term economic well-being.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the SPGRE program for their support of Jordan Pedraza and the Russell Sage Foundation for funding of the Southern Immigrant Academic Adaptation Study. We also very much appreciate Jann Hendrickson-Smith’s assistance with programming and analysis. Funded by National Science Foundation #SES-0548858