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Born to Achieve: Educational Attainment Among Hispanics

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**Research Question**

We predict that U.S.-born Hispanics will have higher educational achievement than foreign-born Hispanic immigrants in the United States.

**Method**

- We compared the means of standardized test scores, parent’s education, language acquisition, parental involvement, family composition, and income for U.S.-born Hispanics and foreign-born Hispanics.
- We created three linear regression models to measure the interactions between our variables as well as to show the amount of variance in test scores that each explains.
  - Model 1 compares U.S.-born and foreign-born Hispanics in regards to standardized test scores.
  - Model 2 takes into account, language acquisition, and family structure into account for both U.S.-born and foreign-born Hispanics.
  - Model 3 adds parent’s education and parental involvement into the analysis.

**Variables**

- **Educational Achievement**- dependent variable- created by looking at standardized test scores for reading and math.
- **U.S. vs. Foreign-Born**- moderator- created by looking at where respondent was born.
- **How Long Respondent has been in U.S.**- how long ago respondent came to U.S.
- **Family Educational Attainment**- highest level of degree completed by father and mother.
- **Language Acquisition**- does respondent usually speak English or Spanish.
- **Parental Involvement**- created by looking at parental involvement in requiring homework and chores to be done as well as speaking to teachers and attending school events.
- **Family Structure**- who lives in same household as respondent.
- **Majority of Hispanic students live with both birth parents.
- **Parent’s Income**- range of household income.

**Results**

- **Standardized Test Scores**
  - There is no statistical difference between the standardized test scores of U.S.-born Hispanics and foreign-born Hispanics.
  - Model 1
    - Model 2
    - Model 3

- **Education**
  - Father’s highest level of education completed is one of the best predictors of children’s standardized test scores.
  - Parents of U.S.-born and foreign-born Hispanics both, on average, have equal level of education.

- **Language Acquisition**
  - The child’s primary language being English versus Spanish has no significant effect on standardized test scores.

- **Parental Involvement**
  - Parents who speaking to teachers or counselors has a significant negative effect on standardized test scores.
  - Parents of U.S.-born and foreign-born Hispanics both, on average, have equal level of education.

**Discussion**

- Our hypothesis that U.S.-born Hispanics would have higher standardized test scores than foreign-born Hispanics was incorrect - there is no difference.
- Future research should look at the correlation between family income and father’s education on standardized test scores for U.S. white children.
- If there is a correlation between family income and father’s education, then we should compare white children with Hispanic children (and look at other races as well) while controlling for father’s education and income.
- It may be that test scores among children are less affected by their race than they are by the income level of the child’s family and the child’s father’s education level.
- Rather than school programs to help minorities we would need to find a way to equalize opportunities for education and income.