Factors Affecting Migration Intentions among Adolescents in Mexico

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Research Questions

- What factors affect migration intentions among adolescents in Mexico?
  - Does academic achievement impact migration intentions among adolescents in Mexico?

  - Does family support impact migration intentions among adolescents in Mexico?

  - Does pre-migration acculturation impact migration intentions among adolescents in Mexico?

Importance of the Study

- Understanding migration intentions among adolescents in Mexico can inform practioners and policy makers and lead to the development of more rational and humane immigration policies.

History of Mexican Migration to the U.S.

- 1848 U.S. defeated Mexico and modern day California, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Colorado, Nevada, and Utah became part of the U.S.

- 1853 U.S. purchased southern part of Arizona creating current U.S./Mexico border.

(Massey, Durand, & Malone, 2002)

History of Mexican Migration to the U.S.

- The concept of the "border" did not exist initially, but took shape over time.

- People migrated from Mexico to the U.S. and back relatively freely.

- 1900-1929 U.S. employers actively recruited Mexican workers, primarily from the states of Guanajuato, Jalisco, Michoacán, San Luis Potosi, and Zacatecas.

- 1924 U.S. Border Patrol created
  - 450 officers were supposed to patrol not only U.S./Mexico border, but U.S. Canada border as well.

(Massey, Durand, & Malone, 2002)

History of Mexican Migration to the U.S.

- During the Great Depression in the U.S. (1929-1941)
  - there was a dramatic increase in apprehensions and deportations of Mexicans for "taking away jobs from Americans and living off public relief" (Hoffman, 1974, p. 33).

History of Mexican Migration to the U.S.

- **The Bracero Era (1942-1964)**
  - With the U.S. engaged in WWII, the draft and factory production mobilized for the war, there was a mass shortage of agricultural workers in the U.S.

  - Agricultural growers lobbied Congress and the President for help.

  - 1942 President Roosevelt negotiated a treaty with Mexico to grant temporary work visas to Mexican agricultural workers.

(Calavita, 1992)

History of Mexican Migration to the U.S.

- 1965-1985
  - Civil Rights era activists successfully fought against the Bracero Program because many felt it exploited Mexican migrant workers.

    - Since the bureaucracy had grown to large and complicated to manage, agricultural growers did not put up resistance.

  - In the years that followed, Congress put caps on the number of visas granted.
    - Legal Mexican immigration dropped from 450,000 a year to 20,000.

    - Since the labor was still needed in the U.S., undocumented immigration rose to fill the gap created by the reduction in visas for Mexican workers.

(Adreas, 2000; Massey, Durand, & Malone, 2002)

History of Mexican Migration to the U.S.

- ## 1986-Present
  - ### 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA)
    - Imposed sanctions against employers
    - Increased INS budget for apprehensions and deportations
    - Increased Labor Department's budget to carry out work-site inspections
    - Granted amnesty for long-term undocumented residents

(Bean, Vernez, & Keely, 1989)

History of Mexican Migration to the U.S.

- 1996 –
  - Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act
  - Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act.
    - Both nationalized limits on Social Security coverage and social services for both legal and undocumented immigrants.

    - States were permitted to limit or exclude entirely legal immigrants from both federal and state programs.

Theories of Migration

- ## Neoclassical Economic Theory-
  - ○ Migration occurs because
    - of the supply and demand for labor
    - workers from low-wage countries move high-wage countries (Ranis & Fei, 1961).

- ## Segmented Labor Market Theory
  - ○ Migration occurs because
    - not by push factors in sending countries, but by pull factors in receiving countries
    - of almost permanent demand for unskilled labor in developed countries (Piore, 1979).

Flaws in Migration Theories

- Migration occurs in the absence of wage differentials.

- Does not account for *circular migration*
  - If the benefits (wages, standard of living, education) in the receiving country are viewed a superior, then why do migrants choose to work and then return to home countries?

Hypotheses

- H1: Students who report higher levels of academic achievement (GPA) will report lower intentions to migrate to the U.S.

- H2: Students who report higher levels of parental support will report lower intentions to migrate the U.S.

- H3: Student who report longer lengths of stay in the U.S. will report lower intentions to migrate to the U.S.

- H4: Students who report higher levels of pre-acculturation will report higher intentions to migrate to the U.S.

Methods

- Sample
  - The data were collected from a non-random sample of a preparatoria in Tijuana, Mexico in February 2009.
  - The total population of the school is 1,406 students.
  - The total sample for this study was 984.

Demographics

Gender	Male: 495 (50.3%)	Female: 485 (49.3%)
Age	Range 15-22+	Average 16
Employment	44.5%	Work for pay
Father's Education	68.6%	Less than secundaria*
Mother's Education	74.2%	Less than secundaria*
SES	22.1%	Poor or very poor
GPA	82.5%	80** or higher
Educational Aspirations	66%	Beyond preparatoria†
Future Work Aspirations	66.4%	Professional Career

* Roughly equivalent to junior high
** Equivalent to B average
† Roughly equivalent to high school
Total Sample= 984

Measures

- *GPA*- based on the students self reported GPA

- *Parental Support*- based on a 5 item scale (α=.764)

- *Length of U.S. Visits*- based on self reported length of visits to U.S.

Measures

- *Pre-Acculturation-* based on 14 items from the Bicultural Involvement Questinnaire (BIQ) (Szapocznik et al., 1980).

  - Measures the level of Hispanicism and Americanism.

  - Based on the two scores, the BIQ measures level of acculturation/biculturalism

  - 14 items of the 33 items were selected based on appropriateness for a sample of students from Mexico.

  - 14 item Pre-Acculturation scale for this study (α=.853).

Dependent Variables

- Some day I would like to go live in the U.S.

- Some day I would like to go work in the U.S.

- When I graduate from high school I will move to the U.S.

- When I graduate from high school I will have to move to the U.S. to get a good job.

  - 4 likert questions (1= Strongly Disagree to 5= Strongly Agree)

Control Variables

- *Age*

- *Gender*

- *Father's Level of Education*

- *Mother's Level of Education*

- *SES*- based on a 7 item scale (α=.878)

- *Perceived Discrimination*- based on a 6 item scale (α=.876)

Analysis

- Relationships were examined using multivariate ordinary least squares (OLS) regressions.

- The final model is presented.

Results

	Like to Live in U.S.	Like to Work in U.S.	Will Move to U.S.	Have to Move to U.S. to Work
Parental Support	.060	**.089+**	.045	.021
	(.057)	(.054)	(.056)	(.059)
GPA	.020	.005	**-.140****	**-.146****
	(.050)	(.047)	(.049)	(.052)
Length of U.S. Visits	.032	**.123****	**.222*****	**.220*****
	(.051)	(.048)	(.050)	(.053)
Pre-Acculturation	**.345*****	**.240*****	**.094****	**.135*****
	(.037)	(.035)	(.037)	(.001)
N	804	801	797	795
R^2	.122	.103	.074	.077

$+ p < .10, * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001$
Gender (Male=0, Female=1)
Unstandardized Coefficients
Standard Errors in parenthesis

Results

- ## H1: supported
  - Higher GPAs significantly predicted lower migration intentions.

- ## H2: not supported
  - Higher parental support was not a significant predictor for lower migration intentions

Results

- ## H3: not supported
  - Longer lengths of stay in the U.S. significantly predicted higher migration intentions.

- ## H4: supported
  - Higher levels of pre-acculturation significantly predicted higher migration intentions.

Discussion

- Results indicate that for this sample, low SES was not a significant predictor of migration intentions to the U.S.

- Results support the notion that students with higher GPAs feel that they can obtain a high paying job and therefore do not need to migrate to the U.S. for work.

- Similarly results indicated that higher levels of participants' fathers' education was a significant predictor for lower migration intentions (results not presented)

Discussion

- Even controlling for Perceived Discrimination in the U.S., exposure to U.S. culture and the U.S. (Pre-Acculturation and Length of U.S. visits) significantly predicted higher migration intentions.

- Tijuana is a border city and proximity to the U.S. provides exposure to the U.S. through media (radio, television, movies, etc.) and U.S. (travel visas), which may lead to different pull factors such as U.S. lifestyle.

Limitations

- Non-probability sample

- One school

- Adolescents who are no longer in school may have different migration intentions

Implications for Practice

- Need for increased collaboration between social workers and educators in Mexico.

- Higher levels of acculturation among Latino adolescents living in the U.S. have been shown to lead to negative outcomes (lower academic achievement, higher drug use, family conflict, behavior problems) (Choi, He, & Harachi, 2008; Pew Hispanic Research Center, 2004; Smokowski, Rose, & Bacallao, 2008).

- Since exposure to the U.S. (Pre-Acculturation and Length of U.S. Visits) significantly predicted higher migration intentions, practioners in Mexico need to work with families to ensure that protective factors associated with Mexican culture are not eroded.

Implications for Policy

- Since higher academic achievement predicts lower migration intentions:
  - the Mexican government can attempt to fund the entire K-12 education of students.

  - Mexico can expand access to education for students, especially in rural areas.

  - Instead of spending billions of dollars on building a militarized physical and virtual fence, the U.S. can provide financial assistance to Mexico to expand access to education and fully fund K-12 education.

  - Reinstate a guest worker program to allow those who want to come work in the U.S. to do so not only in a legal way, but in a safer and more humane way.

Future Research

- Fall 2009 the State Department of Education of Baja California, Mexico has agreed to administer the questionnaire to a random sample of 3,000 students among the 26 public preparatorias in Tijuana, Mexico.

- Continue to study various factors impacting migration intentions among adolescents from other regions of Mexico.

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Questions