



THE UNITED STATES OF ORIGIN?

INTERPRETING THE IMMIGRANT EXPERIENCE OF UAA STUDENTS

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RESEARCH & QUESTIONS

The United States' ranking as the top migrant destination speaks volumes about the legacy that immigration has had on the country's past, present, and future. This immigration stream has also helped transform the local community, and recent research finds that Anchorage has some of the most diverse neighborhoods and high schools in the entire country. This study seeks to paint a portrait of the immigrant experience at one of our community's most important institutions—the University of Alaska Anchorage. We are guided by three research questions:

1. What sorts of experiences immigrant students have at UAA?
2. Do experiences differ by respondent characteristics such as language proficiency or length of residence in the U.S.?
3. How does family support factor into educational experiences?

RESEARCH DESIGN

In cooperation with UAA's Multicultural Center, we have recruited 55 international students to complete an online survey created using Qualtrics survey software. This survey includes open- and closed-ended questions that assess English language proficiency, reason for immigration, length of residency, family support, and country of origin. We provide a series of questions about immigrant experiences at UAA, including those inside and outside the classroom.

"Themed" Qualtrics generated survey:

People think I'm shy when I really just have trouble speaking English.



- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I feel that there is a division between immigrant students and non-immigrant students at UAA.



- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

HYPOTHESIS 1: ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY (ELP)

ELP can affect immigrants comfort level in host settings and their access to social networks and institutional resources.

HYPOTHESIS 2: LENGTH OF RESIDENCY

Immigrants gain cultural literacy, confidence, and knowledge over time residing in a host society.

HYPOTHESIS 3: FAMILY SUPPORT

Family support can help ease the transition to a host society.

RESPONDENT COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN:

China (1) 	Ireland (1) 	Mongolia (1) 	Russia (3) 	Taiwan (1)
Dom. Rep. (2) 	Japan (3) 	Nepal (1) 	Somalia (1) 	Ukraine (1)
Gambia (1) 	Korea (10) 	Philippines (4) 	S. Africa (1) 	Venezuela (1)
Germany (1) 	Mexico (1) 	Poland (1) 	Sudan (2) 	

LANGUAGES SPOKEN:



FAMILY SUPPORT: Has your family impacted your education?

"Since my father received his Ph.D. degree in the United States, he has provided me great motivation for me to study here."

"Significant. Even when professors clearly didn't believe that I belonged in a particular class, I always had support at home."

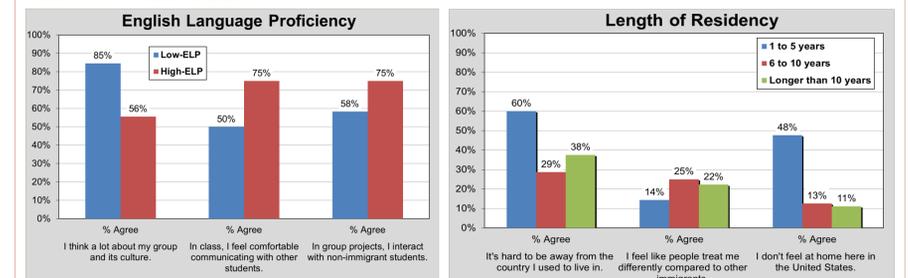
"Unquestionably, they are my inspiration and I am able to make progress because of their support."

Independent Variables: ELP, years in U.S., family support



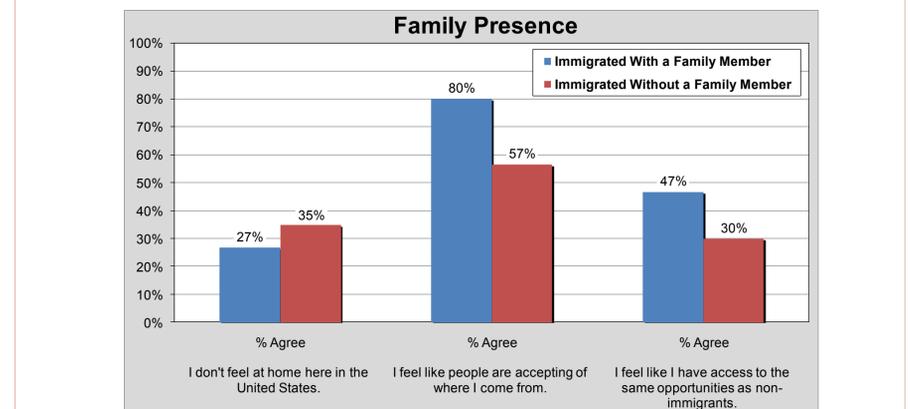
Dependent Variables: immigrant experiences

KEY FINDINGS



English Language Proficiency: Students who struggle with English are more likely to reference their group and their culture than those with high English Language Proficiency (ELP). About half of Low-ELP students feel comfortable interacting with other students in classroom settings or group projects, but these rates are considerably lower than High-ELP students.

Length of Residency: Relative newcomers are more likely to miss their origin country and less likely to feel at home in the United States than those who have lived here longer. However, these newcomers are slightly less likely to think they are treated differently than other immigrants. Those who have lived in the U.S. over five years are very likely to report feeling at home in the U.S.



Family Presence: Immigrating with family members makes students feel slightly more at home in the United States and makes them feel much more accepted in their host society. More than half of respondents did not agree that they had access to the same opportunities as non-immigrants. However, those who immigrated with family members were likely to report greater access to opportunities than those who did not.



THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING CONTRIBUTORS

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