Influence of immigrant generational status on college major choice

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BACKGROUND:
- The “immigrant paradox” is the phenomenon whereby second- and first-generation immigrants academically outperform later generations.
- There are few studies that examine the relationship between immigrant generational status and academic and career choices.
- A previous study (Rangel & Shi, 2019) has shown first-generation students begin skill specialization in early high school. This could influence later generations.

METHODOLOGY:
1. Participants were comprised of second- and third-generation immigrant students (N = 38, second-generation = 32, third-generation = 6)
2. Chi-square and t-tests were conducted to examine group differences in determinants (e.g. science self-concept) of STEM major choice across second- and third-generation participants

RESULTS:
- Second-generation immigrant students were more likely to select a STEM major compared to third-generation students ($X^2(1, N = 38) = 13.87, p < .01$)
- Second-generation immigrant students did not significantly differ on determinants of STEM major choice (science self-concept, math self-concept, science self-efficacy, math self-efficacy, STEM utility)

DISCUSSION:
- Findings from this study suggest that immigrant generational status has effects on educational choices not just academic performance (e.g. GPA).
- Future research can examine contextual variables that influence specific immigrant groups to specialize in certain occupational fields.

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Note. Mean scores of second-generation vs. third-generation are presented with the following coding scheme: SSC = Science Self-Concept, MSC = Math Self-Concept, STU = STEM Utility, STA = STEM Ability, MC = Major Confidence, PC = Parental Confidence, PI = Parental Influence.