

# Influence of immigrant generational status on college major choice

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## BACKGROUND:

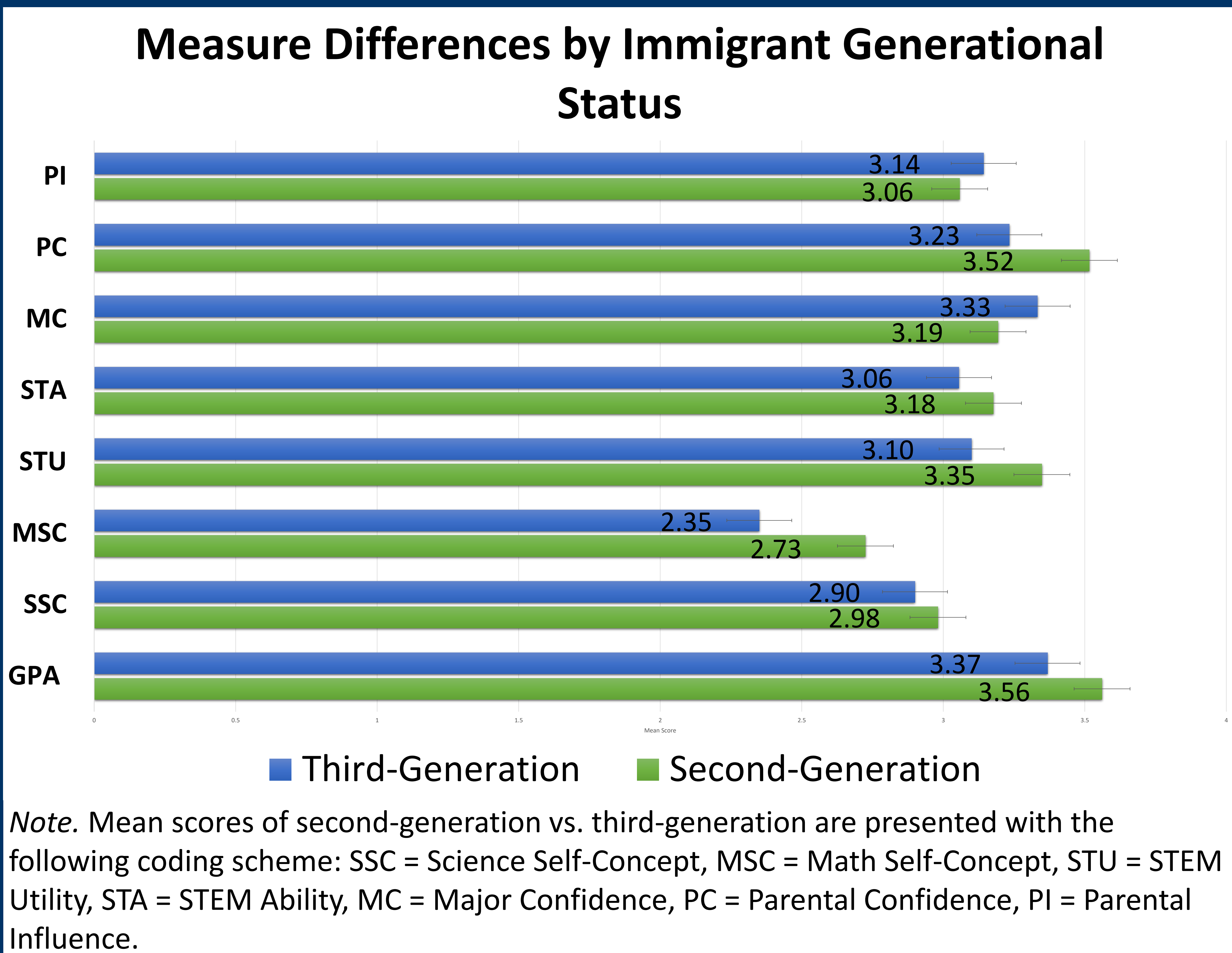
- The “immigrant paradox” is the phenomenon whereby second- and first-generation immigrants academically outperform later generations.
- There are few studies that examine the relationship between immigrant generational status and academic and career choices.
- A previous study (Rangel & Shi, 2019) has 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

Rangel, M. A., & Shi, Y. (2019). Early patterns of skill acquisition and immigrants' specialization in STEM careers. *PNAS Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 116(2), 484–489. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1812041116>

# Immigrant generational status has significant effect on college major choice.



## 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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